

## CIVIL WAR PREDICTION: LITERATURE REVIEW ON TERRITORIAL AND ETHNIC STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

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**Abstract:** Armed civil conflicts in foreign countries have significant consequences for states in the international system. The political, social and economic threats generated by them have in recent years become relevant in a global sense. In order to successfully deal with them, the international community desires to develop a reliable prediction and prevention model. The crucial part concerns the identification of the causal paths leading to conflict escalation but assembling these paths must be preceded by the evaluation of various possible causes as separate variables. It is also important to factor causal complexity into the model, therefore, to analyze not only single variables but also their interconnections. The article reviews two major areas of civil conflict causes – territorial and ethnic. It summarizes the main arguments and theories beyond the suggested proxy variables representing territorial and ethnic problems. By reviewing the existing research, this study aims to facilitate the selection of variables for prediction and prevention systems. The result is a literature review clarifying the relations among the causes of conflict that underlies their importance. All proposed territorial and ethnic causes have to be assessed in relation with complementary variables but also applied to a particular country which would benefit from the prediction and prevention model.

**Keywords:** civil war, conflict prediction, conflict prevention, ethnic conflict, territorial conflict

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**Rezumat:** Conflictele civile armate din țările străine au consecințe semnificative pentru statele din sistemul internațional. În perioada recentă, amenințările politice, sociale și economice generate de acestea au devenit relevante dintr-o perspectivă globală. Pentru a face față cu succes acestora, comunitatea internațională dorește să dezvolte un model viabil de predicție și prevenire. Partea crucială constă în identificarea cauzelor care duc la escaladarea conflictelor, dar înainte ca acestea să fie integrate într-un cadru operațional trebuie mai întâi să fie evaluate ca variabile separate. Complexitatea cauzelor este, de asemenea, important să fie inclusă în model, astfel încât nu sunt analizate doar variabilele unice, ci și întrepătrunderea acestora. Articolul se concentrează pe o lectură a două domenii majore ale cauzelor conflictelor civile - problemele teritoriale și etnice. Sunt rezumate principalele argumente și teorii dincolo de variabilele proxy sugerate, care sunt reprezentate de probleme teritoriale și etnice. Scopul principal este de a

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revizui cercetările existente în vederea realizării unei selecții optime a variabilelor relevante pentru dezvoltarea sistemelor de predicție și prevenire. Rezultatul este o analiză documentară care clarifică relațiile între cauzele conflictelor și în urmă căreia se identifică mai bine relevanța acestora. Toate cauzele teritoriale și etnice propuse de literatura de specialitate trebuie evaluate împreună cu alte variabile complementare, precum și în funcție de contexte statale specifice astfel încât, modelul de predicție și prevenire să vină în sprijinul statelor analizate.

**Cuvinte cheie:** conflict etnic, conflict teritorial, predicția conflictelor, prevenirea conflictelor, război civil

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## I. Introduction

**Armed** conflicts are not going to disappear from the international system, and, yet, any trends surrounding their development are currently still far from clear.<sup>1</sup> The outcomes of civil conflicts have direct or indirect effects on the security of states in the international community and present threats that are certainly not negligible. Thus, prediction, early warning and prevention are becoming more and more imperative for the international community, and over the past decades, several models have been proposed. These methods have been adopted mostly by the major actors who have more resources at their disposal – among small countries such as Czech Republic, whose resources are limited, their development has been limited. The goal of the project, which this article forms a part of, is to create a tailor-made system for the prediction, early warning and prevention of regional / armed conflicts that might pose a threat to Czech Republic’s internal security. Such a system needs to consider which threats are specifically relevant to Czechia and to identify in which countries the escalation of a conflict would create the most significant risks to the country. Without a general model for predicting a conflict, none of those specific, tailor-made steps are possible.

A predictive model that is able to detect emerging armed conflicts abroad with a measure of certainty is necessary in order for the Czech state to prepare itself for the possible threats that might arise from them. This is needed in order to either mitigate these threats or to make an effective contribution to prevention. Crucial to such models is the requirement to identify the conditions that lead to the escalation of internal conflicts. To this purpose, we need to avoid the false premise of causal homogeneity<sup>2</sup>– something that not all authors

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Watts et al., *Understanding Conflict Trends: A Review of the Social Science Literature on the Causes of Conflict* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.7249/rr1063.1>.

<sup>2</sup> Halvard Buhaug, Lars Erik Cederman, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Square Pegs in Round Holes: Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War”, *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2014): 418. Causal homogeneity refers to “the existence of only one path from a predictor or

have been able to do. We need to cover various sets of causes and accept that causes and conditions may interact with one another. We must be able to monitor conditions in those countries in Czechia's broader neighbourhood (including Europe, Middle East, North Africa, and post-communist area) in which there is a risk of conflict, so that the observed data can be used for the production of the model as well as for the prediction.

One of the first steps in building a successful model is to compile a detailed literature review; this will help us identify what conditions are most often considered by various authors, and, more importantly, will also permit us to uncover the underlying connections between these conditions. The literature review is centred around theories and concepts applicable to the conflicts with impact on Czech internal security and which address the main purpose of the model. This article, therefore, focuses on two main sets of conditions that lead to conflict escalation – territorial and ethnic – as both are prevalent in conflicts from the Balkans to the Middle East, from North Africa to Central Asia. The article examines how authors classify these conditions as representing constituent elements of conflicts, and which of them are most often indicated as causes. In conclusion, based on this literature review, a set of specific conditions will be selected for the predictive model that is being developed for the Czech Republic.

## **II. Conditions leading to conflict escalation**

Historically, the development of conflict studies has been dynamic, as has been the phenomenon of conflict itself; over the past century, the issue and the discipline have transformed substantially. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have witnessed how each of the world wars claimed tens of millions of casualties. In the 1950s, conflicts moved from the destroyed European continent to other parts of the world as proxy wars that brought death to millions. Since the end of the Cold War, disputes that have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives have been ongoing.<sup>3</sup> If the scope of conflicts is decreasing, not the same thing can be said about their increasing numbers; this increase is linked with the transformation of their character. From the end of World War II to the beginning of the new millennium, there were 25 international wars in which at least one state recorded more than a thousand casualties. During that

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explanatory variable to an effect or outcome. This is usually a working assumption in studies of causation. While causal heterogeneity can be demonstrated empirically, causal homogeneity is more often assumed” (W. Paul Vogt and R. Burke Johnson, *Dictionary of Statistics & Methodology. A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences (Fourth Edition)* (Los Angeles, London: SAGE Publications, 2011), 46).

<sup>3</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide (Reprint edition)* (London: Penguin, 2012), 13.

same period, there were approximately 127 civil wars, each with more than 1,000 fatalities, affecting 73 states.<sup>4</sup>

Developmental trends of armed conflicts are difficult to predict.<sup>5</sup> Their immediate consequences go beyond the casualties to encompass destroyed infrastructure, waves of migration and the disruption of political, social, and economic institutions.<sup>6</sup> Given how the international system has evolved to become interdependent at various levels, these consequences are becoming a global problem. International trade is an example: according to an analysis of 134 countries from 1979 to 2000, trade has suffered more during domestic conflicts than international conflicts. Domestic conflicts negatively impact the assets required for trade precisely because the disruption of infrastructure is more geographically concentrated. But trade tends to be disrupted even if the conflict occurs in a neighbouring country.<sup>7</sup> Since conflicts affect a large number of states and actors at various levels, the international community must know how to respond.

The areas of conflict and the countries where conflict occurs or may occur have several specific characteristics. Since conflicts can become global in scope, we need to train our lenses – metaphorically speaking – on the world as a whole. Of the 36 domestic conflicts that occurred in 2011, nine became internationalised.<sup>8</sup> Scholars aim to identify the factors and the conditions involved in the outbreak of conflicts, so that they might be able to predict where they are most likely to escalate. Such an endeavour is not designed only to prevent conflict, but should a conflict break out, the international community should be able to mount a quick and effective response.

Researchers largely agree on the main conditions leading to escalation. Many authors have identified territorial disputes to be the main cause.<sup>9</sup> The United Nations<sup>10</sup> and the analysts of RAND Corporation<sup>11</sup> add several other

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<sup>4</sup> In sum, 3.33 million lives were lost in international conflicts and 16.2 million in domestic conflicts. James D Fearon and David D Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (2003): 75.

<sup>5</sup> Watts et al., *Understanding Conflict Trends*, 71.

<sup>6</sup> Scott Gates et al., “The Consequences of Internal Armed Conflict for Development”, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Valentina Marano, Alvaro Cuervo-Cazurra, and Chuck C. Y. Kwok, “The Impact of Conflict Types and Location on Trade”, *The International Trade Journal* 27, no. 3 (2013): 2.

<sup>8</sup> Lotta Themnér and Peter Wallensteen, “Armed Conflicts, 1946-2012”, *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 4 (2013): 565.

<sup>9</sup> Kalevi J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648–1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1991); Gary Goertz and Paul F Diehl, “Review Reviewed Work(s): Territorial Changes and International Conflict”, *Tuomas Forsberg Source: Journal of Peace Research* 29, no. 4 (1992); John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle* (Tennessee: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Barbara F. Walter, “Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict,” *International Studies Review* 5, no. 4 (2003).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Practical Guide Early Warning and Response Systems Design for Social Conflicts* (UNDP, 2016), [https://www.oas.org/es/sap/pubs/GuiaAlerta\\_e.pdf](https://www.oas.org/es/sap/pubs/GuiaAlerta_e.pdf)

factors, many of which have one thing in common: ethnic and social relations. Disputes over territory and ethnic wars are the most frequent types of conflict statistically, and hence receive much attention in the literature. They are especially relevant for the Czech Republic and all members of the European Union (EU) since ethnical and territorial conflicts are still present in EU's neighbourhood.

### III. Views on the origin of territorial conflicts

The roots of territorial conflicts reach into prehistory; the desire for land is a recurring theme throughout history.<sup>12</sup> In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, up to 70% of domestic conflicts were about territorial issues.<sup>13</sup> To put things in perspective, over the past three centuries, territorial disputes accounted for 85% of wars between the main powers.<sup>14</sup> The 21<sup>st</sup> century brought many changes: specifically, the great impact of globalisation with its accelerated capital and trade flows and an increased mobility of populations, has transformed the perception of territoriality and borders, without removing either. The world continues to be shaped by factors that include the links between actors and territories, and the willingness of the former to fight for the latter.<sup>15</sup> In fact, armed conflicts over territory make up an increasing share of the global distribution of tensions.<sup>16</sup>

Although the territorial aspect of conflict has long been examined, in recent decades, the literature on the topic has become ever more extensive. Initially, researchers focused on wars between states, but currently, they are examining domestic conflicts as well. Many studies examine how territory and its characteristics influence an actor's decision to enter into a conflict.<sup>17</sup> The

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<sup>11</sup> Watts et al., *Understanding Conflict Trends*.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Diehl and Gary Goertz, *Territorial Changes and International Conflict (Studies in International Conflict) (1st Edition)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>13</sup> Walter, "Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict", 137

<sup>14</sup> Vasquez, *The War Puzzle*, 63.

<sup>15</sup> Miles Kahler and Barbara F. Walter, *Territoriality and Conflict in an Era of Globalization* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Monica Duffy Toft, "Issue Indivisibility and Time Horizons as Rationalist Explanations for War," *Security Studies* 15, no. 1 (2006): 39.

<sup>17</sup> Randolph M Siverson and Harvey Starr, "Opportunity, Willingness, and the Diffusion of War", *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 1 (1990): 47-67; Paul F. Diehl, "Geography and War: A Review and Assessment of the Empirical Literature", *International Interactions* 17, no. 1 (1991): 11-27; John A Vasquez, "Why Do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, or Territoriality," *Journal of Peace Research* 32, no. 3 (1995): 277-293; Harvey Starr and G. Dale Thomas, "The Nature of Borders and International Conflict: Revisiting Hypotheses on Territory," *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (2005): 123-139; Paul R. Hensel, "Territory: Theory and Evidence on Geography and Conflict", in *What Do We Know about War?*, ed. John Vasquez (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 57-84.

geographical proximity of the territory claimed by actors represents a frequent motive for engagement;<sup>18</sup> in domestic conflict, the distance from the capital or centre of government of the area claimed by a secessionist group is an important factor.<sup>19</sup> Just how important is the distance from the centre of government is highlighted by places such as Chechnya. Even a small group, not in the proximity of the capital and taking advantage of the difficult terrain, was capable to conduct an effective campaign against a strong political centre.<sup>20</sup> If a territory supports an important population concentration, this might serve as another facilitating factor for the insurgent group. A concentrated population is easier to mobilise, and it is more likely that they will lay claim to ‘their’ territory, often leading to violence.<sup>21</sup> Conflicts including rebel groups fuel the illicit arms trade. Escalations in regions close to Czech borders pose a problem for the internal security of the republic. Thus, when building a prediction model tailor-made for internal threats, claims on a territory made by rebel groups should also be covered.

Other researchers have tried to identify those situations where violence spills over from a disputed territory to other parts of the country. Some have argued that this tends to take place when the rebels are suffering serious losses during intense fighting. Attacks on civilians outside the disputed territory are intended to cause greater losses for the government.<sup>22</sup> According to Holtermann,<sup>23</sup> rebels will attack civilians when they want to distract the government’s attention away from the claimed territory. This tactic, however, has its limits, since it risks provoking a response from abroad; hence it is used most often when the government pursues an offensive strategy.

Yet the analysis of the location where the most intense fighting is most likely to occur is not that important when it comes to uncovering the causes

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<sup>18</sup> Siverson and Starr, “Opportunity, Willingness, and the Diffusion of War”; Harvey Starr and G. Dale Thomas, “The ‘Nature’ of Contiguous Borders: Ease of Interaction, Salience, and the Analysis of Crisis”, *International Interactions* 28, no. 3 (2002): 213–35; Starr and Thomas, “The Nature of Borders and International Conflict: Revisiting Hypotheses on Territory”; Paul D. Senese, “Territory, Contiguity, and International Conflict: Assessing a New Joint Explanation”, *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 4 (2005): 769–79.

<sup>19</sup> Halvard Buhaug and Scott Gates, “The Geography of Civil War”, *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 4 (2002): 417–33; Lars-Erik Cederman, Halvard Buhaug, and Jan Ketil Rød, “Ethno-Nationalist Dyads and Civil War A GIS-Based Analysis”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 4 (2009): 496–525.

<sup>20</sup> Cederman, Buhaug, and Rød, “Ethno-Nationalist Dyads”, 503.

<sup>21</sup> Nils B. Weidmann, Jan Ketil Rød, and Lars-Erik Cederman, “Representing Ethnic Groups in Space: A New Dataset”, *Journal of Peace Research* 47 no. 4 (2010): 491–99.

<sup>22</sup> Lisa Hultman, “Battle Losses and Rebel Violence: Raising the Costs for Fighting”, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 2 (April 6, 2007): 205–22; Lisa Hultman, “Military Offensives in Afghanistan: A Double-Edged Sword”, *International Area Studies Review* 15, no. 3 (September 28, 2012): 230–48.

<sup>23</sup> Helge Holtermann, “Diversionary Rebel Violence in Territorial Civil War”, *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (June 1, 2019): 215–30.

leading to the conflict. It is more important to look at the circumstances under which a particular territory becomes subject to dispute.<sup>24</sup> The relationship between conflict and the determination of national borders or the national borders already established is considered among the most important.<sup>25</sup> Vasquez<sup>26</sup> argues that the most peaceful regions are those in which all the major states have reached agreements on boundaries with their neighbours. North America in contrast to Europe is stated as an example from past. In the years after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the emergence of many new states led to borders disputes, and several of them persist in latent form to this day. This further underlines the importance of territorial requirements as a condition contributing to the outbreak of conflicts.

Authors have often assumed that a territory for which actors are willing to fight has to mean something significant for them. Three main justifications for the importance of a territory can be found in the literature: it can be seen as an essential source of natural resources,<sup>27</sup> important for strategic or security reasons<sup>28</sup> or as having symbolic value.<sup>29</sup> As for the first two reasons, the potential loss of a territory that would disrupt the economy or threaten security provides a more powerful justification for states to use force than others<sup>30</sup>. If a symbolic importance is given to a territory, it becomes exceptionally valuable to the state<sup>31</sup> and any disputes over such a territory are likely to escalate to violence, as it is difficult to resolve them by other means.<sup>32</sup> The theory promoted by

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<sup>24</sup> Goertz and Diehl, “Review Reviewed Work(s): Territorial Changes and International Conflict”, 465.

<sup>25</sup> Starr and Thomas, “The Nature of Borders and International Conflict”.

<sup>26</sup> Vasquez, “Why Do Neighbors Fight?”

<sup>27</sup> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648–1989*; John Coakley, *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> Evan Luard, *War in International Society, 1st ed.* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1986); Paul K. Huth, *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Newman, “Real Spaces, Symbolic Spaces: Interrelated Notions of Territory in the Arab-Israeli Conflict”, in *A Road Map to War: Territorial Dimensions of International Conflict, 1st ed.*, ed. Paul F. Diehl (London, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1999), 3-36.

<sup>30</sup> Paul R Hensel, “Contentious Issues and World Politics: The Management of Territorial Claims in the Americas, 1816-1992”, *International Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (2001): 81-109; Jason Sorens, “Mineral Production, Territory, and Ethnic Rebellion: The Role of Rebel Constituencies,” *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 5 (2011): 571–85.

<sup>31</sup> Goertz and Diehl, “Review Reviewed Work(s): Territorial Changes and International Conflict”; Diehl and Goertz, *Territorial Changes and International Conflict (Studies in International Conflict)*; Tuomas Forsberg, “Explaining Territorial Disputes: From Power Politics to Normative Reasons,” *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 4 (1996).

<sup>32</sup> Toft, “Issue Indivisibility and Time Horizons”; Ron E Hassner, “Security Studies ‘To Halve and to Hold’: Conflicts over Sacred Space and the Problem of Indivisibility,” *Security Studies* 12, no. 4 (2010): 1-33.

Hassner<sup>33</sup> draws evidence from a deeply entrenched conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

A dispute over a valuable territory might lead both to an international or a domestic conflict. Monica Duffy Toft<sup>34</sup> and Barbara Walter<sup>35</sup> have examined civil conflicts in great depth. They argue that wars have often broken out over territories of little importance, and, contrariwise, states have sometimes ceded economically important areas. In determining whether a dispute will or will not arise over a territory, Walter<sup>36</sup> identifies the response of the national government to territorial demands as the crucial factor and not its value as one might assume. She also links the government response with the number and the activities of separatist groups in the country and examines in greater detail, the situations where a larger number of such groups are spurring the conflict.<sup>37</sup> She further contends that there is a greater risk of conflict breaking out if the government needs to signal to other groups making territorial claims that they will be costly to realise, thus deterring other potential challengers. The presented rational can be found once again in Chechnya. Boris Yeltsin clearly articulated that the “willingness to resort to violence to prevent secession extended to any and every secession-minded political unit”<sup>38</sup> so as to set a precedent. Following Walter’s theory, the high risk of escalation should have been expected and indeed, was confirmed by the Russian reaction to Chechen separatism which, consequently, led to bloody battles.<sup>39</sup> Similar cases in countries found on Czechia’s broader neighbourhood are also potentially perilous; if the government actions towards insurgent groups can be perceived as controversial by other international actors, they may be accompanied by an increase in hybrid threats reflected in disinformation campaigns.

These theories are further expanded by Senese,<sup>40</sup> who notes that nation-states with well defined territories are more willing to use military force. Bormann and Savun<sup>41</sup> point out that under certain circumstances, concessions

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<sup>33</sup> Hassner, “Security Studies ‘To Halve and to Hold’: Conflicts over Sacred Space”.

<sup>34</sup> Monica Duffy Toft, “Indivisible Territory, Geographic Concentration, and Ethnic War,” *Security Studies* 12, no. 2 (2002): 82–119; Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence: Identity, Interests, and the Indivisibility of Territory* (Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Walter, “Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict”; Barbara F. Walter, “Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others,” *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 2 (2006): 313-30; Barbara F. Walter, *Reputation and Civil War: Why Separatist Conflicts Are So Violent (1st Edition)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Walter, “Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict.”

<sup>37</sup> Barbara F. Walter, “Explaining the Number of Rebel Groups in Civil Wars,” *International Interactions* 45, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 1-27.

<sup>38</sup> Toft, “Issue Indivisibility and Time Horizons”, 47.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-49.

<sup>40</sup> Senese, “Territory, Contiguity, and International Conflict”.

<sup>41</sup> Nils-Christian Bormann and Burcu Savun, “Reputation, Concessions, and Territorial Civil War,” *Journal of Peace Research* 55, no. 5 (September 30, 2018): 671-86.



(not just territorial but also power-sharing concessions) granted following violent clashes may trigger further conflict.

Empirical studies have shown that disputes over territory have a greater tendency to escalate than non-territorial disputes.<sup>42</sup> However, the authors do not examine the territoriality of disputes alone but are interested in how the territory interacts with other conditions. Vasquez<sup>43</sup> notes that the presence of a territorial dispute increases the likelihood of other factors being present: such as an increase in enmity among the concerning parties or an arms race leading to the conflict escalation. Siverson and Starr<sup>44</sup> sought to define the opportunities for escalation not just from the territorial dimension but also from the viewpoint of political decision-making. To this end, their explanation combines geographical and political variables. Bremer<sup>45</sup> and Starr and Thomas<sup>46</sup> are among those who have broadened the debate about borders as a source of conflict by noting the measure of interaction among actors.

Concepts and theories explaining the types of conflicts which may be relevant for the Czech Republic are commonly drawn from the existence of territorial claims. Whether it is the claim made by another country or by an insurgent group, its presence contributes to conflict escalation. The role of territorial claims in escalation mechanisms should be examined for the purpose of building a successful model. However, the territory is not the sole cause and must be considered in its interactions with the ethnic conditions.

#### **IV. Views on the origin of ethnic conflicts**

Ethnicity is a particularly important condition that interacts with territorial issues. Since the 1990s, about half of all civil wars have been the result of an ethnic group's endeavour to obtain autonomy or their own state.<sup>47</sup> The end of the Cold War opened broader opportunities to change the existing borders, which ceased to be fixed by the strategic interests of the superpowers.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> John A. Vasquez, "Distinguishing Rivals That Go to War from Those That Do Not: A Quantitative Comparative Case Study of the Two Paths To", *International Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4, (1996): 531-58; Paul R. Hensel, "Theory and Evidence on Geography and Conflict," in *What Do We Know about War? (Second edition)*, ed. John A. Vasquez (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000): 57-84; John Vasquez and Christopher S. Leskiw, "The Origins and War Proneness of Interstate Rivalries," *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (June 2001): 295-316.

<sup>43</sup> John A. Vasquez, "The Probability of War," *International Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2004): 1-27.

<sup>44</sup> Siverson and Starr, "Opportunity, Willingness, and the Diffusion of War."

<sup>45</sup> Stuart A. Bremer, "Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816-1965," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36, no. 2 (1992): 309-41

<sup>46</sup> Starr and Thomas, "The Nature of Borders and International Conflict".

<sup>47</sup> Toft, "Issue Indivisibility and Time Horizons", 42.

<sup>48</sup> John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "The Political Regulation of National and Ethnic Conflict," *Parliamentary Affairs* 47, no. 1 (January 1994): 100.

Secession, as a result of a combination of territorial disputes and ethnic diversity, has come into scholarly focus since the 1990s.<sup>49</sup> McGarry and O’Leary<sup>50</sup> noted that secession tends to be a response to ethnic discrimination or an effort to preserve some culture or identity from vanishing.

After the end of the Cold War the prevailing opinion was that the civil wars ongoing at the time were primarily a result of ethnic and religious antagonisms, but the consensus was that ethnicity or identity in themselves do not cause these conflicts.<sup>51</sup> However, both of them are crucial in mobilising the population<sup>52</sup> and are often sources of grievance leading many authors to consider them the main cause of an emergent conflict.<sup>53</sup>

In their analyses of conditions, authors have increasingly noted the major differences that exist between the wars that have broken out in connection with identity and those that were not connected with identity disputes.<sup>54</sup> Elaine Denny and Barbara Walter<sup>55</sup> ask why ethnic groups are more susceptible to conflict than other groups. Drawing on works by other authors, they show that various factors facilitating conflict tend to cumulate in ethnic groups. Since such groups usually live far away from the capital and tend to be territorially concentrated, they can benefit from circumstances favouring the creation of their own organisational structures, or even their own state.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Stephen M Saideman, “Is Pandora’s box half-empty or half-full? The Limited Virulence of Secessionism and the Domestic Sources of Integration,” *UC San Diego Policy Papers* 18 (1995), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/060917hd>; Stephen M Saideman, “Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability versus Ethnic Ties,” *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997): 721-53.

<sup>50</sup> McGarry and O’Leary, “The Political Regulation of National and Ethnic Conflict.”

<sup>51</sup> Elaine K Denny and Barbara F Walter, “Ethnicity and Civil War,” *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014) : 199-212; Stephen Watts et al., *Understanding Conflict Trends: A Review of the Social Science Literature on the Causes of Conflict*.

<sup>52</sup> Rui J.P. Jr. de Figueiredo and Barry R. Weingast, “The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict,” in *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention*, ed. Barbara F Walter and Jack Snyder (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1999), 261–302; Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War”; Shiping Tang, “The Onset of Ethnic War: A General Theory Corresponding Author,” *Sociological Theory* 33, no. 3 (2015): 256–79.

<sup>53</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Ted Robert Gurr and Will H Moore, “Ethnopolitical Rebellion: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the 1980s with Risk Assessments for the 1990s,” *American Journal of Political Science* 41, no. 4 (1997): 1079–103; Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000); Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min, “Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis,” *World Politics* 62, no. 1 (2010): 87–119.

<sup>54</sup> Roy Licklider, “The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945–1993,” *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 681–90; Nicholas Sambanis, “Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?: A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1),” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 3 (2001): 259–82.

<sup>55</sup> Denny and Walter, “Ethnicity and Civil War”.

<sup>56</sup> Julian Wucherpfennig et al., “Politically Relevant Ethnic Groups across Space and Time: Introducing the GeoEPR Dataset,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28, no. 5 (2011): 423–37.

Geographical closeness is also a cause for a group to develop common customs and use a common language,<sup>57,58</sup> and this may gradually contribute to the emergence of ethnic nationalism.<sup>59</sup> From this follows a division of the society along ethnic lines, sometimes leading to efforts at self-determination or of seeking various independence-related aspects.<sup>60</sup> Secessionist claims are not rare in the countries found in the Czech broader neighbourhood and can be a significant indicator for the model. Considering the importance of territorial disputes, irredentist claims should be included in the model as well.

Another factor that may be behind the division of society along ethnic lines has to do with the limited access to power. If the political elite are members of one ethnic group, they tend to favour this group at the expense of others and ethnic diversity becomes a systemic condition in the exacerbation of grievances.<sup>61</sup> One of the most complex examples of this phenomenon is the case of Ethiopia. Analysis of its multiple separatist groups fighting in six civil wars revealed that most rebel groups mirrored the nation's ethnic cleavages and that their fight was motivated by political discrimination.<sup>62</sup> The Ethiopian case is not one which has a direct impact on the Czech Republic. However, the thorny issue of political discrimination rooted in ethnic relations can be a relevant pattern that is also found in regions such as the Balkans, Middle East and Central Asia. Including the existence of marginalized ethnic groups<sup>63</sup> into the research as a relevant condition may improve the model significantly.

Whether such grievances are mitigated or aggravated largely depends on the political system and its mechanisms, as well as on other political variables. This issue has been considered by various authors, for instance: Marta Reynal-

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<sup>57</sup> For instance, Marta Reynal-Querol (Marta Reynal-Querol, “Ethnicity, Political Systems, and Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 1 (2002): 29-54) examines linguistic differences as a potential source of conflict. She argues that these differences do not constitute a fundamental dividing line, but in combination with other factors may play a role. Bormann, Cederman and Vogt (Nils-Christian Bormann, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Manuel Vogt, “Language, Religion, and Ethnic Civil War,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 4 (2017): 744–71) examine the pathways from linguistic differences to ethnic conflict through the theoretical frameworks of grievance, rebel mobilisation and government response to rebel demands. Their conclusions indicate that actors divided by language are more likely to create civil conflict in a country than those divided by religion.

<sup>58</sup> Denny and Walter, “Ethnicity and Civil War.”

<sup>59</sup> Klaus Schlichte (Klaus Schlichte, “Is Ethnicity a Cause of War?”, *Peace Review* 6, no. 1 (1994) 59–65), providing an analysis of three specific counterexamples of conflict, is among those who oppose the argument that cultural and ethnic differences cause social conflict.

<sup>60</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000).

<sup>61</sup> Cederman, Wimmer, and Min, “Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis”.

<sup>62</sup> Walter, “Explaining the Number of Rebel Groups in Civil Wars”, 23.

<sup>63</sup> Ethnic groups advocating their rights on an ethnic basis which are discriminated and have no access to central power.

Querol;<sup>64</sup> Fearon and Laitin (in the form of political rapacity);<sup>65</sup> or by Denny and Walter (who provide a contrasting point of view, in the form of political exclusion).<sup>66</sup> Moreover, political variables may play an important role in connection with ethnicity if they influence migration patterns. This can have two consequences. If members of an ethnic group are forced to migrate within a country, they may settle in a territory where another ethnic group is already established which, in turn, may create what has been termed the ‘sons of the soil conflict’, pitting two groups against each other. The concept had been developed with regard to South Asia and conflicts in Bangladesh, Burma, Northeastern India, and Indonesia.<sup>67</sup> Fearon and Laitin<sup>68</sup> used the Tamil civil war in Sri Lanka as an case-study. Boone<sup>69</sup> evaluated the suitability of Fearon and Laitin’s model for Africa. However, the model did not work for African cases or for other settled agrarian societies in the modern world. This model is not applicable to the conflicts which may be relevant to our present analysis therefore conditions derived from the ‘sons of the soil conflict’ concept are not to be further examined.

The other option is that the migrating ethnic group – which in extreme circumstances may have been forced to leave due to instances of war or ethnic cleansing – settles in areas where this ethnicity is already preponderant.<sup>70</sup> This further exacerbates the division of the country along ethnic lines, fuelling grievances as witnessed in Iraq, Congo, Sudan, Pakistan or Rwanda. Aside from the ethnic grievances which are linked with perceptions of identity and other political grievances easier to observe, many authors also highlight the economic grievances as another conflict-enabling factor. Rather than social variables, Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler<sup>71</sup> place economic variables at the centre of their analysis, since, they believe, these can better describe why conflict break out. An ethnic group may evaluate the economic factors relative to a grievance caused by income inequality or low living standards;<sup>72</sup> or in relation to the state, by focusing on poverty or slow growth, particularly when affecting the disadvantaged ethnic group.<sup>73,74</sup> Income inequality and wealth inequality should

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<sup>64</sup> Reynal-Querol, “Ethnicity, Political Systems, and Civil Wars”.

<sup>65</sup> Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War”.

<sup>66</sup> Denny and Walter, “Ethnicity and Civil War”.

<sup>67</sup> Cederman, Buhaug, and Rød, “Ethno-Nationalist Dyads and Civil War”, 504.

<sup>68</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War,” *World Development* 39, no. 2 (February 2011): 199–211.

<sup>69</sup> Catherine Boone, “Sons of the Soil Conflict in Africa: Institutional Determinants of Ethnic Conflict Over Land,” *World Development* 96 (August 1, 2017): 276–93.

<sup>70</sup> Denny and Walter, “Ethnicity and Civil War”.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, no. 4 (October 2004): 563–95.

<sup>72</sup> Gurr and Moore, “Ethnopolitical Rebellion: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the 1980s”.

<sup>73</sup> James C Murdoch and Todd Sandler, “Economic Growth, Civil Wars, and Spatial Spillovers,” 2002; Håvard Hegre and Nicholas Sambanis, “Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil

be included in the model to capture these economic grievances; their interaction with the political exclusion of ethnic groups can uncover interesting results.

More recently, analyses shifted from the state to the supranational level<sup>75</sup> and the concept of transborder ethnic kin (TEK) groups became significant in the debate about the role of ethnicity in the escalation of conflicts. TEK groups from different parts of the region or of the world often support or subsidise activities of ethnically related rebel groups. The underlying assumption is that the bigger the TEK group that supports rebels, the higher the conflict probability is. However, authors agree that the relationship between supranational ethnic-demographic dimension and the likelihood of conflict is not a linear one. In other words, it is not true that the greater a TEK group is in size, the more susceptible to conflict and violence the domestic group will be.

Van Houten (1998) argues that precisely the opposite holds true: large TEK groups, actually, have a pacifist influence over domestic groups. Van Evera<sup>76</sup> envisages a curvilinear effect and Cederman et al.<sup>77</sup> confirms this using empirical data. The increased likelihood of conflict grows in parallel with the size of the TEK group only up to a certain point, after which the supranational group tends to mitigate the conflict-prone tendencies. The main argument states that the large state-owning TEK groups, and these usually are state-owning

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War Onset,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 4 (2006): 508–35.; Lars-Erik Cederman, Luc Girardin, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Ethnonationalist Triads: Assessing the Influence of Kin Groups on Civil Wars,” *World Politics* 61, no. 3 (2009): 403–37.; Lars-Erik Wimmer, Andreas Cederman, and Brian Min, “Ethnic Politics and Armed Conflict: A Configurational Analysis of a New Global Data Set,” *American Sociological Review* 74, no. 2 (2009), 316–37.

<sup>74</sup> Grievance, an important concept in the discipline, has been accompanied by a discussion about how it should be measured or operationalised – primarily through means of individual structural inequality. Grievance tends to be expressed through proxy variables describing vertical inequality, e.g. the Gini or ELF index, or some other index of social fragmentation. The shortcomings of these models have been highlighted by Buhaug, Cederman and Gleditsch (Halvard Buhaug, Lars Erik Cederman, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Square Pegs in Round Holes: Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War,” *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (June, 2014): 418–31), who, instead, propose measuring horizontal inequality globally as well as inequality among groups. This has been followed up by Chiba and Gleditsch (Daina Chiba and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “The Shape of Things to Come? Expanding the Inequality and Grievance Model for Civil War Forecasts with Event Data,” *Journal of Peace Research* 54, no. 2 (March, 2017): 75–97), who broaden our understanding of horizontal inequality. Since the reasons for conflict escalation derived from horizontal inequality tend to capture the structural risk of conflict rather than an immediate risk, Chiba and Gleditsch seek a method that better reflects the dynamics of inequality and grievances. For that reason, they introduce ‘event data’ into their model. Despite the fact that their model does not produce consistent results, it has generated better predictions.

<sup>75</sup> Cederman, Girardin, and Gleditsch, “Ethnonationalist Triads: Assessing the Influence of Kin Groups on Civil Wars”; Lars-Erik Cederman et al., “Transborder Ethnic Kin and Civil War,” *International Organization* 67, no. 2 (2013): 389-410.

<sup>76</sup> Stephen van Evera, “Hypotheses on Nationalism and War”, *International Security* 18, no. 4 (1994): 5-39.

<sup>77</sup> Cederman et al., “Transborder Ethnic Kin and Civil War”.

groups, are less likely to risk and resort to potentially dangerous border-crossings (which is a plausible explanation when it comes to the relative peacefulness of the Russian diaspora). The opposite effect can be found in intermediate-size kin groups. Stateless groups, such as the Kurds outside of Iraq support rebel groups inside the country and increase the chances for conflict escalation.<sup>78</sup>

Not just TEK, but all factors related to territory or ethnicity either favourable or unfavourable when it comes to conflict escalation, pose complex issues for the analysis of causal mechanisms. Although authors do not eschew this complexity and seek to address it in their analyses, it has not yet been possible to find a combination of factors that capture the causes of conflict with sufficient precision and enough generality as to permit us to predict when an escalation is going to occur. Ethnic conditions and their interactions among themselves as well as the transversal conditions pertaining to other areas are very complex. For the model which seeks to predict the conflicts that might pose the most relevant threats to Czech internal security, ethnic power relations and income and wealth inequality also need to be included in addition to the previously mentioned territorial, irredentist and secessionist claims

## V. Conclusions

To date, the extensive work undertaken by researchers has largely focused on identifying the structural conditions which depict the situation of countries in which conflicts tend to break out. The long-term perspectives and the mechanisms creating the favourable circumstances leading to conflict are well explained. This does not cover the escalation aspect but describes the context in which it may occur. There are gaps on medium or short-term conditions and ‘events’, and while they have not been fully incorporated into the model – they are slowly being filled up: consider the study by Chiba and Gleditsch<sup>79</sup> cited above and the new EU method for identifying countries at risk.<sup>80</sup> Recent research responds to the need for a more dynamic modelling, which is becoming increasingly available thanks to the development of methods that use large amounts of data or directly embrace the big data approach.

However, every model needs support in terms of the underlying structural conditions which are able to provide a sufficient description of the causal mechanisms, and onto which other conditions or ‘events’ are layered in.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 407.

<sup>79</sup> Chiba and Gleditsch, “The Shape of Things to Come?”.

<sup>80</sup> European Commission, “Methodology for Identifying High-Risk Third Countries under Directive (EU) 2015/84”, (May 2020), [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/business\\_economy\\_euro/banking\\_and\\_finance/documents/200507-anti-money-laundering-terrorism-financing-action-plan-methodology\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/business_economy_euro/banking_and_finance/documents/200507-anti-money-laundering-terrorism-financing-action-plan-methodology_en.pdf).

In order to develop a system tailor-made for a country such as the Czech Republic – a small state with an open economy – we need to start with a model chiefly based on the structural conditions since it is easy to maintain and does not require the investment of massive resources. Once its results are combined with the results from other systems modelling at the EU level, its predictions and early warnings should be sufficient in addressing any potential threat that might arise where Czech security interests or otherwise are concerned.

In choosing the structural conditions for this tailor-made model, we need to consider the neighbourhood of the Czech Republic and the types of conflict that might have the greatest effects on the country. All proposed territorial and ethnic causes have to be assessed in relation to the conflicts happening in the Czech neighbourhood, therefore only a few of them will become part of the final prediction model. The first set of proposed conditions for the model is:

- ethnic power relations in countries in the broader neighbourhood, we are specifically interested in the presence of marginalised ethnic groups that seek to establish themselves on the basis of their ethnicity, are discriminated against and do not have access to the central government;
- irredentist or separatist claims of a country against its neighbours, or, contrariwise, a country being the target of such claims;
- territorial claims made by a country, or a country having territorial claims made against it.

None of the structural conditions selected can explain or predict on its own whether an armed conflict will escalate. Further research is needed to supplement the territorial and ethnic conditions with those that cover areas where we might find other causes of civil conflict: economic conditions, social conditions and other suchlike. The goal in constructing the model is to find causal combinations that enable conflict escalation; then look for these combinations among Czechia's broader neighbourhood; and, if found, issue an early warning that a potential conflict might be on the verge of breaking out.

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