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Master thesis

# Mobilising Grievances

The greed hypothesis applied to Kenya's 2007-08  
Post-Election violence

Political Science  
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Empires and the Rest  
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## **Preface**

This thesis was written for the final stage of my master in Political Science on Leiden University. I started this master in September 2012 after having completed a bachelor degree in Public Management and Organisational science at the VU University in Amsterdam, with a minor at Oxford-Brookes University in Great-Britain.

I chose to write this over Kenya's ethnic conflict of 2007-08 because I always had an interest in African affairs. During my bachelor I attended some courses where conflict as well as post-war reconstruction were discussed, and found these topics interesting as well. The choice for Kenya was initially almost coincidental: initially I had wanted to do a quantitative research project, which was later changed to a case study of a few African states. After a while, I decided to focus on two cases alone: Kenya and Nigeria. During the writing process I decided to drop the Nigeria case and focus exclusively at Kenya, since I had found that case had enough material to write multiple theses about. The affairs of Kenya have grabbed my attention while writing this thesis, and I will continue to follow that country's developments with great interest.

A number of people have helped me during the writing of this thesis, and I would like to make use of this preface to thank them. First, my thesis supervisor and first reader Dr. Jan Erk for his support, feedback, as well as the discussions and the books and magazines I was able to borrow. I would also like to thank my second reader Dr. Lee Seymour because – even though we have not had any personal contact – through Dr. Erk he did provide feedback on the research proposal. Some of this thesis was based on an earlier paper I wrote, on which Dr. Frank de Zwart gave extensive feedback as well as some hints on where to look for relevant literature. Then I would like to thank the people who read my thesis in its last phases and provided feedback from their various points of view: Corné Nijburg, Nicole van Diest, Bryan Rijnders and Frances van de Vel.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank you, the reader, for taking the time to read this thesis.

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# 1 Introduction

Africa, for the first time since decolonisation, is booming. The African economies are growing, conflict seems to be down in some areas, and even the rampant corruption is being addressed. A recent report by *The Economist* confirmed these positive trends, claiming Africa is “the world’s fastest growing economy just now” (2013: p. 3). However, despite the optimism there are still plenty of problems for Africa to address. African countries are still addicted to aid according to Dambisa Moyo’s influential book *Dead Aid* (2009). Though the economy is developing, still 47,5% of the population lives of less than 1,25 dollar per day, the highest percentage in the world (World Development Indicators, 2008). Furthermore, conflict may be down from its peak in the early 90’s, but there is still a lot of conflict: in 2012, the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK) listed 90 conflicts in in Sub-Saharan Africa with 18 of those classified as ‘highly violent’, the largest number since it began measuring this in 1945 (2013: p. 29). This indicator suggests conflict has even increased in recent years, despite the economic growth. Africa may thus be making progress, but there is still a long way to go.

Conflict is seen by many scholars as the main cause of Africa’s problems: the continent is the most conflict-ridden one in the world (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002a: p. 13). As in the rest of the world, during the last few decades African states have seen relatively little inter-state conflict. Instead, intra-state conflict seems to be most prevalent: violence within rather than between states. In particular, ethnic civil wars are very common amongst African states (HIIK, 2013: p. 30). That these conflicts affect economic development seems a given; most scholars agree that political instability and conflict negatively affect economic growth (e.g. Alesina, Özler, Roubini & Swagel, 1996). But if economic growth is up in African countries, why is conflict not down? One might expect economic development to appease ethnic divides in a country, since every group can profit from this progress. Yet the data from the HIIK seem to indicate an opposite pattern: has the economic boom increased rather than decreased ethnic conflict in Africa? Even a relatively stable country such as Kenya, which had for years known peace and growth, relapsed into ethnic conflict after the 2008 elections. How is this possible?

In order to answer questions like this, researchers need to look at the relation between ethnic diversity, economic development and violent conflict. Unfortunately, no definitive proof on the questions has been found in scientific literature. There has been a lot of research on how economic variables and ethnic conflict are interrelated. However, the explanations found have often been inconsistent with one another. Since 2000 though, there has been a promising

theoretical approach that garnered much attention: Paul Collier's greed hypothesis (2000). This theory attempts to use economic variables to explain and even predict civil conflicts. It focuses on the economic aspects of a civil war: how elites instigate and use conflicts to further their own interests. Often, these conflicts are about a centralised rebellion fighting against the state over control of some important resources. The theory has been tested through quantitative means numerous times, yet rarely in a qualitative analysis. This thesis will provide a qualitative analysis using the greed hypothesis to attempt to explain ethnic conflict in a case study: the 2007-08 post-election violence in Kenya. In this way the thesis will provide explanations and insights into the Kenya conflict, particularly by focusing on the relevant economic variables and motives. At the same time, this will be a reflection upon the greed hypothesis to see if it is suited for explaining civil conflicts such as the one in Kenya. For this project, the following research question and sub-questions have been established:

*How can the greed hypothesis be used to explain the explosion of violence in Kenya after the 2007 general elections?*

- What does the existing scientific literature say about the relation between economic variables and ethnic conflict?
- Is it possible to establish some conditions, based on the literature, that need to be met for a civil conflict to arise?
- Can the violence during the Kenya crisis be explained by using the greed hypothesis and these conditions that arose from it?
- How does the analysis of Kenya's crisis reflect on the greed hypothesis literature?

The first two of these sub-questions will be answered on the basis of a theoretical study. Here, a theoretical framework will be established by first looking at the literature on the relation between the variables of economic development, ethnic fragmentation and civil conflict. For this, relevant articles by various scholars will be discussed. The greed hypothesis will be discussed at some length, and four conditions for civil conflict to occur will be set based on this literature.

The final two sub-questions will be answered using a case-study of Kenya. Using information from academic articles on Kenya's 2007-08 crisis as well as reports by the Kenyan government as well as neutral NGO's, first an overview of Kenya's crisis will be given. The information from this overview will then be analysed and compared to the information from the greed hypothesis. The four conditions that have been established in the previous sections will be

tested in practice. Finally, the greed literature will be reflected upon in the light of the new insights coming from the case study.

In this way, this thesis will show that the greed hypothesis provides an effective explanation for some conflicts. However, there are numerous pitfalls in its logic and it is not as effective in explaining the more local and diffuse kind of violence as can be seen in the Kenya case. The greed hypothesis provides interesting insights into what motivates elites to start and continue conflicts, but this is a short-term logic. The more structural causes of conflict may not lie in the greed of elites, but in the ethnic grievances and institutional problems that are used to mobilise the masses.

This thesis will consist of six chapters. After this introduction, a theoretical framework will be provided to answer the first two sub-questions in chapter 2. Then follows a background and description of the Kenya crisis in chapter 3. Chapters 4 and 5 will attempt to answer the third and fourth sub-question respectively, focusing upon the analysis of the Kenya case and reflection on the literature. Finally, a conclusion will be given in which the findings of the earlier chapters will be summarised.

## **2 Theoretical framework**

In conflicts like Kenya's 2007-08 post-election violence, there are many different factors playing a role. Ethnicity is an important factor, but can ethnic diversity within states cause a conflict by itself? Besides ethnicity, there are a number of economic variables that could be important. What does the literature say about the definitions and effects of these variables? In this section, the existing academic literature will be studied to find the answers to two of the questions asked in the introduction. First, what does the existing scientific literature say about the relation between economic variables and ethnic conflict? And second, is it possible to establish some conditions, based on the literature, that need to be met for a civil conflict to arise? To answer these questions, this literature review part of the thesis will look at a number of both theoretical and empirical books and articles in order to establish a theoretical framework to build the rest of this thesis on.

### **2.1 Ethnic fragmentation and conflict**

Before anything can be said about the relation between economic variables and ethnic conflict, this thesis first needs to establish whether ethnic conflicts are actually different from other conflicts. Does ethnic diversity cause conflicts? In this case, ethnic diversity refers to the chance that two randomly selected people from the same country are from different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups are, of course, hard to define. Fredrik Barth names four aspects of an ethnic group: it is biologically self-perpetuating, shares fundamental cultural values, members communicate and interact, and the members identify themselves as members and are identified by others as members of the group (Barth, 1969: p. 10-11). Barth stresses boundaries in his definition of ethnicity: according to him, groups are defined by what they are not (1969). However, all this is hard to quantify. Thus, most quantitative studies use Ethno-Linguistic Fragmentation or ELF to measure ethnic diversity (Posner, 2004: p. 489). This measure focuses on one aspect of ethnic fragmentation: differences in language. Although questions on the relation between ethnic diversity and conflict may lead to philosophical debates about the nature of ethnicity, for reasons of brevity and conciseness this literature review will mainly limit itself to existing empirical research on the topic. Still, it is important to have some insight into the main theories on ethnicity before focusing on its empirical effects.

In the social sciences, there are two main streams of thought on the effects of ethnicity: primordialist and instrumentalist (Matuszeski & Schneider, 2006; p. 17-19). The former claims that a person's ethnicity is an inherent part of their utility function, thus influencing their



preferences and choices directly. Instrumentalist – or circumstantialist – theories, on the other hand, claim that people are not concerned with ethnicity itself but use it as a strategic means to achieve other goals. These two lines of thinking can clearly be seen in the literature on the relation between ethnicity and conflict. Amongst the instrumentalists in this debate are authors such as Caselli and Colemann (2006), whose research article claims that ethnicity is a tool used by groups to enforce group membership. Similarly, Glaeser (2002) describes how politicians can mobilise groups on an ethnic basis using (supposed) crimes by the other ethnic group to incite hatred. However, the primordialists claim that instead of just being a mobilising mechanism, ethnicity has an inherent value. The article ‘The Integrative Revolution’ by Clifford Geertz (1963) claims that “congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves” (Geertz, 1963: p. 109). Geertz is not a classic primordialist, he does not believe that ethnicity is defined by biological values. He argues that it is constructed, but ascribes an inherent value to this construct that instrumentalists do not believe to be real. More recent authors such as Gil-White (1999) also follow this approach. Although they do not themselves support it, authors Fearon and Laitin describe the most extreme form of the primordialist argument: in some cases conflict between two ethnic groups is inevitable because of inherent cultural and ethnic characteristics (Fearon & Laitin, 2000: p. 849). In recent years the debate between the two sides has settled down a bit, with many scholars claiming the two streams of thought are not as different as they were made out to be. Matuszeski and Schneider for instance, although mostly instrumentalist in their reasoning, argue that “[i]n many cases, primordialist arguments can serve to strengthen the theories we describe” (2006: p. 17). What authors from both sides certainly agree on, is that ethnicity does influence civil conflict, even if there is controversy on how exactly this works.

Besides the more philosophical debates, many researchers have done empirical research on the effects of ethnicity on conflict. Authors Janina Matuszeski and Frank Schneider (2006) did research on the relation between ethnic fractionalisation and civil conflict. They claim the existing literature on this topic lacks “conclusive evidence concerning the effect of fractionalisation on civil conflict” (Matuszeski & Schneider, 2006; p. 3). Theoretically, they use existing arguments to show how ethnic diversity does increase the risk of civil conflict (Matuszeski & Schneider, 2006; p. 18). For instance, they quote authors such as Caselli and Coleman (2006), who claim that ethnicity plays a large role in creating coalitions during civil conflict. Another risk factor that Matuszeski and Schneider name is ethnic clustering: when ethnic groups are located in geographically distinct areas, public goods will only benefit one of these groups if located in one

area (2006: p. 19-20). This may cause feelings of preferential treatment towards one group, which can increase the risk of civil conflict.

Using a new index of measuring ethnic diversity called the Ethnic Diversity and Clustering (EDC) index as well as the well-known ELF index, Matuszeski and Schneider correlated ethnic fragmentation with indicators of civil wars such as the number of conflicts, their duration and the number of casualties. The authors conclude that both ethnic diversity and clustering are “significantly correlated with the incidence and overall impact of conflict on a country” (2006: p. 28-29). Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2010) underline these conclusions in their research, showing that civil wars tend to last significantly longer in ethnically polarised countries.

Although the assumption that more ethnic fractionalisation leads to more ethnic conflicts seems intuitive from the above theoretical arguments and empirical correlations, it is far from a proven fact. Unlike the authors cited above, some others have found wildly differing results. For instance, Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue academics should not “infer that ethnic diversity is the root cause of civil conflict” (2003: p. 88). In a later research by the same two authors with Kimuli Kasara (2007), they confirmed the earlier idea that ethnic diversity does not cause civil war, and neither does rule by an ethnic minority work as a potent predictor (2007: p. 193). Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) even claim that ethnic diversity can have a preventive effect on civil war as it “necessitates inter-group bargaining processes” (2000: p. 244). In other words, because in a greatly ethnically fragmented society none of the groups have the power to impose their will onto others negotiation is necessary between groups. This may lead to a more peaceful rather than a more violent society. For these reasons, Caselli and Coleman (2006) propose an inverted U-shaped relationship between ethnic diversity and conflict: a very low or a very high ethnic diversity reduces the chance of conflict, while having a small number of large ethnic groups increases the risk.

Collier and Hoeffler (2002a) also questioned the use of ethnicity alone as an explanatory variable: according to them, Africa’s bad economic performance rather than problems in its social structure were the main causes of conflict. In a follow-up on their article mentioned above, Elbadawi and Sambanis (2002) confirmed the importance of economic performance in predicting civil conflict, as well as emphasising the role of certain political variables. However, they saw ethnic fragmentation as measured by the ELF index as an important moderating variable (Elbadawi & Sambanis, 2002: p. 329). Kanbur, Rajaram and Varshney (2011) also warn not to overestimate the role of ethnicity by itself. They claim there are important feedback effects from violence to ethnicity that enlarge ethnic differences, and that ethnicity and violence can both be

caused by the same explanatory variables, such as colonial heritage and social mobilisation by politicians (Kanbur e.a., 2011: p. 150). Like the previously mentioned authors, they point towards the economic performance of the country as an important explanatory variable.

The link between ethnic fragmentation and civil conflict is thus unclear. There does appear to be a correlation between ethnic diversity and civil conflict, but as all social scientists know correlation does not imply causation. Variables other than ethnic fragmentation must be taken into account when measuring the risk of civil war in a state. Since it has already been mentioned by a few of the authors quoted in this section, perhaps the most promising of these alternate explanatory variables is the economic performance of a country.

## **2.2 Ethnic diversity and economy**

As the above quoted literature shows, ethnic diversity does in many cases correlate with civil conflict. On the other hand, this does not mean that ethnic diversity actually causes the conflicts. As authors such as Collier and Hoeffler (2002a) argue, other factors are also important in this relationship, economic variables first of all. So is it perhaps possible that ethnic diversity increases the risk of conflict through the mediating effect of economic performance. In order to find out if there is any truth in this idea, this section will establish whether the presence of different ethnic groups in a country affects that country's economic performance. Economic performance, in this case, is most often seen in the simple form of economic (GDP) growth. Of course there are other variables that are important: whether this growth is based on primary commodity exports or manufacturing, whether the wealth is shared evenly between groups or hoarded by a small group, and what the political situation in the country is. Other sections of this literature overview will discuss these variables, but most of the literature in this part conceptualises economic performance simply as economic growth.

In 1997, William Easterly and Ross Levine released their influential article 'Africa's growth tragedy: Policies and ethnic divisions'. In this article, they hypothesised that differences in ethnic diversity between countries account for much of the differences in economic performance between the countries (Easterly & Levine, 1997: p. 1205). They claimed ethnic diversity influences economic performance through affecting the government's policy decisions: societies that are ethnically diverse may have trouble reaching consensus on government policies, which could harm economic performance by resulting in bad policies or even a lack of governance (Easterly & Levine, 1997: p. 1230). The two authors tested this hypothesis by using the ELF index to link ethnic diversity to a number of indicators of economic performance. The article concludes that "[h]igh ethnic diversity is closely associated with low schooling, underdeveloped financial systems, distorted foreign exchange markets, and insufficient infrastructure" (Easterly &

Levine, 1997: p. 1241), all of which are predictors of low economic growth. Ethnic diversity both directly and indirectly influences economic growth, but according to Easterly and Levine is also associated with lower worker productivity (1997: p. 1240-1241). The results of this study were often re-tested by other authors. Alesina and his colleagues confirmed most of the results, although the link they found was not as strong as indicated by Easterly and Levine (Alesina e.a., 2002: p. 17). Campos, Saleh and Kuzeyev (2009) tested the model with different measures for ethnic diversity and found a strong negative link between ethnic diversity and economic performance.

Despite the praise Easterly and Levine got from some academics, others were more critical. Arcand, Guillaumont and Jeanneney (2000) questioned the results on both theoretical and empirical grounds. According to the authors, the results of the Easterly and Levine study “are both debatable and weak from an econometric point of view” (Arcand e.a., 2000: p. 937). The evidence is inconclusive, although Arcand e.a. do not deny the importance of ethnic fragmentation for economic performance (2000: p. 936). In a more recent article, Birnir and Waguespack (2011) found that ethnic diversity per se is not the relevant variable for predicting economic growth. Instead they hypothesised that if multiple groups are present and represented in a country, that country’s economic performance will only improve. This hypothesis was only partly confirmed in their research though: ethnic diversity still had a negative impact on economic performance, but an ethnically diverse government could prevent some of this (Birnir & Waguespack, 2011). Other authors, such as Fosu (1992) and Alesina e.a. (1996) found that instead of ethnic diversity, political instability – which, according to the previous paragraphs, may or may not be influenced by ethnic diversity – influences economic performance.

One thing to keep in mind during all this is that most of the articles quoted above were written before the Africa economies started to boom in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even some highly ethnically diverse countries grew fast, such as Ethiopia, Angola and Namibia (WDI, 2013). At the same time, a country like Eritrea is ethnically homogeneous yet shows very little economic growth. This does not mean that the results from the studies quoted above are not valid, just that they need to be seen in perspective. Ethnic diversity is but one of many factors that affect economic growth, and the relation to the variables is not a linear causation.

### **2.3 The free market economy**

There is a lot of research on the links between ethnicity and civil conflict and between ethnicity and economy, but the results are often inconclusive or even contradictory. However, there does seem to be a correlation between a high ethnic diversity in a country, lack of economic

development and high risk of civil conflict – even if, again, this does not mean there is definite proof of causation. Either way, this is bad news for Africa, which is a highly ethnically diverse continent. But what does the economic performance then mean for the risk of civil wars in Africa? Does economic development encourage civil war or does it stabilise old ethnic conflicts? And which aspects of economic development matter most in this?

The place to start looking for an answer to the above question might be on the basis of our current economic system. That basis is formed by the ideology of the open capitalist market. Most African countries also apply this free market in their economy, although some embrace it more fully than others. But does having a free market stabilise a country? The western liberal ideology claims that a democratic government and an open market economy are likely to ensure a country becomes prosperous and stable. This hypothesis is called the liberal peace, a theory that claims that it is unlikely for two countries with democratic political institutions to go to war with one another (Doyle, 2005: p. 463). Although this theory is normally about democracy as the crucial variable, many have expanded it to include institutions of the free market economy. This theory is most often applied to inter-state conflict: it claims that states that depend on each other in trade will cooperate rather than seek conflict. Interdependence and trade thus lead to peace. According to the academics Roger Mac Ginty and Andrew Williams, this theory “has an impeccable intellectual pedigree” (2009: p. 24) thanks to the writings of established social scientists such as Rawls (1999) and Fukuyama (1989). The author Jack Levy even goes as far as to claim it “comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations” (1988: p. 662). There is also some empirical evidence to support the liberal peace argument: an article by Oneal, Oneal, Maoz and Russett showed that trade and economic interdependence between countries indeed reduces the risk of a conflict occurring (1996). A follow-up by Oneal and Russett confirmed these findings (1996).

While there is a lot of support for the liberal peace hypothesis on both theoretical and empirical grounds, there is also a lot of criticism (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: p. 25). David Spiro is an important critic of the liberal peace, arguing that the theory only applies under very specific conditions (1994). He claims the scholars who found empirical evidence in support of the liberal peace manipulated important variables such as what constitutes as a liberal state in order to make sure “data analysis yields the results they seek” (Spiro, 1994: p. 55). Spiro’s statements were supported by John Mearsheimer, who claims that there have not been enough situations where two liberal countries could go to war with each other to constitute as evidence in support of the thesis (1990: p. 50). However, despite the criticism the liberal peace is one of the most influential theories in the social sciences and has a good empirical and intellectual foundation (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: p. 24).

So if the liberal peace theory is correct, there is a great opportunity for developing countries. If these countries become democratic and adopt a free market economy, they will avoid conflict with other states. But does the liberal peace also apply in the case of intra-state conflict? The original theory was concerned with inter-state warfare, not with conflict within a state. Yet civil conflicts, particularly on an ethnic basis, are far more common now than wars between states (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002b: p. 3). There is some potential for the theory to apply to intra-state conflict as well. An open economy may not only make states dependent on each other, it could also make individuals in the society depend on others, even from different ethnic groups. Furthermore, the meritocracy that should be present in a competitive market-based economy ignores ethnicity, valuing work-rate and intelligence above which ethnic group a person is from. However, ethnic groups within a country are not unitary actors that states in the liberal peace model are assumed to be. This makes appliance of the liberal peace to intra-state relations difficult. Is there any empirical support for a positive relation between an open market and peace? Academics Gissinger and Gleditsch have done research on the effect of trade openness – the percentage of a country's GDP that is formed by trade – on the risk of civil conflict (1999). They showed that more openness in trade leads to a reduced risk of civil conflict. This seems to imply that in the relations between ethnic groups there is a similar effect to the liberal peace effect between democratic states, although it will obviously take a completely different form. De Soysa confirmed these findings in a study of what predicts a civil war (2002). Krause and Suzuki also confirmed the hypothesis, showing that even when a country is ethnically fragmented trade openness reduces the risk of a civil conflict starting (2005: p. 38).

Yet not all academics agree with the appliance of the liberal peace in civil conflicts. Many, in fact, claim a market economy increases rather than decreases the risk of instability and violence within a state (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: p. 25). A free market economy may benefit some groups over others, leading to increased inequality. Dependency theorists are especially critical of the effects of the open market on developing countries. Gissinger and Gleditsch are no dependency theorists themselves, but do summarise its main argument in one of their articles: “a high degree of openness in the economy leads to a high degree of income inequality, which in turn increases the likelihood of armed conflict” (1999: p. 338). Should this inequality occur along ethnic lines, the risk of a civil conflict may increase further. The scholars Boswell and Dixon also conclude that the risk of civil conflict is only increased by economic dependency: they argue market capitalism causes greater income inequality and have negative effects on class structures as well as state institutions, all of which can cause a rebellion (1990: p. 540). Not only dependency theorists, but also critical theorists such as Michael Pugh are sceptical of the effects a

free market has on developing states. Pugh claims an open economy increases the risk of violence breaking out by making the population more vulnerable to poverty and extortion in black markets (2005: p. 23). In between the extremes that are found in the proponents of the liberal peace on one hand and the dependency- and critical theorists on the other are authors such as Gissinger and Gleditsch. They argue trade openness may have a beneficial effect by reducing the risk of civil conflict, but only under specific circumstances (1999: p. 327). Important factors in this are whether the country relies on the export of agricultural or manufactured goods: exporters of agricultural products will be more likely to see violent conflict than those of manufactured goods (Gissinger & Gleditsch, 1999). This is because exporters of manufactured goods gain more from trade, since exporting agricultural products does not provide the country with a high income. However, Gissinger and Gleditsch do agree with critical theory in that free markets can increase inequality and poverty, again depending on the circumstances (1999). But if a free market leads to increased poverty and inequality, what kind of effect does that have on the risk of civil conflict? And what is the role of the kind of products a country exports plays in this?

## **2.4 Inequality, poverty and natural resources**

The literature thus does not provide a clear answer to whether having a capitalist open market will decrease the risk of civil conflict occurring. But that open market might not be the most important economic variable in this regard. The fact that a country has an open market does not necessarily mean the country's economy will grow, or even that poverty will be reduced. Yet some research seems to indicate that economic growth is important in preventing a violent civil conflict. Bohlken and Sergenti (2010) did research into the effect of economic growth on the occurrence of riots between Hindu's and Muslims in India. They found that economic growth significantly reduced the risk of riots: a 1% increase in growth rate reduced the expected number of conflicts by as much as 5% (Bohlken & Sergenti, 2010: p. 589). In the African context, Collier and Hoeffler ascribed the high level of conflict in the continent to economic factors: "Africa has experienced a rising trend of conflict because its economies have performed so poorly both absolutely and relative to other regions" (2002a: p. 14). They found that a higher average GDP per person in a country and the growth of GDP reduce the risk of a civil conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002a: p. 22). Londregan and Poole furthermore confirmed that poverty, another important economic variable, is closely related to the number of coups in a country (1990). In fact, according to them poverty is even "close to being a necessary condition" for a country to experience military coups (Londregan & Poole, 1990: p. 151). But how do economic conditions such as poverty and lack of economic growth increase the risk of violence in the form of civil wars or coups? Bohlken and Sergenti (2010) claim this works through the mechanism of ethnic

competition: ethnic groups will compete with one another for the available resources. When there are fewer resources available due to bad economic conditions, the struggle for those that are available will increase (Bohlken & Sergenti, 2010: p. 592). Thus, both in free markets and in other types of economies, a lack of economic development can increase the risk of violent conflict. And yet, this is not the only factor that is relevant in this regard.

Even when there is economic development, there can still be a risk of conflict if this development is shared unevenly between different ethnic groups. If one group is perceived to be profiting more from development than others, this may cause jealousy and even violent reactions. Inequality has long been a common topic in research in the area (Gissinger & Gleditsch, 1999: p. 337-338). Authors such as Boswell and Dixon claim that inequality can significantly increase the risk of violent civil conflict in a state (1990). But empirical studies have shown that perhaps even more than inequality, the content of a country's export products predicts the risk of civil conflict. As was mentioned above, Gissinger and Gleditsch argued that a dependence on the export of agricultural products may have a negative effect on the economic performance of the country, as well as increasing inequality and unrest (1999: p. 353-354). Similarly, Bannon and Collier found a high correlation between the percentage of commodity exports such as oil, minerals, and agricultural products and the risk of civil conflict (2003). But how does having natural resources and exporting them lead to more conflict?

## **2.5 Greed or grievance?**

As can be seen from the above literature, there is still a lot of controversy on what kind of effects economic development has on civil conflict. But there is a growing consensus in the spheres of both policy makers and academics that development and conflict are closely linked (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: p. 42). But how does this link work? Paul Collier (2000) and his colleagues provided one answer to that question: the 'greed hypothesis', which has since then become one of the most important theories on the link between economic factors and civil conflict. The greed hypothesis is based on the rational choice approach to social science, which claims that people are in the end self-interested and motivated by economic gain (Hindmoor, 2010: p. 42-43). Applied in the greed hypothesis, this theory claims it can use economic variables to successfully predict countries that are at a high risk of going to civil war (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: p. 30). But what is perhaps more important is that it also provides a theoretical explanation for how economic factors can make countries more or less war-prone: it assumes that economic factors are the motives for combatants to enter, continue or leave a conflict (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: p. 30). Collier contrasts two kinds of theories on what motivates people to enter a conflict: greed and grievance theories (2006). The latter claim that people enter a conflict



because they experience grievances that they feel need to be rectified. These grievances could include social injustice, inequality, and ethnic discrimination. According to Collier, these only correlate with conflict because they act as an official rationale for the conflict, something political elites use to mobilise ethnic groups while using the conflict to chase personal economic gain (Collier, 2006: p. 1). Economic aspects such as income inequality, lack of economic growth, low GDP, and a high percentage of commodity exports then predict civil wars because “they enable rebel leaders to buy the guns and feed the soldiers, and furthermore to perpetrate large scale killing without themselves being killed in the process” (Collier, 2006: p. 22). In other words, grievances alone are not enough to cause a conflict. There has to be some form of economic gain for a group that has the power to mobilise certain ethnic groups for economic gain. According to the greed hypothesis then, only where grievances go combined with economic opportunities there is a high risk of civil war.

The economic gain that motivates political elites to start or continue a civil conflict can take different forms. Grossman focuses on the exploitation of the economic resources of the state and claims that a rebel leader will try to gain control over the state in order to control these resources (1999). Potential rebels will thus see whether the possible gains from taking over the state’s resources outweighs the costs and risks of entering a conflict before making a decision on whether or not rebel (Grossman, 1999). These resources that the state and rebel groups fight over often take the form of natural resources. This may explain why academics such as Caselli and Coleman (2006) and Bannon and Collier (2003) find a correlation between commodity exports and risk of civil conflict. Commodities such as oil or mineral wealth can easily be captured by certain groups and have a high enough value to finance a conflict. Thus, where there is an abundance of natural resources there is both motive and opportunity for political elites to try to capture those through a rebel movement. However, not all agree to this view. Fearon and Laitin argue that instead of all natural resources, only certain minerals and some forms of contraband – such as narcotics – have a high enough inherent value to be used to finance a civil conflict (2003: p. 87). Krause and Suzuki reach a different conclusion: they find that rather than minerals such as gold or diamonds, only oil exports are important in predicting civil conflict (2005: p. 32-33). Fearon and Laitin argue that this relation between oil export and conflict is a spurious one: according to them, oil exporting countries generally have a weaker government, and are more likely to enter civil conflict because of this weakness in the government rather than directly because of the oil (Fearon & Laitin, 2003: p. 87). But in the words of De Soysa, natural resources are “a potent predictor of conflict” (2002: p. 413) since the presence of natural resources is significantly correlated with conflict in her quantitative study. From a theoretical perspective this also makes sense, since commodity exports and natural resources offer opportunities for extortion

that are not present in countries without any natural resources, which should thus have a lower risk of civil conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002b: p. 7). Yet a simple look at recent African history shows that conflict is not exclusive to states that are rich in natural resources: Rwanda, for instance, does not have many resources yet has known a lot of ethnic conflict. How can this be explained? Collier and Hoeffler name two other sources of income that can be used by rebels to finance their conflict: donations from diasporas of the ethnic groups, and financial support from governments or other organisations that are hostile to the country the group aims to rebel against (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002b). Using sources of income such as these, rebellion and conflict can be profitable according to the greed hypothesis, even in states that lack natural resources.

One thing from the correlations mentioned in earlier sections does not seem to work with the greed hypothesis: how does poverty and a low GDP lead to an increased risk of conflict? Should the potential spoils of a rebellion not be lower in a poorer country, thus dissuading political elites from taking the risks of entering a civil war? According to Bohlken and Sergenti, this can at least partly be explained by a lower opportunity cost of riots during difficult economic times: the cost of foregone wages and other lost revenue through rioting drops relative to the possible gains from plundering (2010: p. 952), making recruitment of potential fighters easier. Furthermore, according to Fearon and Laitin such measures as GDP are instead a “proxy” for government capacity (2003: p. 76). In other words, poorer states have a weaker government. This fits into a greed hypothesis of conflict: a state with lower government capacity means it is easier to subvert, thus decreasing the costs of rebellion.

At first sight, the greed hypothesis seems to imply that grievances are unimportant in conflict. Wars are not decided by who is right or wrong, but by who has the economic means to see the conflict through (Collier, 2006 p. 3). Yet still, the ethnic grievances may matter after all. As Caselli and Coleman show, ethnicity is still important as a mobilising mechanism (2006). They do agree that greed is an important cause for conflict, but claim that grievances along ethnic lines are vital as ethnicity “provides a technology for group membership and exclusion which is used to avoid indiscriminate access to the spoils of conflict” (Caselli & Coleman, 2006: p. 30). Additionally, if economic growth is low, politicians can use this in electoral campaigning by blaming other ethnicities for the lack of growth and thereby instigate ethnic conflict (Bohlken & Sergenti, 2010: p. 592). If the growth is higher, the elite will instead be content with the status quo and refrain from using ethnic arguments. This is perhaps not exactly what the original greed thesis was concerned with, but certainly fits in. However, this is also a weakness of the greed hypothesis: it ignores ethnicity as a motivator for conflict. Primordialists will disagree with the greed hypothesis’ idea that economic gain is the only thing that motivates people since according

to them there is an inherent value in ethnicity. This remains one of the big questions of ethnic conflicts: is ethnicity really just a mobilising mechanism, or is it more than that?

A further weakness of the greed hypothesis is that it may look at the short term rather than structural causes of conflict. Perhaps the grievances that are present in societies would be activated into conflict eventually, no matter the economic circumstances? The short-term logic of greed may explain why a conflict occurs at a specific point in time, but there is much to be said in favour of looking at more structural causes of conflict. Perhaps ethnicity is one of those, as argued by primordialists.

## **2.6 Conditions for civil conflict**

The overarching message of the greed hypothesis is that grievances alone are not enough to instigate a civil war, but elites with a personal economic interest in creating a conflict are needed to turn grievances into conflict. Besides this, economic resources for financing any organised force are also necessary for a conflict to arise. However, this does not mean the grievances themselves are not at all important: there needs to be some form of inequality, discrimination, or injustice to be exploited by the political elite for them to be able to mobilise their groups. Furthermore, the government needs to be vulnerable – for instance through a low GDP or through ethnic fragmentation – or else a rebellion will not have much chance of succeeding. Based on the greed literature as well as on some of the major critiques on it, this suggests there is a total of four requirements for civil conflict: (1) the presence of perceived grievances on the basis of which ethnic groups can be mobilised; (2) a political elite with the capability of mobilising the ethnic group(s) that has an economic interest in promoting the conflict; (3) economic resources that can be captured for use by the rebel groups to finance their struggle; and (4) a government that is weak enough for the rebellion to be potentially successful. In this, the third and fourth condition seem to be similar. In some cases, the elite's economic interest in the conflict and the economic resources that can be used to finance the rebellion may indeed be the same. An example could be a diamond mine: the desire to control this mine would motivate the elite group to start the conflict, while the revenue for this mine would provide means to continue it and defend the new possessions against the state. Yet in other cases, the economic motivation and the means for financing the conflict are different. If the economic goal is to gain control over the state, as in the conflicts Grossman (1999) focuses on, then that economic resource cannot be used to finance the struggle until the conflict is won. In such a case funding from sources such as a captured diamond mine, but also from gifts by diaspora groups, are not the economic motivator for the conflict but do serve as the means to continue it. For this reason, the third and fourth variables are separated.

These conditions are not uncontroversial though: there may be some further weaknesses in the greed hypothesis. The theory originates from before Africa started to experience an economic boom in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. During this economic boom, many countries saw growth rates rise to as much as 5 to 15%. What does this mean for the effect of the greed hypothesis? Liberals would expect that when there is potential for economic growth, ethnic groups will cooperate rather than compete against each other: the economy is not a zero-sum game, and by cooperation everyone can benefit from economic growth without anyone needing to take the risk to start a conflict. At the same time however, economic growth can increase grievances such as inequality and social instability as has been shown by some of the literature quoted above. This may lead to more opportunities for rebellion and conflict, especially when combined with difficult relations between ethnic groups.

Not only have economic circumstances changed, but also the kind of conflict that occurs in most countries is different. The greed hypothesis focuses on centralised rebellions in which one organised rebel group led by a specific political elite group attempts to subvert the state. This may indeed apply to some conflicts, but definitely not to all. Conflicts such as the 2007-08 Kenya crisis – the case-study of this paper – are not fought along such clear-cut lines. Instead, such conflicts are fought on a more local level with disorganised mobs doing the killing, as will be discussed in the later chapters of this thesis. The greed hypothesis focuses on nation-wide, or at least ethnicity-wide elites organising the violence (see e.g. Caselli & Coleman, 2006). Can the greed hypothesis logic be used to explain these more local outbursts of violence?

In order to test the four conditions established in this section and to see if the described weaknesses of the greed hypothesis are relevant, this thesis will do a case-study of a major conflict in an African country. For this, the case of Kenya's 2007-08 post-election crisis will be used. This thesis will attempt to find out whether the greed hypothesis can be used to explain this conflict. It will use the hypothesis that the four conditions mentioned in the previous paragraph need to be present for an ethnic conflict to arise within a state, and that when these conditions are present even during times of economic growth conflict can be possible and even profitable for certain groups.

## 3 Background of the 2007-08 Kenya crisis

Kenya's case is interesting because its conditions were completely unlike what the greed hypothesis focuses on. It has known ethnic conflict, most recently after the 2007 presidential election. But before this crisis, it was known as one of the most stable countries in Africa (Kagwanja & Southall 2009: p. 260). The country is democratic, knew relatively high economic growth in the years before the 2007 election, and has few natural resources of note. In other words, at first sight it seems to be exactly the kind of state where the greed hypothesis would not expect a conflict to arise. Yet still, conflict did occur. That conflict, however, was not like the ones the greed hypothesis focuses on: instead of a centralised rebel group fighting the government, the violence was more local in nature. How did this happen, and can the greed hypothesis provide good explanations for this? In order to find that out, this section will first give a short overview of Kenya's ethnic and historical background, before moving on to the political and economic situation in 2007 to find possible explanations for the occurrence of the ethnic crisis. Then in the next chapters, this information will be further analysed in combination with the literature.

### 3.1 Ethnicity in Kenya

Kenya is a highly diverse country. Its inhabitants are divided into numerous ethnic groups of varying sizes. According to Ethnologue, an institute recording languages throughout the world, the country features 67 live languages, with English and Swahili as the national languages (Ethnologue, 2013). One thing that makes the Kenyan case interesting is that none of the ethnic groups encompass a majority of the population: there is no obvious majority group, just a lot of minorities. The largest ethnic group, going by data provided by the CIA, are the Kikuyu with just 22% of the population (CIA

Name	% of pop.
<b>Kikuyu</b>	22%
<b>Luhya</b>	14%
<b>Luo</b>	13%
<b>Kalenjin</b>	12%
<b>Kamba</b>	11%
<b>Kisii</b>	6%
<b>Meru</b>	6%
<b>Other African</b>	15%
<b>Non-African</b>	1%

Table 1: Ethnic groups in Kenya (source: CIA Factbook, 2013)

Factbook, 2013). Of the other ethnic groups, none encompass more than 15% of the population. In 2009, a census was executed to get an overview of the population of the country, which was published in 2010. In this census, 24 main ethnic groups were recognised and the Kikuyu were again shown to be the largest, with 6,6 million, 17% of the total population (Oparanya, 2010: p. 34-35). The difference between the data from the census and those from the CIA Factbook are because the CIA includes some closely affiliated tribes with the Kikuyu, while the census

recorded these as separate from the Kikuyu. A complete overview of the largest ethnic groups according to the CIA can be found in table 1.

Historically, the different ethnic groups have been at odds at different times. The Kikuyu are often perceived by members of other ethnicities to be advantaged over the other groups: they are the wealthiest and best educated ethnic group in the country and dominate both the national politics and business (Smith, 2009: p. 880). The Kikuyu originate from the central part of Kenya, surrounding Mount Kenya, where Kenya's capital of Nairobi is also located (BBC News, 2008). This central position gives them a great advantage. The other important groups are mostly located towards the west of the country:

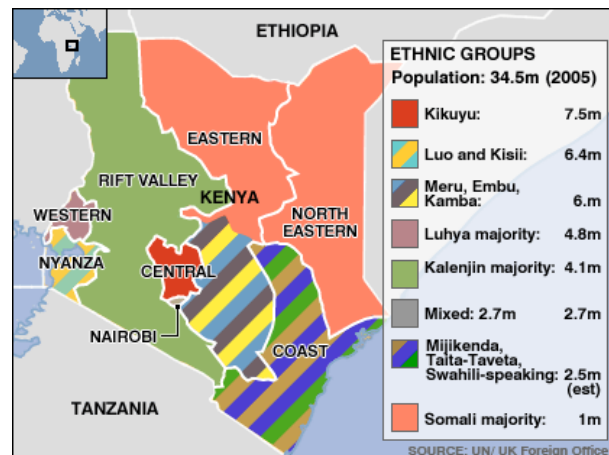


Figure 1: Map of Kenya's ethnic groups (source: BBC News, 2008).

the Kalenjin who are the dominant ethnic group in the Rift Valley, the Luo who live in the Nyanza district, and the Luhya who live in the Western district. The Eastern and North-Eastern districts are less densely populated, the Somali majority there thus has relatively little political power. Because of this complex ethnic situation, ethnicity plays an important role in the daily life in Kenya.

Since ethnicity is so important in Kenya, the numerous grievances between the ethnic groups are highly precarious. The most important of these grievances is that the smaller groups feel the Kikuyu dominate the Kenyan politics and economics. The Kikuyu benefited from the British colonial rule, and retained their favoured position after independence in 1963 (Smith, 2009: p. 880). As will be discussed further in the overview of Kenya's history since independence, the KANU political party that controlled Kenya for almost 40 years was dominated by Kikuyu for much of its existence. This dominance has led to the fact that of the presidents Kenya has had, all but Moi were Kikuyu. Under the presidency of Kibaki leading up to the 2007 elections, most of the important ministers were either Kikuyus or from the related Meru or Embu groups (Barkan, 2008: p. 2). Besides politics, according to academic Joel Barkan the businesses of Kenya were also dominated by the Kikuyu: as such, that group also profited most from the economic growth Kenya experienced in the years before the 2007 election (2008: p. 2).

Besides the Kikuyu domination of the government and economy, there were also various territory-related grievances amongst the smaller ethnic groups of the country (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 268-270). After decolonisation, the land formerly owned by the British was

given away in a government-sponsored program. But according to the opposition this program heavily favoured the Kikuyu, leading to the economic edge the group currently has over the rest of the population (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 269). Kikuyu land-owners gained land that was located in the middle of the other tribes' territory. The various commissions on the issue of displacement "have stalled out, leaving land grievances to simmer, usually along ethnic or regional lines" (Smith, 2009: p. 882). In addition to this, groups of Kikuyu were settling in areas that were historically dominated by other groups and taking important positions there. Cities such as Kisumu, Eldoret and Nairobi are ethnically mixed, and it is here where the most serious grievances related to land or economic development are found (Smith, 2009: p. 870). These areas were to form important centres for conflict during the 2007-08 crisis (HRW, 2008: p. 35-36). The marginalisation of the smaller ethnic groups in Kenya, combined with historical inequalities and the Kikuyu domination of the national state and economy were important factors that played a role in the 2007-08 crisis (Smith, 2009: p. 885). These grievances are evident not only throughout the crisis, but also through the whole Kenyan history since independence, as will be seen in the next section.

### 3.2 Politics in Kenya since independence

After Kenya became independent from Great-Britain in 1963, it soon established an all-powerful presidency (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008: p. 6). Soon the KANU (Kenya African National Union) political party became dominant, winning the first election and the Kikuyu Jomo Kenyatta became the first president. Dominated by the Kikuyu ethnic group (Smith, 2009: p. 880), the KANU controlled the Kenyan politics for years. Soon after being elected, Kenyatta merged his party with the opposing KADU and proceeded to ban other opposition to his party, thus creating what was essentially a one-party system (Owuor, Nguyen & Kuria, 2008: p. 6). After Kenyatta died in 1978, his former vice-president Daniel arap Moi took over his position as leader of the KANU and president. In 1982, he officially made Kenya a one-party state, which it had been *de facto* for years (Owuor e.a., 2008: p. 6). Throughout his reign, Moi controlled the country's economy and politics through use of the state's power. What began as politics of elite consensus under Kenyatta ended up in coercion and fear holding together the system (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008: p. 9). Moi also used the state's resources to fund a clientelistic economic system, in which corruption was everywhere. During this time, the Kikuyu elite was gradually replaced by Moi's Kalenjin supporters (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008: p. 8). In 1990, protests erupted against the one-party system which were violently broken up. However, due to continued protests and international pressure Moi relented in 1991 and re-instated the multi-party system. In practice, this meant little: Moi still won the 1992 elections against a divided opposition, even though those

elections were controversial (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 1). In the following years, due to both domestic and international pressure, President Moi continued to reform the political system of Kenya. The 1997 elections were the most credible and free ones than any the country had previously seen, but due to divisions in the opposition Moi again won (Owuor e.a., 2008: p. 7).

In years following the 1997 elections a constitutional amendment was passed that disallowed Moi from running for president again, as he had served too many terms already. Moi accepted this and stepped down at the end of his final term, naming Uhuru Kenyatta as his successor and leader of the KANU. However, Kenyatta faced a serious and united opposition by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). The NARC was led by the Kikuyu Mwai Kibaki but also included non-Kikuyu's such as Kalonzo Musyoka from the Eastern District and Raila Odinga, a Luo. In the terms of ethnic alliances according to which elections were historically fought, this was an alliance of Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 267). This coalition was focused on the promise of change: it would alter the outdated constitution and democratise the country further (Smith, 2009: p. 879). In addition to this, Kibaki and Odinga promised to address various social and economic issues, as well as increase access to education for children (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 1). The NARC won the 2002 presidential election, which was deemed by international observers to be fair and open (Owuor e.a., 2008: p. 7). Mwai Kibaki became the new president while the KANU was in the opposition for the first time since independence. This peaceful election of a non-incumbent was seen by some as a confirmation of Kenya's movement towards a successful democracy (Mueller, 2011: p. 101). Unfortunately, the stability was not to last. Kibaki did not name Odinga as a minister, nor did he give enough positions in his cabinet to members of parties in the coalition other than his own. The NARC soon fell apart: Raila Odinga and other prominent members of the coalition felt betrayed by Kibaki's refusal to name them as members of the government and left the coalition due to both personal conflicts and political disagreements (Smith, 2009: p. 879-880). This disagreement broke all trust between Kibaki and Odinga, and set the stage for the later 2007 election. Odinga formed the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), a multi-ethnic party to oppose Kibaki's government. The government's proposal for a revised constitution was offered in a referendum to the people of Kenya, but it was voted away, partly due to intense campaigning by the ODM (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 2). This lack of constitutional reform left the old system of the KANU still in place. Coercive and oppressive institutions were still fully controlled by the president, and Kibaki made good use of that to strengthen his own position (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008: p. 17). However, despite his failure to deliver political reform, Kibaki's government did manage to improve the economic conditions of the country. The economy he inherited from Moi was outdated, had a



negative growth rate as well as high unemployment and poverty, but Kibaki's government managed to turn this around (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 2). By 2007, the country experienced an economic growth of 7%. Against this backdrop of economic growth yet political instability, the 2007 presidential elections took place.

### **3.3 The PNU and ODM election campaigns**

In the 2007 presidential elections, the stakes were high. The ODM of Raila Odinga had campaigned hard against the ruling government led by Kibaki during its term in power, and Kibaki used the power of the state to strengthen his own position. Nothing was left of the alliance between the two sides that once formed the NARC. In 2007, Odinga decided to run against Kibaki for the presidency. Kibaki had re-formed his political party under the name Party of National Unity (PNU) and ran to be re-elected. Meanwhile, Kalonzo Musyoka further complicated things by running for presidency as well, forming a split party of the ODM: the ODM-K. However, he was never really in sight of winning the elections, and Kibaki and Odinga remained the two main candidates. A tough election campaign followed, where both parties used ethnic tensions to mobilise their constituencies (Mueller, 2011: p. 104-105; Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 3).

Presidential candidate Odinga mobilised his followers based on a tough campaign proclaiming it was time for reform. The ODM focused on the perceived shortcomings of Kibaki's government: their populist message was aimed at the masses, accusing Kibaki of ignoring the poor in favour of the existing elite of the country (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 2). Furthermore, Odinga made corruption a key issue: he claimed Kibaki had not done anything about corruption, and even allowed it to persist and benefit his favoured elite (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 3). There was a strong ethnic appeal to Odinga's campaign. He claimed he would end the 'economic apartheid' favouring the Kikuyu over the other ethnic groups of Kenya (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 265). Part of this would be an attempt to end the land-related grievances such as the ones described earlier in this chapter, where post-colonial reforms of land-ownership were seen to have benefited Kikuyu over local tribes. The ODM portrayed the election as an ethnic struggle of 41 ethnic groups against one, the Kikuyu (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 265). Significantly, Odinga was strongly in favour of decentralisation of the Kenyan state. He claimed he would introduce a 'majimbo' institutional setting that would be more federal in nature: the provinces would gain power at the expense of the central state (Cheeseman, 2008: p. 175). This had long been a desire from ethnic groups such as the Luo and the Kalenjin, while the existing (Kikuyu-dominated) elite had always opposed it. Majimboism is a loaded term in Kenyan politics, which not only refers to installing a federal state with more power for the regions, but is also associated with plans to

ethnically cleanse the regions of all but their ‘native’ ethnic groups (Cheeseman, 2008: p. 175). With many Kikuyu living in Kalenjin and Luo areas such as the Rift Valley and holding fertile land there – which was part of the land grievances – many ‘native’ inhabitants of these provinces liked the idea of more local power. At the same time this also – falsely – gave them the idea that the Odinga government would ethnically cleanse their areas after a victory in the elections and give the tribes back their lands (HRW, 2008: p. 36). This raised ethnic tensions, especially as Kikuyu and other PNU supporters strongly opposed all majimbo plans.

Opposing Odinga’s program, Kibaki’s PNU attempted to emphasise the high growth-rates the country had known under Kibaki’s rule, in order to appeal to the growing middle classes (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 2). Furthermore, Kibaki promised to increase the now mostly universal primary school coverage to include secondary schooling as well. However, as with the ODM’s, the PNU’s campaign was mostly focused on ethnic arguments. Kibaki launched an aggressive campaign and attempted to mobilise the Kikuyu’s fears of being marginalised in favour of other groups. The proposed majimbo policies of Odinga mobilised his opponents as well as his allies: PNU supporters likened the policies with tribalism and opposed them strongly (Cheeseman 2008: p. 175). Kibaki portrayed the federalist ideas of his opponent as one step towards the fragmentation of Kenya. If Odinga’s ODM was the reform candidate of the election, the PNU as the party with the incumbent president attempted to continue the status quo and gain the support of those who profited from Kibaki’s rule.

An exceptionally tough election campaign from both sides followed. Susanne Mueller quotes a Kenyan newspaper article claiming both sides described each other as “ethnic demons” (2008: p. 202). The two opponents “charged the other with using tribal appeals while boasting of their own multi-ethnic credentials” (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 3). Odinga attempted to attract votes beyond his Luo base by having a Luhya as his vice-presidential candidate and by using the support of Kalenjin William Ruto, but Kibaki did the same and his campaign also featured high-profile supporters from the Luhya and Kalenjin groups. In the end, the PNU was mostly supported by the Kikuyu and the closely related Embu and Meru, the Kisii and part of the Luhya, while the ODM consisted of an alliance between the Luo, Kalenjin and another part of the Luhya (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 267). These two ethnic alliances went head to head in a closely fought election, the campaign for which was not based on programmatic politics, but instead purely on ethnicity and clientelist relations between ethnicities and the political parties (Mueller, 2011: p. 104-105). All this led to a high-stakes election that would eventually end up in violence.

### **3.4 The 2007 election and subsequent crisis**

After a long and tough campaign, in December 2007 the general elections in Kenya were finally held. Although the voting process generally went fine – despite a number of problems – the tallying of the vote was highly controversial. According to a report on the elections by Human Rights Watch, the tallying was subject to a huge fraud by the Electoral Commission of Kenya, who oversaw a process in which over a million votes for Odinga disappeared (HRW, 2008: p. 21-22). According to Gibson and Long, based on the exit polls these missing votes should have resulted in a victory for Odinga, not Kibaki (2009: p. 3-4). This is also reflected in the results of the parliamentary elections, which were held at the same time. Here, Odinga's ODM won 99 seats compared to the PNU's 43. Instantly, both domestic and international institutions called the vote count flawed and doubted the results (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 3). Despite these objections, Kibaki attempted to prevent any challenge and had himself sworn in within hours after the result was announced. Journalists were sent away and public broadcasts suspended in attempts to keep the peace, but all this only contributed to the unrest (HRW, 2008: p. 22-23). Soon, riots began and the 2007-08 crisis was born. The conflict had far reaching consequences: between 1,000 and 2,000 Kenyans died, with a further 600,000 displaced, and enormous economic and political damage was done (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 260).

Although often going unnoticed, there was already violence well before the elections. Beginning in August 2007, violence had on multiple occasions erupted and caused 200 deaths and led to the displacement of 70,000 people (HRW, 2008: p. 19). Some of this was in-party conflict over who would get the party nominations, but other violent incidents were between different ethnic groups. According to Human Rights Watch, the response by the police to these violent conflicts was insufficient (HRW, 2008: p. 19-20). Furthermore, “[s]everal politicians and local leaders were implicated in this violence” (HRW, 2008: p. 20), yet little to no actions were taken against them.

All the violence leading up to the election was nothing compared to what came after through. That post-election violence was not in all cases a spontaneous response to the rigging of the elections. In Eldoret for instance, local leaders and ODM organisers called for war against the Kikuyu in case the PNU was declared the winner of the elections, since according to them that would signify that the elections were rigged (HRW, 2008: p. 37). After the elections, throughout the Rift Valley – the province mostly inhabited by the Kalenjin – conflicts emerged, particularly on places where there was a significant Kikuyu minority. Angry mobs of Kalenjin targeted Kikuyu and other ethnic groups in the area, as well as anyone who was affiliated with the PNU. Many were injured or killed, numerous houses were burned and thousands of people were

displaced and forced to leave their homes (Waki Report, 2008: p. 60). In some cases, the Kikuyu in the Rift Valley attempted to defend themselves against the attacking mobs, and in some cases undertook violent reprisal attacks (HRW, 2008: p. 42-43). Particularly in cities in the Rift Valley where the Kikuyu were in the majority, attacks on Luo, Kalenjin or other ODM supporters were commonplace. Violent gangs were implied to be involved in these reprisal attacks (HRW, 2008: p. 43). The police and military were unable to control the violence, which continued to spiral out of control. In other areas conflict erupted as well. The demonstrations in Nyanza Province – the home district of Odinga – were initially peaceful, but the police crackdown on the protestors was unnecessarily harsh according to later government reports, causing the conflict to become violent (Waki Report, 2009: p. 61-62). This was not the only case where the response by the police caused the conflict to intensify: in most cases where the police intervened their actions were either insufficient or only aggravated the conflict further (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 260). In the Western Province, too, there was violence against the Kikuyu and other minorities (Waki Report, 2009: p. 60-61).

When displaced people from the Rift Valley travelled into the Central Province – up until that moment unstable yet largely without violent incidents – the already tense ethnic relations in that region boiled over (HRW Report, 2008: p. 55). Members of different ethnic groups from the Kikuyu majority in the province were in many cases threatened to leave the area. Many did so, but in some cases violent conflict erupted after all. The Mungiki gang played a large role in the conflict here (Waki Report, 2009: p. 64). The Mungiki gang is a violent group with a Kikuyu allegiance that is active in Nairobi and the Central province. It is often said to have ties to several prominent politicians, although little to no proof has been found of this (HRW, 2008: p. 43-44). Other provinces, like the Coast Province, also knew ethnic conflicts during this period. However, the main centre of the conflict was located in the Rift Valley as well as in the Nyanza and Nairobi provinces. The local attacks and conflicts were responses to each other and conflict in one area exacerbated violence in others, but there were little to no large-scale attacks over the borders of the different provinces (HRW, 2008). All these local conflicts combined, though, caused a lot of devastation throughout the country.

On February 28, a power-sharing agreement between the PNU and the ODM was finally signed, ending the conflict. Mediated first by John Kofuor, later by Kofi Annan and eventually Oluyemi Adeniji, this peace would allow Kibaki to become president after all, but his power was limited due to the addition of the Prime Minister, the office Odinga took. The conflict had lasted less than 3 months, yet the results were disastrous for Kenya. After the peace was signed, two commissions were installed to find the causes of the violence. The Independent Review

Commission was led by judge Johann Kriegler and produced a report – generally referred to as the Kriegler Report – that criticised Kenya’s institutional design and election procedures as part of the causes of the war (Kriegler report, 2009). Similarly, the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence was chaired by Philip Waki and attempted to investigate how the clashes could occur and what the causes and results of the violence were. The Waki Report concluded a total of 1,133 people were killed in the post-election violence (2009: p. 56), while many more were displaced. The damage to Kenya was huge, and many were left wondering how this could have happened.

## **4 Greed and grievance in Kenya's crisis**

In the theoretical framework earlier in this thesis, it has been established that there are four conditions for a violent (ethnic) conflict to arise. To repeat, these are: (1) the presence of perceived grievances on the basis of which ethnic groups can be mobilised; (2) a political elite with the capability of mobilising the ethnic group(s) that has an economic interest in promoting the conflict; (3) economic resources that can be captured for use by the rebel groups to finance their struggle; and (4) a government that is weak enough for the rebellion to be potentially successful. However, these conditions are focused upon organised conflict between a centralised rebel group and a state. What the Kenya case offers is a different kind of violence: local and diffuse in nature. Do the conditions still apply for this kind of violent conflict? This section of the thesis will see if all four of the conditions were present in Kenya ahead of the 2007-08 crisis, thus combining the theory with the practice. In this way, the thesis will test the theory by seeing how the mechanisms found in the literature work in practice. At the same time, this will shed a further light upon the 2007-08 Kenya crisis, giving theoretical explanations on what caused it. This section will start with the first of the four conditions: the presence of ethnic grievances.

### **4.1 Ethnic grievances in Kenya**

According to the greed literature, people who enter a conflict are not motivated by grievances. Inequality, oppression, and other injustices are just an excuse used by leaders of rebellions to justify their cause and mobilise their followers (Collier, 2006: p. 1-2). But that does not mean grievances are unimportant. As was claimed in the theoretical framework, the presence of grievances is one of the requirements for a rebellion or other civil conflict to arise. According to Collier, mobilising ethnic groups on the basis of grievances allows the leaders of those groups to fight their wars (2006: p. 22). Thus, if the greed hypothesis really explains how violence erupts, some ethnic grievances should have been present in Kenya ahead of the 2007 elections. These grievances must then have been activated by ethnic leaders, who used them to get their constituents to fight a war that benefited the leaders economically. So the first step in this remains the presence of the grievances themselves. What were these grievances in Kenya's case?

Perhaps the main grievance that the smaller ethnic groups had was the idea that the Kikuyu ethnic group was in a better position than any other group, dominating politics, the media and the economy (Barkan, 2008: p. 2). As was seen earlier, the Kikuyu had an advantageous position during the British colonial rule and managed to stay in power after independence (Smith,

2009: p. 880). The leading ethnic alliances that have ruled Kenya almost without exception at least included the Kikuyu. President Kibaki was a Kikuyu, as were most of the important ministers in Kibaki's cabinet. This was despite the fact that the alliance with Odinga's Luo played a vital role in winning the 2002 presidential election for Kibaki (Barkan, 2008: p. 2) Many members of other ethnic groups felt the Kibaki government favoured the Kikuyu over all other groups. During the election campaign for the 2007 elections, Odinga even referred to an "economic apartheid" favouring the Kikuyu and giving them all the privileges (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 265). The Kikuyu's dominance is only enhanced by them controlling the Central Province of Kenya, while also being the largest ethnic group in the capitol of Nairobi. All this led to increased calls for 'majimboism' amongst the other ethnic groups which, as has been discussed in the previous section, is a highly controversial form of tribal federalism. The controversy surrounding majimboism was one of the factors that increased tensions surrounding the elections.

Besides the Kikuyu domination of the government and economy, there were also various territory-related grievances amongst the smaller ethnic groups of the country (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 268-270). After decolonisation, still some 20% of the land – often the most fertile agricultural grounds – was owned by the British. A government sponsored program allowed the land to be sold to Kenyan buyers, instead of giving it back to the tribal groups that had collectively owned the land before colonial times (HRW, 2008: p. 13). Then-president Kenyatta used the land to build alliances, and much of it ended up in the hands of Kikuyu. This led many Kikuyu to settle in areas such as the Rift Valley outside of their home areas; a "Kikuyu diaspora 100 miles west of the Kikuyu homeland around Mt. Kenya" and right in the middle of Kalenjin lands (Barkan, 2008: p. 3). According to members of the opposition this unequal division of the land seriously benefited the Kikuyu elite (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 269). This was just one more episode in a long history of land displacement and territorial conflicts along ethnic lines, which were not adequately responded to by the government (Smith, 2009). Issues like these have caused local 'land defence forces' to arise, armed groups that defend their ethnicity's territory against others (Smith, 2009). These land defence forces are important in the conflict, since the presence of these meant there was a pre-existing capacity for violence. These armed groups were already present and ready to defend their land, or attack other ethnic groups if necessary. Because of this, the conflict could spiral out of control faster (Smith, 2009). The role of land as a grievance is particularly interesting in relation to the greed hypothesis since – in addition to being highly symbolic and important for ethnic groups – it is one of the most valuable resources Kenya has (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 264-265). Although most greed scholars focus on oil and minerals as the main resources to motivate conflict (e.g. Krause and Suzuki,

2005; and De Soysa, 2002), other resources may also be relevant. A high reliance on agriculture may be relevant in predicting civil conflict as found by Gissinger & Gleditsch (1999: p. 353-254) not only because it signals a weak government and economy, but also because as in the Kenya case land and ethnicity are inherently linked. Because of this combination of a high economic value of the land and its important role in the ethnic tribes' culture and heritage, the Kenyan grievances surrounding land were very important in motivating the conflict.

Other grievances played important roles as well. Poverty and inequality were (and still are) common in Kenya: many communities have done better than others in the process of economic development. This has caused feelings of jealousy, particularly when the inequalities have occurred along ethnic lines (Waki Report, 2009: p. 51). In addition, access to resources such as education was not shared evenly between ethnic groups and the Kikuyu were again perceived to have gotten the better deal in this regard (Barkan, 2008: p. 2). As scholars such as Matuszeski and Schneider discuss, this kind of unequal access to public services is a significant risk factor for civil conflict (2006: p. 19-20).

There were thus numerous ethnic grievances amongst Kenya's ethnic groups. These grievances were largely ignored by the political elite throughout the years (Smith, 2009: p. 870). During previous crises, such as those surrounding the 1992 and 1997 elections, these grievances exploded into violent conflict, but never to the extent they did in 2007 and 2008. For years before the crisis, nothing had changed in the grievances: the Kikuyu had occupied their advantageous position for years, the land grievances were never addressed, and inequality was always present. And yet, at one sudden point all these grievances were activated and the crisis ensued. This supports the 'greed hypothesis' argument that grievances alone are not enough to start a violent conflict. The question then becomes: what caused the long-standing grievances to ignite into violence during the 2007-08 crisis?

## **4.2 Mobilisation of grievances by the elite**

The grievances described in the previous section were long present, but for decades they rarely played up. During the early parts of the KANU's rule, the country's elite was united and saw no reason to instigate ethnic tensions (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008: p. 6-7). The elites were dependent on the KANU and its structures to protect their wealth. When these elites fragmented, governments and ethnic alliances became less stable and violence was more commonplace, but even under Moi's rule the elite remained largely united due to his use of the state's coercive force (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008: p. 8-9). In the 2002 elections, a new ethnic alliance arose, but the presence of the Kikuyu in this alliance as well as its overwhelming victory in the general elections



ensured that for a while the country remained stable. However, during the time leading up to the 2007 election, this changed. The elite that had won the 2002 election fell apart: the Kikuyu under Kibaki formed the government, while Odinga and his Luo formed an opposition to them. Thus, nothing changed in the grievances between the ethnic groups, yet they were activated: presidential candidate Kibaki and Odinga mobilised their followers on ethnic grounds. As was described in the previous chapter of this thesis, the campaign that followed was harsh and full of arguments based on ethnicity. This is in line with what the greed hypothesis proposes: ethnicities are mobilised into entering a conflict by political elites (Caselli & Coleman, 2006). In Kenya's case, this can clearly be seen. The whole election campaign was based on ethnicity, with both sides aiming to mobilise their ethnic group as best as they could (Mueller, 2011: p. 104-105). However, there are some problems with this linking of the greed hypothesis with what happened in Kenya. First of all, the people who mobilised the grievances were trying to win an election first of all, not trying to form a rebel organisation to subvert the government. And second, the greed hypothesis claims that the leaders who mobilise their ethnic groups will do so in order to achieve some kind of economic goal (Mac Ginty & Williams, 2009: p. 30). What would that goal be in the case of Kenya, what kind of economic gain can be won through mobilising the ethnic grievances?

What is vital in understanding the Kenya conflict is how Kenya's politics have always been a game of alliances between ethnic groups. As was described earlier in this thesis, the ethnic alliances of the PNU and the ODM were pitched against each other in the election. According to Mueller, the two sides believed that the winner of this election would determine which ethnic groups would gain access to the state's resources (2011: p. 104-105). In other words, the election was a zero-sum game where one party – and one ethnic coalition – would gain all power and the related benefits (Mueller, 2011). This is because of the institutional design of Kenya's government: due to the lack of constitutional reform the all-powerful presidency that was installed by Kenyatta and Moi was never removed. The parliament and other institutions were powerless compared to the president, who thus went unchecked. This meant that the winner of the presidential election would essentially rule the country alone. That this significantly influenced the outbreak of violence after the elections was also confirmed by Smith (2009). The importance of this was confirmed in the Kriegler Report after the election: that report made an extensive case in support of constitutional reform, particularly concerning the election procedures. For instance, the president controls the electoral commission, and thus can significantly influence the outcome of the elections (Kriegler Report, 2009: p. 4-5). This directly led to the rigging of the 2007 elections (HRW, 2008). The promise of control over the state was a powerful economic motivator for both sides. This makes perfect sense from a theoretical point of view: as the theory has shown,

gaining control over the state can be an important motivator for political elites to mobilise their constituents (see e.g. Grossman, 1999). This is even more relevant in Kenya, where the all-powerful presidency and widespread corruption allow for huge economic gains for the ruling party. Thus, both sides desperately wanted to win and did everything they could to do so, including mobilising ethnic grievances. This combination of ethnic alliances and a winner-takes-all institutional design made campaigning on ethnicity almost inevitable (Smith, 2009) and the hard campaign described in the previous chapter followed.

In the election campaigns by the PNU and the ODM, the ethnic grievances that existed were mobilised in order to gain electoral support. But how did the country go from a relatively peaceful struggle to win the elections to a violent conflict? The greed theory would expect that the losing party would continue their electoral struggle through other means. However, there is little to no evidence of the direct involvement of either Kibaki or Odinga in the riots (HRW, 2008). This may seem curious, since they should be the people who had most to gain from winning the elections: they would become president and gain access to the state's resources. But besides the two candidates, more minor members of the political parties had important interests as well. The PNU leaders feared of losing their advantageous position. Kikuyu, in particular, were well aware of Odinga's plans of ending their dominance in the government and business and were hoping to stay in that position (Mueller, 2008: p. 201). Furthermore, the Kikuyu elite had much to lose in Odinga's anti-corruption efforts, which could see many of them accused if successfully executed (Branch & Cheeseman, 2008: p. 19). This is because many influential Kikuyu had been involved in some forms of corruption during the Kibaki years and earlier. The perpetrators of corruption and other forms of looting of public resources had been protected by Kibaki's government in exchange for support, and a change in president would make their position highly precarious (HRW, 2008: p. 64). These high stakes for the PNU leaders made sure they wanted to avoid losing at all costs. Thus, it seems likely that the rigging of the elections was directly caused by this, and even Kibaki himself is not entirely without blame in this (HRW, 2008). The rigging of the elections may have added another grievance to the already large list present at the time, but did this directly cause the conflict?

The post-election violence started, as described earlier, in the Rift Valley where Kalenjin mobs attacked Kikuyu and other PNU supporters in their region. Following the greed hypothesis, one would expect these attacks to have clear leaders who have much to gain from the riots economically. To some extent, this is true. However, for the leaders of these initial riots it is necessary not to look to the top of the ODM, but further down its hierarchy. Human Rights Watch implicated numerous local ODM campaigners in the riots (HRW, 2008: p. 37). What did these

have to gain from the riots? It is likely they had hoped to benefit from their party winning the presidential elections, since it would give them better chances of entering a high-profile position in national, provincial or even local government. In Kenya, there are huge economic advantages to having a position in the employment of the government: the wages in the government are very high, with even members of parliament earning \$190,000 per year untaxed (Mueller, 2008: p. 200). In a society with high poverty and unemployment, those are significant figures. Even more important are the interests of local leaders in the Rift Valley – a category that on many occasions overlaps with that of low- to mid-level ODM officials. Many local leaders were involved in the post-election violence (HRW, 2008: p. 37), and they had much to gain from it. The ODM had promised to settle the old land-grievances and many Kalenjin thought that meant the lands in the Rift Valley owned by Kikuyu would be returned to them (HRW, 2008: p. 36). Since land is a highly valuable resource in Kenya, this may have been a significant motivation for these local leaders. Their attempts to force the Kikuyu out of their lands were in most cases successful and even after the conflict was ended many did not dare to return, leaving large areas including the major city of Eldoret almost completely free of Kikuyu presence (HRW, 2008: p. 56).

The question has to be asked whether control over the land was an economic motivator only. Land is – both in Kenya and elsewhere in the world – tied to the tribes and has a great symbolic value for the people: without land, a tribe is nothing. Perhaps this symbolic value was more important to the people of the Rift Valley than its economic worth. Here, the greed hypothesis is at a loss. Putting the symbolic value of the land ahead of material gain is irrational according to the way of thinking the greed hypothesis applies. A defender of the greed hypothesis might say that the symbolic value, again, just serves to hide the economic motivations the local leaders have. The local leaders would furthermore increase their own power through extending the land held by their tribe. However, the symbolic and tribal value of land should not be discounted in an analysis of Kenya's crisis. This may be a weakness in the greed hypothesis, since its focus on economic interests reduces the focus on these – strictly speaking irrational – tribal incentives.

Thus, both the high-ranking politicians in both the PNU and the ODM and local leaders had significant economic interests in the ethnic conflict. Although it is not proven fact that the leaders of the political parties were promoting the conflict, they did little to stop it and there is even evidence some leaders were more actively involved (HRW, 2008). This included, for instance, unnamed PNU ministers (HRW, 2008: p. 45). From both sides of the conflict there are currently major leaders on trial in the International Criminal Court for their involvement in the conflict, including current president and Kikuyu Uhuru Kenyatta and prominent Kalenjin William Ruto. Still, there was no united and single-minded elite mobilising and leading the population.

Various local leaders were the people organising and in many cases funding the conflict. Their goals may also not have been exclusively materialistic. The value of the land for the tribe instead of for the individual seems to have been at least as important as its economic value. In summary, mobilisation of the masses did not happen in the way the greed hypothesis predicts: instead of the presidential candidates mobilising their groups and leading them into conflict, others lower on the party hierarchy profited from the mobilisation of ethnic grievances and used the violence to reach their goals.

### **4.3 Economic resources and funding of the conflict**

The third of the four conditions for violent ethnic conflict is all about the funding of the conflict. How a conflict is funded is a crucial question for the greed hypothesis: without funding, there can be no conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002b). In the previous section we saw that land as an economic resource was an important motivation for the conflict, certainly on a local level. However, land does not have an inherent value high enough to finance a conflict according to the literature (Fearon & Laitin, 2003: p. 87). So if not by land and not through other natural resources – since Kenya is not rich in oil or minerals – how then was the violence funded? The theory gives two potential alternatives: donations from diasporas, and support from foreign governments hostile to the rebel state's government (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002b). Neither of these makes much sense in the Kenyan context. This is because the greed hypothesis focuses on conflict as in the fight of a rebel group against a government. In Kenya, as in many ethnic conflicts, the violence was far less organised than that: mobs and local militias did the fighting, not a centralised rebel army. The police and military did interfere on some occasions and certainly influenced the crisis but the main conflict was between ethnic groups, not between a rebel group and the government. Thus, different and more local methods of funding were required.

The mobs that attacked Kikuyu and PNU supporters in the Rift Valley and Nyanza Province as well as those that attacked Luo, Kalenjin and ODM supporters in the Central Province and Nairobi were mostly organised and funded locally (HRW, 2008: p. 4). For this, local businessmen and other members of the local elite invested their own money, in some cases even paying by the head for each member of the opposite tribes that was killed (HRW, 2008: p. 48). In many cases, extortion of supporters of the other party was used to gain access to additional funds (HRW, 2008: p. 42). The involvement of the Mungiki gang, a violent gang with a Kikuyu origin, further provided funding and other support for locals to attack their neighbours (Waki Report, 2009: p. 51-52). In some cases, there is evidence of funding from party officials, members of parliament and even government ministers (HRW, 2008). Some of the violence was not funded for by any particular means: the looting that took place in all provinces may have provided ample

motivation for people to take part in the mobs (Waki Report, 2009: p. 58-65). Due to the often local nature of the violence, there was little need for great amounts of funding to conduct the attacks. The combination of support from local businessmen and elites, extortion, the involvement of violent gangs, donations from high-ranking party members and gains from looting were enough to fund the conflict.

One of the reasons there was not much need for major sources of funding for the mobs may be found in the economic conditions at the time of the 2007-08 crisis. The economy was growing, with a growth rate of 7% in 2007, but many Kenyans had barely profited from this. Particularly in the urban slums many people were still living in great poverty, which made the decision to turn to violence easier for them (Waki Report, 2009: p. 51). Furthermore, there was high unemployment especially amongst the youth in Kenya. These unemployed youths often found their way into violent gangs, which were then used by politicians and others in the ethnic violence (Waki Report, 2009: p. 51-52). Even besides the influence of gangs, the jobless were significantly easier to recruit for ethnic violence than people with day jobs. As a Kikuyu youth put it in an interview with Human Rights Watch: “[i]t was arranged by people with money, they bought the jobless like me. We need something to eat every day” (HRW, 2008: p. 45). This kind of thinking is in line with the greed hypothesis. Difficult economic circumstances lower the opportunity costs of entering the conflict as the risk of lost wages is lower than the potential gains of the violence (Bohlken & Sergenti, 2010: p. 952). Thus, with economic circumstances favourable for conflict, a low cost of mobilising and paying the mobs and multiple sources of funding available, the third condition for a violent ethnic conflict is also met. However, the nature of this conflict is different from what the greed hypothesis normally studies, making an analysis of the funding of the violence strictly through the greed literature hard.

#### **4.4 Government weakness**

The fourth and final condition for an ethnic conflict to start is that the government should be weak. This is because a powerful government would make any rebellion less likely to succeed, while a weaker government is far more easily subverted (Fearon & Laitin, 2003: p. 75-76). This not only applies directly to the government’s military and police strength, but also to its financial power and governance capacity. A government with a strong military and police force will be far harder to defeat by a rebel movement, thus raising the risk and the costs of rebellion. Similarly, financially strong governments can attract support using its monetary and other economic means, while governance capacity is required for military and financial strength to be used effectively.

Thus, the greed hypothesis would expect that rebellions and other conflicts only arise where the government is relatively weak. Was this the case in Kenya ahead of its crisis?

Kenya's governance institutions during the 2007-08 crisis were still based on the old post-colonial ones that were formed by presidents Kenyatta and Moi, since attempts to reform these had failed. The old and often weak institutions significantly contributed to the crisis. Due to the lack of democratic control over the president, he could freely appoint whomever he wanted to important government positions. In this way president Kibaki had been able to change the members of the Electoral Commission of Kenya to his supporters, after which the Commission proceeded to rig the results in favour of Kibaki (HRW, 2008: p. 21-22). In a more strongly developed democratic state, this would not have occurred as the Electoral Commission would be neutral. Not only this, institutional weakness also allowed corruption to become rampant throughout Kenya's government, which as was seen earlier played an important role in causing the conflict (Gibson & Long, 2009: p. 3). Democracy was not fully developed in the minds of the population either: the election was still contested in terms of ethnic alliances, and rarely was about the content of the different policies proposed by the candidates (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 267). Furthermore, it was the all-powerful presidency and the winner-takes-all nature of the Kenyan election that raised the importance of the elections high enough that neither side could afford to lose (Mueller, 2011). In the terms of the greed hypothesis, this means that the institutional design of the Kenyan government raised the risks of losing the elections, increased the potential gains through conflict and thus made a violent end to the elections more likely. After the conflict was over, all of the Human Rights Watch report (2008), the Waki Report (2009) and the Kriegler report (2009) called for serious institutional reform to address the problems that occurred during and after the 2007 election.

Not only was the institutional design of the government a factor in the civil conflict, the response by the government on both national and local levels in many cases further aggravated the conflict (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009: p. 260). The interventions by police and military often either led to more violence or were completely ineffective in countering the mobs (HRW, 2008). The Waki Report accused the police and other security forces of "unjustified use of force and causing death and injury unnecessarily" and in some cases even "descending into acts of serious crime against civilians" (2009: p. 54). In other cases, the police stood idly by while attacks took place, despite being warned in advance (Mueller, 2008: p. 203). The police was incapable of dealing with the violence, and responded in an inconsistent and often ineffective manner to the riots (HRW, 2008: p. 59-62). Police forces as well as the army clearly lacked the ability to keep

law and order in a difficult time (Smith, 2009: p. 886). It is thus clear that institutional weakness on the side of the police and military aggravated the conflict, as predicted by the greed hypothesis.

The response to the attacks by the national government also fell short. When the first riots occurred, the national government under Kibaki unconstitutionally banned all public gatherings and told police to intervene where demonstrations took place. This set the stage for further violence between police and opposition supporters (HRW, 2008: p. 63). Additionally, the government under Kibaki took weeks before it finally gave in to domestic and international pressure and started negotiations with the other parties (HRW, 2008: p. 59). These ineffective responses by the government lengthened the conflict.

The weakness of Kenya's institutions was an important factor in causing and aggravating the conflict. The institutional design of Kenya's government raised the stakes for the participating parties through the all-powerful presidency, widespread corruption and a winner-takes-all approach to the elections. This seems to support the greed hypothesis, since these factors contributed to the economic incentives for the conflict that were described earlier in this chapter. Other, non-economic factors also played a role though. The crisis was aggravated by the ineffective responses of the national government, the police, and the military. This lengthened the conflict, and even directly caused violence in some cases (HRW, 2008). The fourth and final condition for a civil conflict was thus also met in Kenya: the institutions were sufficiently weak to allow violent riots to have some success.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

The salience of the four conditions for civil conflict that came out of the greed hypothesis literature is not as clear in the Kenya case as was expected. The grievances that ethnic groups had were indeed a necessary condition for the mobilisation of ethnic groups. Without grievances surrounding land, inequality and injustice, tensions would not have run this high and no conflict would have followed. So far, the greed hypothesis works. However, unlike what the theory predicts, the political elite was not a unified group leading a centralised rebellion. Instead, localised violence led by tribal leaders took place. The national elite did little to stop the violence, but was in most cases not directly involved in it either. Furthermore, the motivations for entering the conflict were not exclusively economic. The desire to capture the state's resources played a role in heightening the stakes for the election and leading to the harsh 2007 election campaign and the rigging of these elections, but the violence itself was more directly motivated by the land grievances. Land is an important economic resource in Kenya and some local leaders may have profited from the violence through gaining control over the land, but the main motivation for the

violent mobs seemed to have been in the symbolic tribal value of the land. There were enough financial means to fund the conflict, although because economic circumstances were favourable for conflict and violence was on a local level relatively few resources were necessary. This funding was, again, mostly provided on a local level. Finally, the weakness of the government and its institutions provided further opportunities for violence and also allowed the demonstrations and riots to go unchecked. The ineffective responses by both the national government and local police forces only aggravated the conflict, eventually leading to the large-scale crisis that Kenya suffered from. This analysis suggests some weaknesses of the greed hypothesis, since its application to this specific case is at some points problematic. The next chapter will discuss these weaknesses and discussion points.



## **5 Strengths and weaknesses of the greed hypothesis**

As was seen in the previous chapters, the greed hypothesis literature can do a good deal of explaining on what happened during the 2007-08 Kenya crisis. From the greed literature, four conditions for violent ethnic conflict have been established. In the previous chapter, these four have been applied to the Kenya case, but this proved to be problematic. The analysis has shed some light on the Kenya case, explaining how a country that seemed to stable and peaceful could descend into a destructive conflict. But what does the appliance of the theory to the Kenya case say about the greed hypothesis itself? Should the greed hypothesis be adjusted, changed or even rejected in light of the evidence from Kenya's 2007-08 crisis, or does this just confirm what the greed hypothesis already knew?

### **5.1 The nature of ethnicity**

One of the most relevant and substantive critiques of the greed hypothesis could come from the side of the more primordialist arguments. As the Kenya case shows, there may be something more to ethnicity than the greed hypothesis claims. Caselli and Coleman, for instance, focused on the use of ethnicity as a mechanism for mobilising groups and enforcing coalition membership (2006). However, it seems to be more important than that. In Kenya, ethnicity plays a vital role in daily life, and even more so in politics. Politics were divided by ethnicity for generations, and elections are seen as a contest between different ethnic alliances consisting of the main ethnic groups (Mueller, 2011: p. 104-105). Furthermore, important grievances such as displacement from tribal lands and inequality played out at an ethnic level. This importance of ethnicity goes beyond what could be expected from it serving as a mobilising mechanism or “a technology for group membership and exclusion” (Caselli & Coleman, 2006: p. 30). The existing ethnic grievances were indeed used by political elites, exploited for political or economic gain, but the root cause of the conflict should perhaps not only be ascribed to the greed of these politicians, as the greed hypothesis seems to suggest. The underlying ethnic grievances were always present, and it is highly likely that if the election had ended differently the violence would still have broken out at a different point. If this is true, then the economic circumstances were just an immediate rather than a structural cause of the conflict, while the ethnic grievances play a far more important role. It seems Clifford Geertz had an important point when he said, as quoted earlier in this text, that “congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves” (Geertz, 1963: p. 109).

Specifically, land is a highly sensitive issue in this regard. Land serves as an economic resource, and the desire to capture and control it as has been seen in the Kenya case may be a motive in line with the greed hypothesis, but land also has highly symbolic tribal value. Control over land is important for ethnic groups far beyond that land's economic value. This shows that perhaps the greed hypothesis and its focus on economic variables may fall short in explaining the motives behind violence. An important question is what the cause is and what the effect. Are the grievances in themselves harmless and is it the economic interests that cause and explain conflict, as the greed hypothesis would claim? Or are those economic interests just a short-term cause for the conflict, with the ethnic grievances providing the structural reasons? Given the evidence provided in the previous chapters, the latter option seems more likely. However, it is very hard to accurately find and describe what motivates people when entering a conflict. The truth may well be in the middle, with both ethnic and economic arguments playing a role. The point here is that the greed hypothesis is an excellent tool for short-term explanations for conflicts such as the one in Kenya, but it should not ignore the more structural causes that are provided by ethnic grievances.

## **5.2 The goals of elite groups**

One of the central themes of the greed hypothesis is that grievances alone do not cause a conflict (Collier, 2006). Things like injustice, inequality and poverty just act as an excuse for the conflict, a story on why the group fights to sell to the world – and themselves. For grievances to turn into conflict, they need to be activated by an elite that has an economic interest in the conflict and used to mobilise the population (Caselli & Coleman, 2006). In Kenya's case, this is for the some part confirmed. The grievances related to land displacement, domination of one ethnic group, and poverty were present for years, yet did not lead to a large-scale conflict. Ahead of the 2007 elections, nothing changed in the grievances themselves: the only thing that did change is that the political elites mobilised the ethnic groups on the basis of those grievances. This happened during the election campaign, in which both sides aimed to mobilise their ethnic group as best as they could (Mueller, 2011: p. 104-105). The elite, in this case formed by the two political parties PNU and ODM, wanted control over the state and its resources, which is a goal that fits the greed hypothesis (see Grossman, 1999). Because Kenyan politics are perceived as a contest where the winner takes control over the whole state, there was much to gain in the election and perhaps even more to lose (Mueller, 2011; Smith, 2009). Thus, the greed theory seems to give a logical explanation for why the election campaign was this hard. However, there is a crucial difference between this line of thinking and the greed literature: mobilising grievances to win an election is completely different from using them to enter a conflict.

There are some things in the Kenya case that do not seem to stroke with the greed hypothesis. Although they were the ones who initially mobilised their ethnic groups, there is no evidence that either Odinga or Kibaki were directly involved in the actual conflict (HRW, 2008). Neither candidate was ever on record promoting the conflict or calling for violent action. And despite some finger-pointing between the two camps, the two candidates are not implicated in the ICC proceedings on the human rights violations after the elections. This does not seem to support the greed hypothesis: the presidential candidates were the ones who have most to win from the election, so logically they should be the ones to start the conflict to gain by illegal means what they could not win through an election. Yet this did not happen. The two candidates are far from innocent since their aggressive electoral campaign was what mobilised the ethnic tensions, but they did not lead their constituents into violence.

The greed hypothesis normally focuses on a centralised group of rebels fighting a centralised government (Collier, 2006). In this situation, the person who activates ethnic grievances is the same as the one leading the group into conflict. But in Kenya's crisis this was not the case. As the Kenya case has shown though, there were plenty of leaders lower on the party hierarchy with significant economic interests in the conflict. These lower-level party officials as well as local ethnic leaders – village elders, for instance – more loosely affiliated with the political parties led their groups into violence (Waki Report, 2009). The role of the presidential candidates and others higher up the party hierarchies is complicated, with some evidence tying some of them directly to the violence (HRW, 2008). Even some very prominent politicians are implicated in these violent responses after the election: then Member of Parliament and former minister and current vice-president William Ruto and later presidential candidate and eventual winner of the 2013 elections Uhuru Kenyatta are both charged at the ICC court for crimes against humanity during the crisis, amongst other prominent politicians. Yet, the violence was mostly organised and funded on a local level, with relatively little involvement of national elites. These village elders and low-level party officials had significant economic interests in the conflict. The greed hypothesis' way of thinking can thus be used to explain this for some part, even if the literature itself does not talk about local leadership in conflicts.

### **5.3 Is the greed hypothesis over-simplified?**

The greed hypothesis literature may be some of the most influential literature on civil conflicts, it is also well over a decade old. In that decade, much has changed. Modern media and an African economic boom are just two of the most important changes. It may be questionable whether the greed hypothesis has kept up with that. Collier's greed hypothesis (2000) seems to be

focused towards states that are almost lawless: states where a military coup is instantly accepted by all those involved. In these states, according to the greed hypothesis the (weak) government would be opposed by an organised and centralised group of rebels. These rebels would attempt to capture control of the state, or just of the resources that are important to them (Collier, 2006). This is almost a caricature of what is the case in most African countries now. Kenya is a prime example of how this old way of looking at Africa's conflicts may be outdated and over-simplified. Kenya has been a democracy for a number of years and it has become an open country that benefits from trade and foreign investment. In such a country, performing a military coup would hurt the country's economy significantly. More importantly, a coup would be far harder to execute. After years of democracy, it is questionable whether the civilians and the military would just accept a coup. And as an important country in African trade and politics, international pressure would also be against anyone attempting to organise a coup or rebel movement. In other words, the risk of organising a centralised rebel army would be far bigger than what would be acceptable if the leaders follow rational economic thought.

In addition to the raised cost for an organised rebellion, the possibilities of organising violence are far more diffuse than they would be in the simplified country the greed hypothesis assumes. Rather than just one elite group having the power to organise violence, the Kenya case shows that many local leaders and violent gangs have this capacity as well. The diffusion of violence was, in fact, one of the reasons local actors in Kenya could cause such widespread chaos (Mueller, 2011). All this reflects a different kind of ethnic conflict from what the greed hypothesis proposes: localised violence that is not focused against the government or police but directly against the other ethnic groups. The local leaders were not only motivated by the potential gains if their political party would control the government, but also by the possibility of re-gaining their lands when the other ethnic groups had been thrown out of those. Whether this kind of conflict is really different from older conflicts is debatable and beyond the scope of this thesis.

The greed hypothesis is still very useful for explaining violent conflict. However, Mac Ginty and Williams claim that the theory not only attempts to explain, but also predict conflict (2009: p. 30). The diffused and localised violence that is evident in the Kenya case instead of large-scale rebel movements makes it far harder to predict where and when conflict is going to occur. The complicated and globalised economic situation only adds further problems to this. All this does not mean the greed hypothesis is not useful: it provides excellent explanations of how and why conflicts occurred by focusing on economic factors in combination with other grievances. The four conditions for violent conflict that came forward out of this thesis and were tested on the Kenya case show that it is possible to at least partly explain conflicts using greed

literature. The complicated nature of all of the ethnic grievances, the elite's interests, the economic situation and the government's weakness make clear how hard it would be to predict an ethnic conflict in advance, rather than provide a post-hoc explanation.

## 6 Conclusion and recommendations

In the introduction to this thesis, one research question was posed with four different sub-questions. The main question was: *How can the greed hypothesis be used to explain the explosion of violence in Kenya after the 2007 general elections?* The four sub-questions to this main question were: what does the existing scientific literature say about the relation between economic variables and ethnic conflict? Is it possible to establish some conditions, based on the literature, that need to be met for a civil conflict to arise? Were these conditions based on the greed literature present in Kenya ahead of its crisis? And finally, how does the analysis of Kenya's crisis reflect on the greed hypothesis literature? Using a combination of existing academic literature and an in-depth case-study of Kenya's 2007-08 crisis, this thesis has provided answers to these questions.

In order to answer the first two questions, a literature review on the relations between ethnic fragmentation, conflict, and various economic variables was done in chapter 2. Books and articles from many theoretical perspectives were studied, but the focus of this review was on the greed hypothesis by Paul Collier (2000). This greed hypothesis was not just taken for granted, but criticised, weighted and at some points adjusted using work by different scholars. Using this literature, four conditions for ethnic conflict were established. These were hypothesised to be requirements for any kind of ethnic conflict to arise in a country. The four conditions were: (1) the presence of perceived grievances on the basis of which ethnic groups can be mobilised; (2) a political elite with the capability of mobilising the ethnic group(s) that has an economic interest in promoting the conflict; (3) economic resources that can be captured for use by the rebel groups to finance their struggle; and (4) a government that is weak enough for the rebellion to be potentially successful. These conditions were then ready to be tested in the case-study.

In chapter 3, the ethnic and political situation in Kenya was reviewed, before the election campaign and the subsequent violence that characterised the 2007-08 post-election crisis was studied in depth. This information was then in chapter 4 used to answer the third of the four sub-questions this thesis asked in the introduction: were the four conditions found in the literature review present in the case of Kenya? In this review, the advantages and disadvantages of these four conditions – and by extension, the greed hypothesis – were shown. Each aspect had a different role leading up to the conflict, but all were necessarily present to cause and aggravate it. The first condition, the presence of ethnic grievances, is required because without these grievances the population will have no motivation to enter a conflict. In Kenya's case, these

grievances were formed by various land-related disputes, as well as by the perceived domination of economy and government by the Kikuyu tribe of president Kibaki. Still, the presented grievances could not ignite into a conflict without the second condition: a political elite to mobilise the population on the basis of the grievances. The political elite must have certain economic interests to pursue in the conflict, otherwise it would have no motive to enter it. In Kenya's case, the grievances were initially activated by the two presidential candidates Kibaki and Odinga, but mobilised into violence by various local leaders. Both the presidential candidates and the local leaders were at least for some part motivated by economic gain, as predicted by the greed hypothesis. However, other factors such as ethnicity and the land grievances also played major roles in causing the conflict. Funding of the conflict, the third condition, was also provided through local means. Because of the local nature of the violence, no major sources of funding from valuable natural resources or other means were required. The fourth and final condition was also met: the Kenyan government was both weak and ineffective in its response to the violence, which contributed to both causing and aggravating the conflict. Thus, the Kenya case showed the value of the four conditions.

When reflecting on the literature using the new insights from the case study for the final sub-question, this thesis asked some questions to whether the economic variables proposed by the greed hypothesis were really the structural cause of the conflicts, or whether this structural cause was formed by the ethnic grievances. The conclusion was drawn that the greed hypothesis may be in need of an update, because its simplified rebels versus government nature does not apply to the current state of most African nations any more. Furthermore, the simplified nature of the greed hypothesis was discussed, and the thesis concluded that the greed hypothesis can be highly effective in explaining conflicts after they had happened, but perhaps less so in actually predicting them. Still, the greed hypothesis and the four conditions for conflict this thesis found were clearly useful and deserve further academic research.

For future research on this topic, it might be worthwhile looking further at the four conditions and whether their logic also applies to other cases. Perhaps they could even be tested in a large-N test taking many conflicts into account, although this will be complicated. The greed hypothesis would need to be updated for that, in order for it to apply to the localised violence that was seen in Kenya, because as it is the greed hypothesis focuses exclusively on centrally organised rebellions. What certainly deserves further attention are the questions on whether ethnic grievances are the actual structural cause behind the conflicts instead of the economic interests and elite mobilisation. Finally, it might be worth researching whether the greed hypothesis literature can be used to predict rather than just explain ethnic conflicts. This is a complicated

matter which is far beyond the scope of this paper though, which at least showed that the greed hypothesis' logic can be used to provide an short-term explanation for why a conflict occurs at a specific moments, even if it does have its weaknesses.



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