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The 'Ambivalence of the Sacred' in Africa: The Impact of Religion on Peace and Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Given the widespread focus on socioeconomic factors, it comes as no surprise that religion is neglected in most theoretical explanations of African civil conflicts. While scholarly interest is increasing in light of the civil wars in Sudan, Nigeria, and northern Uganda, no systematic empirical analysis has been undertaken to date. Hence, this paper aims to provide a preliminary assessment of the role of religions in sub-Saharan civil conflicts. Quantitative and qualitative analysis based on a newly compiled database including 28 violent conflicts show that religion plays a role more frequently than is usually assumed and that the effects of religions are principally ambiguous. Religious actors and institutions have escalating effects in many cases, yet more often they become active for peace. Religious identities and ideas seem to have a particular impact on conflict. Even though religion seems secondary when compared to classical "risk factors," the findings demonstrate that religious factors have to be taken seriously when analyzing civil conflicts in Africa.

Keywords: Religion, Africa, ambivalence, civil war, violent conflict

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Zusammenfassung

Die „Ambivalenz des Heiligen" in Afrika:
Der Einfluss von Religion auf Gewaltkonflikte im subsaharischen Afrika

Der Fokus auf sozioökonomischen Faktoren lässt in den meisten Erklärungsansätzen afrikanischer Gewaltkonflikte keinen Raum für den Faktor Religion. Wenngleich das Interesse an seiner Wirkung angesichts der Bürgerkriege im Sudan, in Norduganda und Nigeria gestiegen ist, bleiben systematische Analysen bislang weitestgehend aus. Zur Schließung dieser Lücke versucht das vorliegende Working Paper beizutragen, indem es eine erste, vorläufige Einschätzung der Rolle von Religionen in Gewaltkonflikten im subsaharischen Afrika vornimmt. Quantitative und qualitative Analysen unter Nutzung einer neu erstellten Datenbasis, die bislang 28 Gewaltkonflikte in Afrika umfasst, zeigen, dass Religionen und religiöse Unterschiede in weitaus mehr Fällen eine bedeutende Rolle spielen als gemeinhin angenommen. Der Einfluss religiöser Faktoren ist grundsätzlich ambivalent: In vielen Konflikten tragen religiöse Akteure und Organisationen zur Eskalation der Auseinandersetzung bei; noch häufiger jedoch versuchen sie, sich für eine friedliche Lösung einzusetzen. Dabei scheinen sich vor allem religiöse Identitäten und Inhalte auf die Ausprägung verschiedener Konfliktvariablen auszuwirken. Wenngleich die Wirkung dieser religiösen Faktoren im Vergleich zu klassischen Risikofaktoren sekundär scheint, verdeutlichen die Befunde die Notwendigkeit, den Faktor Religion bei der Analyse afrikanischer Bürgerkriege ernst zu nehmen.

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Article Outline

1   Introduction

Particularly since 9/11 and the subsequent "war on terror" religion has been portrayed as a potential source of extremism and violence, predominately in the form of political Islam and Islamist terrorism. The ensuing debate has neglected the fact, however, that religion may also bring about "peace not war" (Smock 2006, see also Weingardt 2007). In this respect we can refer to religious values of peace as well as peacebuilding initiatives by religious actors. Despite today's widespread scholarly acknowledgement of this "ambivalence of the sacred" (Appleby 2000; Philpott 2007), the question remains as to which specific characteristics of the "religious landscape" and surrounding conditions in fact influence religion to either stimulate conflict or contribute to peace.

This paper aims to engage in a preliminary assessment of the contradictory character of religion in sub-Saharan violent conflicts from 1990 to the present. The choice of sub-Saharan Africa may be particularly fruitful for at least two reasons: First, choosing sub-Saharan Africa allows for a number of interesting insights, especially in terms of the three major religious "families" present in the region, that is, African traditional, Christian, and Islamic denominations, and the fairly important role of religion in sub-Saharan Africa in general (see Ellis/ter Haar 2007). Second and probably more importantly, the role of religion in such conflicts has remained underscrutinized, particularly as regards a general empirical assessment of the religion-violence nexus in the region—even though sub-Saharan Africa has probably been the most conflict-ridden region since the end of the Cold War. Possibly with the exception of the work of Møller (2006)—which comes closest to a preliminary general assessment—valuable works by Kastfelt (2005) and Haynes (1996, 1998, 2005), as well as numerous case studies which largely refer to Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, or Uganda (see selected Bibliography), shed light on (specific) theoretical and descriptive aspects or country details rather than systematically investigating the religion-violence relationship.

The paper proceeds as follows: The first section outlines some basic theoretical assumptions on the relationship between religion and conflict in general, which results in the development of a number of hypotheses. The following section presents the preliminary results of a pilot project on the religion-conflict nexus in sub-Saharan Africa, which was conducted at the GIGA Institute of African Affairs and generously funded by the German Peace Research Foundation (*Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung*).[1] Finally, the paper draws conclusions for future research on the subject.

2   Theoretical Framework: Some Hypotheses on the Impact of Religion in Civil Conflicts

2.1   Basic Theoretical Assumptions

As already noted in the introduction, "9/11" escalated the already lively debate on the role of religion in violent conflicts (see for example: Appleby 2000; Fox 2004, Juergensmeyer 2003; Seelengut 2003; Harpviken et al. 2005; Philpott 2007: 518-521). Despite the ever-growing interest in this field of research, some crucial questions remain unanswered: Which conditions cause religion to escalate conflict or contribute to peace? What is the relative weight of religion in conflict relative to other (political or economic) factors? Through which mechanisms does religion translate into escalation or de-escalation? In reference to the apparent problems in answering these pressing questions, at least four aspects as regards the role of religion in civil conflicts deserve consideration (see also Hasenclever/De Juan 2007):

While most earlier works in the field tended to concentrate on the escalating effects of religion, neglecting its peacemaking potential, the widely cited work by Scott Appleby (2000) shifted scholarly attention to the "ambivalence of the sacred": *The role of religion in conflicts is principally ambiguous*. In a given setting and at a certain point in time religion may incite violence; in other circumstances it may contribute to peace or prevent violence from emerging (Weingardt 2007). When trying to identify factors that can explain this ambivalence, *two dimensions have to be differentiated*: the direction and the magnitude of religions' effects on conflicts. Some factors might influence the probability that religions have an escalating or a de-escalating effect in a given setting. However, these factors might not influence whether religions will actually be able to have an escalating or de-escalating impact on the course of the conflict. Other factors might determine how strong a religion's impact on a given conflict can be, but are ambiguous regarding its direction.

"Religion" is most probably a category too broad for meaningful analysis. Rather, *the term deserves differentiation* (see Harpviken et al. 2005). Religious factors that may have an impact on how religion influences peace and conflict comprise at least the following dimensions:

- Demographic religious structures and dynamics, that is, the share and relative number of people affiliated with different religions or denominations in a given society as well as changes in these structures
- The content and intensity of religious identities (as a social identity) as well as their relationship to other identity markers such as ethnicity or region
- Religious or theological ideas such as values, commandments, and beliefs, as well as their interpretation
- The characteristics of religious organizations and institutions
- The (possibly idiosyncratic) traits of individual religious leaders

Beyond the impact of these religious factors, one must acknowledge that conflict and peace are the result of a complex interplay of multiple variables; religious factors are embedded in a complex and dynamic setting of (other) social, political, economic, and cultural conditions. *The impact of religious factors depends principally on the context.* Hence, the causal direction of impact depends on the specific characteristics of religious factors *and* the surrounding non-religious conditions. Further, both the causal direction and the magnitude may vary with the conflict phases. One has to be aware that religious factors may have a different impact in 1) preconflict periods, 2) the perpetuation of violence once it has broken out, 3) periods of de-escalation, or d) postconflict periods. While moderate, de-escalating religious values may be comparably effective in pre- or postconflict periods, they may be powerless in phases of intense violence. The opposite might apply to escalating religious values. Thus, sophisticated analyses must provide for differentiated examinations of different conflict phases. Accordingly, the role of religions has to be analyzed in constant reference to other economic, political, and social factors as well as their dynamics.

2.2   Hypotheses

It is beyond the scope of this paper to develop an innovative and comprehensive theory on the role of religious factors in (sub-Saharan) violent conflicts which incorporates all of the above-mentioned reflections. Rather, using these considerations as theoretical and methodological guidelines, we want to identify plausible and potentially testable factors that are likely to have an impact on the role of religion in civil conflicts:

A society's *demographic religious structure* can influence the potential magnitude as well as the direction of the role of religions in conflicts. A strong geographic dispersion of believers, for example, might hinder the coordination of collective action and hence inhibit any mobilization on the basis of religious ideas or identities. By contrast, a high degree of regional concentration reduces coordination costs and facilitates the use of religious communities' resources, such as interpersonal networks, for mobilization. This effect of geographic concentration of religious communities can be assumed for both escalating and de-escalating measures (Gurr 1993). Religious structures may influence not only the potential magnitude of religions' effects on civil conflicts but also the nature of their impact. Religious differences by themselves, for example, might act as causes of conflicts: the irreconcilability of different religious convictions and claims to truth, for example, might evolve into violent clashes (e.g., Huntington 1996). Hence, homogenous religious structures might prevent religion from playing an escalating role in conflict, as long as there is no conflict over the role of religion in a given political order.

The demographic religious structure—due to the apparently readily available data—is perhaps the religious variable on which the greatest number of empirical studies regarding religion's impact on the onset of civil wars have been conducted (Collier/Hoeffler 2001; Fearon/Laitin 2003; Ellingson 2000; Montalvo/Reynal-Querol 2005; Reynal-Querol 2002; Rummel 1997, for Africa: Elbadawi/Sambanis 2000). Most studies indicate that those societies which are either highly fragmented or homogenous in terms of religious demography are actually less prone to (religious) conflict (Collier/Hoeffler 2001; Fearon/Laitin 2003). The most trouble-ridden constellation—and this is in line with the Horowitz hypothesis on ethnic demography—is a polarized structure in which a religious majority faces a strong religious minority or in which two main groups, such as Christianity and Islam, are almost the same size (Montalvo/Reynal-Querol 2005). The results of these studies indicate that religious differences themselves are not the pivotal factors. Rather, the crucial question is whether the religious structures enable or inhibit mobilization on religious grounds, with polarized structures being especially dangerous in this respect. We find such polarized demographic structures, for example, in Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire.[2] However, the general empirical findings for Africa thus far are not clear-cut. According to Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000), religious polarization or any other measure of religious demography cannot be linked to the onset of civil war in the region.

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[2]   In both cases, we find Christians and Muslims, but also, particularly in Ivory Coast, a considerable share of "Animists."

Religious demographics and *religious identities* are certainly closely connected. However, the latter encompasses more than just a formal affiliation. Religious identities may be intense—even more important than ethnic, national, or other identities—and form a central part of an individual or social identity in the sociopsychological sense (Henri Tajfel). The intensity of the religious identity determines the potential for mobilization in conflict. A secular-minded population would easily resist efforts to create religious in-group and out-group stereotypes.[3] The same holds true for a population in which other identity markers, such as ethnicity or nationality, are more important than religious affiliations. Similarly, weak religious identities will inhibit any religion-based efforts to restrain people from fighting or to mobilize believers to engage in peacemaking activities.

Perceived threats to religious identities can strengthen internal group solidarities and simultaneously foster group dissociation with regard to different religious communities (Anderson 2004: 271). Such threats may result from the relative growth of other religious communities, the discrimination against or preferential treatment of specific religions by the state, or simply cultural change such as modernization and secularization (Haynes 1999: 243). Processes of differentiation, resulting from such factors, can in turn facilitate the mobilization of religious groups against the identified sources of peril (Seul 1999). In Angola, for example, the repressive measures of the Marxist regime against the Protestant community has in many places led to strong associations between Protestant groups and the rebels (Schubert 1997).

Further, the specific traits of particular religious identities can influence what kind of role religion is likely to play in a given conflict. Religious identities can be more or less inclusive or exclusive and, hence, easier or harder to use to create in-groups and out-groups (Harpviken et al. 2005). Another decisive factor is the relation of religious and other identities. If religious identities and ethnic, social, or regional identities run parallel, intergroup processes may escalate relatively easily since the salience of the "otherness" can hardly be denied. Hence, it can be regularly observed that religions play escalating roles if the boundaries of religious identities run parallel to social, ethnic, or regional boundaries. Fox (2004) demonstrates that the escalating effects of religions can be particularly devastating in territorial ethnic conflicts. Similarly, combinations of religious and ethnic or nationalistic affiliations in so-called ethno-religious conflicts are assumed to bear a specific potential for escalation (Appleby 2000; Juergensmeyer 1996). Such parallelism of different potential identity markers can, for example, be observed in Sudan.

On the other hand, if religious identities cut across other identities, particularly if a common religious identity unifies an otherwise divided society, religious identity may work as a pro-peace factor. In this respect, religious identity may contribute to peace. It comes as little surprise that relatively few studies have been conducted on the role of intensities and qualities of religious identities in Africa and elsewhere. Such studies require data which can be de-

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3   As long as the in-group and out-group stereotypes are not about secular and nonsecular identities, as one could argue with regard to the potential conflict between Muslim immigrants and secular Christians in Western Europe.

rived solely from representative survey polls and other costly and time-consuming research, and such studies are particularly rare.[4]

It comes close to triviality to note that the *character of religious ideas* (values, commandments) is crucial to the impact of religions on war and peace. The attitude of religious ideas towards the "secular realm" is decisive for the potential strength of the influence religion might exert. Religious groups can be either inward-oriented or outward-oriented.[5] An inward-oriented religion will care mainly about spiritual issues and worshipping, and the outside world may not really count for adherents or leaders. Buddhism, for example, is often portrayed as being remote from society and focused on a spiritual elite rather than on the believers, resulting in a principally passive stance towards any social issues (Appleby 2000: 133). Hence, such inward oriented groups might be less likely to engage in any social action—be it the incitement of violence or the promotion of peace. An outward-oriented religion, on the other hand, will have pronounced ideas on how the social and political order should be arranged. Further, outward-oriented religious communities are likely to pursue their ideas through active measures in the social world surrounding them. An extreme example of such active social or political activism is the attempt to establish a theocracy, where religious elites decide on all political and social matters.

Religious ideas influence not only the magnitude of religions' impact on conflicts but also its nature. The idea seems straightforward: A religion that legitimizes or even calls for violence against "nonbelievers" and "heretics" will certainly not contribute to peace. However, a religion that preaches love (perhaps even for enemies), peace, and tolerance and strongly rejects violence (for example, "Thou shalt not kill") will avoid violence; adherents to such values will be motivated to engage in peace initiatives once a violent conflict has broken out. However, the issue is much more complicated: The holy writings and traditions of the world religions are fairly ambiguous with respect to the use of violence. It is easy to find quotes that legitimize violence and intolerance, and vice versa, in every world religion (Appleby 2000; Juergensmeyer 1993; Little 1996). Obviously, the dominant interpretation of the holy writings and the general discourse on religious ideas plays a decisive role in this respect. The nature of this discourse will depend on certain other religious or contextual factors. For instance, a perceived threat to the religion in question will be conducive to the legitimization of violence as defense. In fact, the current discourse on the jihad rarely fails to portray violent actions as acts of defense, necessitated by the actions of outside enemies (Seelengut 2003). The same holds true for the conflict phases: radical and escalating interpretations will dominate religious discourses in times of manifest violent conflict rather than in times of peace.

Even though interpretations of religious traditions are of utmost importance, it is important not to rule out the possibility that religious contents matter independently from specific in-

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[4]   The Arnold Bergstraesser Institute in Freiburg/Germany is one of the few institutes which have conducted such survey polls (though not exclusively on religion). Refer for instance to Dickow (2005) on Chad, Dickow et al. (2007) on Zimbabwe, and Schlee (2004) on the DRC.

[5]   Almond et al. (1995: 428-429) differentiate fundamentalist movements according to their relation to the outside world and thus distinguish between "World Conqueror," "World Transformer," "World Creator," and "World Renouncer."

terpretations. The common discourse on the ambivalence of the sacred tends to obscure the fact that religions themselves might have offensive ambitions, and that they may differ in this respect. Monotheist religions in particular, such as Christianity and Islam, make claims of an exclusive theological truth; hence they may not accept other religions as equal. Christians and Muslims also aim principally to proselytize. Violence may be not the measure of choice, but it is more likely that such religions will enter into conflict with other religious denominations or "nonbelievers" than those which do not aim at proselytization. In fact, throughout history, the spread of Christianity and Islam has often, though not always, been accompanied by massive violence. This may depend, amongst other conditions, on internal dynamics. Christianity, for instance, had apparently lost its missionary drive for the larger part of the last century. The aggressive proselytization by Evangelicals and Pentecostals—particularly in Africa—may indicate different dynamics today (Møller 2006: 30ff; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2006).

The characteristics of *religious organizations and institutions* may also affect religions' contributions to peace or war. Highly centralized and institutionalized organizations endowed with a lot of human and material resources—such as the Catholic Church—will be able to exercise stronger influence on their adherents and beyond, either to incite violence or to call for peace. In contrast, in rather decentralized religious communities, such as the Sunni branch of Islam or many African traditional religions (ATR), it will be much more difficult to mobilize believers for whatever purpose.

A crucial characteristic of religious organizations concerning the direction of their impact on civil conflicts is their independence from the conflict parties and political actors at large. It is when religion loses its nonpartisan stance that it is most likely to contribute to the escalation of conflicts. Hence, religious organizations are more likely to play an escalating role if they are attached to one of the conflict parties in terms of strong personal relationships, overlaps in personnel, or structure. In Rwanda, for example, the strong personal and institutional ties between the Habyarimana regime and the Catholic hierarchy are crucial to understanding the silence of the Catholic Church during the 1994 genocide. On the other hand, independence from the conflict parties might enable religious actors and institutions to engage in peacemaking activities as it enables them to act autonomously and increases their credibility in the eyes of the different warring factions. The peacemaking activities of the *Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone* (IRCSL) can be regarded a case in point.

The organizational aspects are not confined to the characteristics of individual religious organizations. It seems plausible that networks of religious organizations, both at the national and transnational level, are conducive to peace rather than war, particularly if they cut across different religions. Isolated religious groups with sparse or one-sided networks have few institutional impediments to violence. In contrast, institutionalized dialogue and mutual dependencies will make pro-violence activities and discourses difficult (Hasenclever 2003).

Last but not least, *the traits of individual religious leaders will matter*. This assumption may be somewhat theoretically unsatisfactory. Scholars prefer structural explanations, probably given their parsimonious character; acknowledging that personal idiosyncrasies can make a

difference introduces an element of unpredictability and contingency. It comes close to triviality to state that the influence as well as the beliefs and activities of a religious leader vis-à-vis peace will affect the relationship between religion and conflict. Yet, we feel that human agency indeed matters and is not completely determined by structures: It may be as a result of Curnot effects or other contingencies that a charismatic or very skillful religious leader emerges or not. This will determine his (or her) influence on religious communities and—dependent on personal values and ambitions—the impact of his or her activities vis-à-vis peace and conflict. The presence of a Hassan al-Turabi (Sudan) or a Desmond Tutu (South Africa) may make a difference.

The magnitude and direction of religious leaders' activities is of course not independent from other conditions. In a very peaceful and nonpolarized "religious landscape" the emergence of extremist religious leaders will be more difficult than in one characterized by conflict and polarity. The effectiveness of organizations will also have an impact on the magnitude of individual leaders' agency. This, however, points to a final assumption which should be kept in mind. The aforementioned aspects or dimensions of religion (see Table 1) do not have an independent and linear impact on peace and conflict. Their interplay (which should also take into account nonreligious surrounding conditions) will determine the ultimate outcome.

Table 1: Hypotheses on the Ambivalence of the Religion-conflict Nexus (Selection)

	Strong impact of religion	Most favorable for peace	Least favorable for peace
Demographic religious structures	Regional concentration of religious communities	Homogeneous or highly fragmented structure Weak or no demographic change	Polarized structure (few and antagonistic groups) Strong demographic change
Religious identities	Intensity (absolute and relative to other identity markers)	Cross-cutting with other identities; inclusive identities	Parallel to other identities; exclusive identities
Religious ideas	Inward-oriented or outward-oriented	Tolerance towards other denominations Dominance of pacifist theological interpretations	Intolerance towards other denominations Dominance of nonpacifist theological interpretations
Religious organizations & institutions	Effectiveness (degree of centralization and institutionalization)	Independence from conflict parties National and transnational networks with other religious organizations	Close connections to conflict parties Sparse or one-sided networks
Religious leaders	Charisma, intellectual and other leadership skills; relative weight within organizations and communities	Pro-peace personal values, ambitions, and agency	Pro-conflict personal values, ambitions, and agency

Source: Authors' compilation.

3   Methodology

The main problem in empirical research on religious factors in (African) conflicts is probably the lack of adequate data about such factors. On the one hand, quantitative studies almost exclusively use religious demographics (whose reliability may be questioned) which cover only a small—and possibly theoretically less interesting—selection of the relevant factors. On the other hand, case studies provide in-depth insights but are hardly comparable to other studies given a lack of comparable research questions, concepts, and indicators or operationalizations and are hence not suitable for valid generalizations.

The methodological focus of the pilot project on religion and conflict has therefore centered on the compilation of a database that collects as many relevant conflict-specific and religion-specific variables in sub-Saharan violent conflicts (and countries spared from violent conflict) as possible. The main idea has been to compile data that allow generalizations beyond in-depth case studies and that extend beyond the almost exclusively demographic data used in quantitative studies. At this stage, however, it has to be conceded that the whole project is still a work in progress and that this paper can present only part of the results (see also conclusions).

At the present stage of the project, we have mapped such religion- and conflict-specific factors for all sub-Saharan violent domestic conflicts which were either underway in 1990 or began afterwards. The period of investigation ends in early 2007. The selection of conflict cases proved more difficult than expected. Sources are sometimes contradictory, inconsistent, and incomprehensive; the main problems are the underlying definitions of violent conflicts and—if such definitions depend on the number of battle deaths—the availability of data and the choice of an adequate threshold. To deal with that dilemma, we opted for a pragmatic approach. If a conflict was mentioned in three out of four sources we consulted (see Annex, Table A1) as at least a minor violent conflict, we incorporated the case in our study. Another challenge was the differentiation of several conflicts within one country. In cases where conflicts could be easily differentiated by region or time, we counted the conflicts separately (examples are Angola, the DR Congo, Nigeria, and Sudan, with two conflicts each). In less clear-cut cases, when conflicts overlapped in time and territory or were obviously bounded, we opted for the category "complex conflict" and counted the conflict as one. Examples are Chad (since 1966), the DR Congo (since 1998), and Ethiopia. The procedure resulted in 28 conflict cases altogether, with 24 countries affected.

As regards the conflict- and religion-specific variables, it was necessary to strike a balance between what can be reasonably captured and what is theoretically important. Apart from these practical constraints—we hope to fill one or the other of the gaps in the future—we distinguished between four groups of variables (see also Table 2 and Annex):

a) *Conflict-specific* but non-religion-specific factors which include information on the warring factions, beginning and ending of the conflict, time span, intensity of conflict, and the like.

b) *Religion-specific* factors which are not directly or necessarily related to the conflict including data on religious demographics, indices on the relative strength of religious groups (that is, the degree of polarization), the presence of (inter)religious networks, and the

overlap of religious cleavages with other social boundaries or identities. Unfortunately, meaningful data on the characteristics of individual religious organizations (hierarchical structure, resources) were not available at this point in time.

c) Variables describing the role of *religion in conflict* ("religion cum conflict") including whether religious boundaries run parallel to differences between the warring factions' support bases, the organizational connections between religious organizations and warring factions, whether or not religious ideas are partly at the heart of the conflict, and whether any religious or conflict actor explicitly uses religious ideas to (de)legitimize violence.

d) *Intervening variables* which are neither directly related to religion nor describe the conflict but can be looked upon as classical "*risk factors*" which—according to the literature (see for instance Elbadawi & Sambanis 2000; Collier et al. 2003)—influence the likelihood of conflict. Such variables are, for instance, income per capita (1990), dependence on primary commodities (1990), growth rates (1986–1990), prior conflict before 1990 according to International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) and Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), regime stability before 1990, and ethnic fractionalization.

Table 2: Variables in the Database

Conflict variables (1990–2007)	Religion variables (not conflict-specific) (1990–2007)	Religion in conflict variables (1990–2007)	Intervening variables/ "risk factors" (1990 or before)
Warring factions	Religious demographics (various)	Do religious boundaries run parallel to conflict cleavages?	Income level
Main conflict causes and cleavages/type of conflict	Polarity & polarization indices (various)	Are there connections between religious organizations and warring factions?	Growth rates
External involvement	Do (inter)religious net-works exist?	Are religious ideas a partial cause of conflict?	Dependence on primary commodities
Time spans and conflict termination	Do religious boundaries and other cleavages run parallel?	Are religious ideas used to de-escalate the conflict (religious actors and conflict parties)?	Prior conflicts
Intensities (various)	Changes in religious demographics	Are religious ideas used to de-escalate the conflict (internal and external actors)?	Regime stability

Source: Authors' compilation; for further details see Annex.

The data type varied according to the nature of the variables (for more details see Annex). Where possible we used quantitative (numerical) data. However, this was feasible only for a limited number of variables and data reliability must be questioned in many cases, especially as regards statistics on victims of conflicts (deaths and refugees). A second data type comprises qualitative assessments derived from other sources (for example, conflict factors), such as conflict causes and types of conflict. For the variables which describe the role of religion in conflict, we mainly compiled the data ourselves, using sources such as the *Economist Intelli-*

gence Unit (EIU), Africa Yearbooks articles, and a bibliography which was compiled for the purpose (Körner 2007a). The exercise also included expert interviews. In all instances we had to resort to qualitative assessments which were effected through the answering of a detailed questionnaire and hence resulted in clearly distinct values (see Annex, Table A3).

The database allows for a broad test of several of the hypotheses developed in the theoretical section of this paper (see especially Table 3). Given the limited number of cases (28) at this stage, only simple bivariate statistics have been calculated. We have also employed a macro-qualitative comparative approach—a simplified variant of macro-qualitative comparison resembling the logic of *qualitative comparative analysis* (QCA). Variables were generally dichotomized, either through qualitative assessment—for instance, the presence or absence of religious networks—or the application of pertinent thresholds (such as sample medians of conflict intensity). We then assessed whether a case showed a theoretically expected value. With a result of approximately two-thirds of nondeviant cases, we will consider the hypothesis in question to be supported.[6] The section on the results starts with a descriptive overview which is then followed by the systematic testing of several of the hypotheses developed in the theoretical section of the paper.

4   Preliminary Results for Sub-Saharan Africa

4.1   Descriptive Overview of the Role of Religion in Civil Conflict

The following overview of the role of religion in conflict concentrates on the variables which describe religious factors that are relevant for conflict or are directly related to conflict.[7] Generally, almost all of the 28 conflict cases in 24 countries, as well as the nonconflict countries, are characterized by a relatively strong religious heterogeneity. Changes in religious demographics are difficult to detect. On the basis of a comparison between Clévenot (1987) and the *World Christian Database* (WCD 2007), in 13 out of 48 cases there were cumulative changes of more than 10 percentage points.

Data on the characteristics of religious organizations were difficult to raise. We collected data on the existence of interreligious networks, which were present in all but seven cases. As regards identities, we found that social boundaries in the broad sense often run parallel to religious differences. In many cases we found several overlaps with class, but mostly with region and ethnicity. Only in four cases (Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Somalia) could no such differences could be detected. Parallel religious and actual conflict cleavages could be found in 18 of 28 cases. These parallel cleavages are mostly partial (that is the conflict parties and their support base respectively differ significantly but not *entirely* in terms of religious af-

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6   The latter research strategy also allows for the finding of clusters of several variables, though on the basis of a rather qualitative and informal procedure. This macro-qualitative strategy also has the considerable advantage of keeping individual cases easily identifiable.

7   For more detailed results on conflict-specific variables and others see Basedau et al. 2007.

filiation), but in three cases the overlaps are almost completely or at least largely parallel (Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria-North, Sudan-SPLA/M).

In 10 out of 28 cases contacts or connections between religious actors or institutions on the one hand and conflict parties on the other exceeded (almost always existing) informal personal contacts between religious leaders and political leaders. In just two conflict cases we found organizational overlaps between religious organizations and warring factions (Uganda: *Lord's Resistance Army*, LRA; Somalia: *United Islamic Courts*, UIC).

In looking at the role of religious or theological ideas, several indicators were used: In eight cases *theological ideas* were at least partial causes of conflict—either because aggressive prose-lytization caused resistance or because theocratic elements of the state order (for instance, the introduction of Islamic law, Sharia) were disputed between conflict parties. This appears to be particularly clear-cut in Nigeria (North: Sharia), Sudan (SPLA: Sharia), and Somalia (secular vs. nonsecular order of the state) and possibly also in Uganda (the LRA and the "Ten Commandments"). In four more cases this assumption seems somewhat less convincing: In South Africa, apartheid and the repression it entailed were theologically justified by the *Dutch Reformed Church*. In Chad, one of the numerous rebel groups claimed to be fighting for an Islamic state in the 1990s. In the Sudanese province of Darfur, the rebel groups differ in terms of their theocratic or secular orientation. In the Central African Republic, President Bozizé's evangelically oriented religion policy has triggered Muslim resistance.

In at least nine cases, *religious actors and institutions contributed to the escalation* of conflict by (religious) legitimization or incitement of violence. In five cases, individual religious actors, that is, clerics, were actively involved in violence (Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, and Uganda), although in most cases this did not mean the involvement of the entire organization. In 16 cases, warlords or other leading representatives of conflict parties made use of religious ideas and legitimized or called for violence with religion-inspired justifications.

In contrast, activities on the part of *domestic religious actors aiming for de-escalation* are much more frequent. In only three out of 28 cases could no such pro-peace behavior could be observed (Djibouti, Ghana, and Niger). Proactive peace efforts (for example, brokering), however, were confined to nine cases. In the remaining cases, such activities simply meant verbal calls for peace. *International religious actors* undertook de-escalating activities in all but eight cases. In only seven out of 20 cases did these peace efforts go beyond verbal intervention.

Taking all escalating and de-escalating activities and aspects together, there is strong evidence for the assumption that *religious factors have a principally ambiguous role in Africa's civil conflicts* (see Table 3). This ambivalence includes the fact that in 19 conflict cases we can observe both an escalating and de-escalating influence of religion (though not necessarily at the same time). In only six instances is no escalating role of religion present, and the total absence of both dimensions can be found in three cases only. An example of an exclusively escalating role of religion is completely absent. Hence, apparently, de-escalation by religion is more common. However, this does not say anything about the relative strength of religion in conflict. The small number of countries with theological issues as partial causes of conflict indicates rather that religion is not at the heart of conflict in most of the cases.

Table 3:   Use of Religion for Escalation and De-escalation in Sub-Saharan Conflicts since 1990

	Use of religion for escalation	No use of religion for escalation
Use of religion for de-escalation	Angola I (UNITA) Central African Republic* Chad Congo Republic Côte d'Ivoire DR Congo II (bounded) Ethiopia Guinea Liberia Nigeria I (Delta) Nigeria II (North)** Rwanda Senegal* Sierra Leone Somalia** South Africa* Sudan I (SPLA)** Sudan II (Darfur)* Uganda**	Angola II (Cabinda) Burundi DR Congo I (AFDL) Guinea-Bissau Mali Mozambique
No use of religion for de-escalation		Djibouti Ghana Niger
N = 28	19	9

Notes: "Use of religion" refers to the behavior of religious actors or the use of religious ideas by conflict actors (calls for peace vs. legitimization/incitement of violence, active engagement in conflict vs. active engagement in peace brokering), not necessarily its actual impact on the prevalence or intensity of violent conflict (see also Annex, Table A3).

  *   Evidence for theological issues as partial conflict cause.
  **   Strong evidence for theological issues as partial conflict cause.

Source: Authors' compilation.

4.2   Empirical Results on the Religion-Conflict Link in Africa

The database—though still in the process of being extended and finalized—allows for the testing of a number of relationships. The following analysis, however, concentrates on what is probably the most important research question:[8] How do religious factors influence civil conflicts? More precisely: are religion-specific factors—namely, demographic structures, organizational structures, and ideas—systematically connected to the intensity and prevalence of violent conflict in Africa?

Yet, the database only partially allows for comparisons between conflict and non-conflict cases. It is mainly with respect to the role of interreligious demographics, (overlapping) identities, and intervening "risk factors" that we have extended the sample to non-conflict countries. For the remaining variables we have to use the various measures for conflict intensity as well as the dynamic aspect (time span/ongoing conflict) as operationalization for the dependent variable.

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[8]   On the proven role of religion in conflict as a dependent variable see Basedau et al. 2007.

In line with the findings of several global large-N studies (Ellingson 2002; Montalvo/Reynal-Querol 2005, Roeder 2003; Rummel 1997)—but contrary to a study by Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) on Africa—we find evidence which points to the substantial causal role of religion in civil conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. Looking at the dependent variable, however, the results vary substantially vis-à-vis the various indicators for civil conflict (see Table 4):

The picture for the numerous measures for *conflict intensities*—battle deaths, aggregated conflict intensities, refugees, and *internally displaced persons* (IDPs)—is not very consistent. Although we find a number of significant relationships, only the average conflict intensities per annum indicator shows *four* significant relationships. This indicator is positively connected to the population share of Catholics. Contrary to expectations, however, it also has a positive relationship to the use of religion to de-escalate conflict, both by domestic actors and in general, as well as to overlapping quasi-ethnic and religious cleavages. The link between conflict intensity and the use of religion to de-escalate conflict may be explained by the fact that high intensities trigger peace initiatives. All in all, and given that none of the other indicators produce more than two significant correlations, it must be concluded that, according to our indicators, religion offers relatively little of explanatory value for conflict intensity.

Results for the length of conflict are even weaker. *Time span* is not connected to any religious variable (and only prior conflict with the "risk factors", which is partly an artifact, given that time spans include years of conflict before 1990 when conflicts started before this year). The picture changes when we look at the question of whether conflicts have been terminated or not. Whether conflicts were terminated or not ("*Ongoing conflict in 2007*")—which is admittedly not a particularly meaningful variable[9]—is systematically and significantly linked to a number of religious variables. Save for the population share of adherents to ATR (or "Animists"), seven religious indicators show positive and significant links. Ongoing conflict is more likely when there are more Christians (and less Animists); connections between religious organizations and warring factions; religious ideas as partial conflict causes; and the escalating use of religious ideas by religious leaders, such as incitement of violence or its legitimization. In particular, any escalating use of religion is strongly and significantly linked to ongoing conflict (0.54, significant at the 0.01 level). As was the case for conflict intensities, we also find that the use of religion for de-escalation is somewhat related to ongoing conflict. It seems plausible to conclude that ongoing conflict strongly motivates religious actors to make efforts for peace rather than seeing religious efforts at de-escalation as an adverse—and hardly theoretically plausible—causal effect. Generally, however, we can cautiously conclude that some religious factors indeed hinder the termination of conflict.

Equally strong results—seven significant correlations—are returned when we test religious variables against the question of whether violent conflicts occurred in the period under investigation ("*Conflict prevalence after 1990*"). Conflict after 1990 seems more likely when there are higher population shares of Muslims, higher polarization between different Christian

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[9]   Although 2007 marks the end of the period under investigation, one could principally measure "ongoing conflict" at any other point in time. Thus, it is only a very imperfect proxy for the dynamic aspect of violence.

denominations, and overlapping religious and other (not necessarily violent) cleavages. Especially when ethnic and regional boundaries run parallel to religious differences, the prevalence of conflict is fairly probable (0.38 and 0.41 respectively, both significant at the 0.01 level). Again, religious de-escalation efforts are positively related to conflict after 1990.

Table 4: Correlations between Religious Factors and Violent Conflict

Indicators	Conflict intensities	Ongoing conflict 2007?	Conflict prevalence?
	Deaths/refugees/ IDPs (various)	Yes/no as of mid-2007	Yes/no after 1990
Demographics			
Christians in % of population	0.35*[a]	0.32*	
Muslims in % of population			0.23*
Animists in % of population	0.41*[f]	-0.52***	
Catholics in % of population	0.41**[c]		
Polarization (intra-Christian)			0.30*
Changes in religious demographics 1987–2007			-0.24*
Organization			
Interreligious networks?			
Connections between religious actors and conflict parties?		0.34*	n.a.
Identities			
Parallel religious and ethnic boundaries?	-0.39**[d]		0.38***
Parallel religious and regional boundaries?	-0.33**[b]		0.41***
Parallel religious and social boundaries?			0.30**
Parallel religious and quasi-ethnic boundaries?	-0.54***[c]		
Any parallel boundaries?			0.36**
Parallel religious and conflict cleavages?	-0.37**[d]		
Ideas and leaders			
Religious ideas as partial conflict causes?		0.32*	n.a.
Use of religious ideas for escalation by religious leaders?		0.38**	n.a.
Use of religious ideas for escalation by conflict parties?			n.a.
Any use of religious ideas for escalation?		0.54***	n.a.
Use of religious ideas for de-escalation or peace initiatives by domestic religious leaders?	0.40**[c] 0.34*[e]	0.35*	n.a.
Use of religious ideas for de-escalation or peace initiatives by external religious leaders?			n.a.
Any use of religion for de-escalation?	0.39**[g] 0.40**[c]	0.41**	n.a.

*   Significant at the 0.1 level.
**   Significant at the 0.05 level.
***   Significant at the 0.01 level.
[a]   Total battle deaths/population.
[b]   Total battle deaths/population/conflict years.
[c]   Average conflict intensity per year (PRIO).
[d]   Maximum number of refugees during conflict.
[e]   Maximum number of internally displaced persons.
[f]   Maximum number of internally displaced persons/population.
[g]   Cumulated conflict intensity (PRIO).

Source: Authors' compilation; for details of operationalization and coding see Annex, Tables A1-A3.

Turning the perspective to the independent variables, the results also point to the fact that different religious factors have different impacts on the likelihood of violence, its duration, and its intensity: Generally, and contrary to the hypotheses, *religious demographics* have a rather weak impact. Except for the share of Animists and Catholics (see above), correlations are only significant at the 10% level and only one (that is, polarization in terms of the intra-Christian fragmentation[10]) of the numerous measures on population shares, the relative size and polarization of religious groups, has produced a significant result (these insignificant measures are not shown in the table). Interestingly, albeit at a relatively weak level of significance and on the basis of somewhat questionable data, changes in religious demographics between 1987 and 2005 apparently have a negative effect on conflict after 1990.

The explanatory power of *religious identities*, largely neglected in previous empirical studies, seems more convincing: Though this dimension was almost exclusively measured through overlapping boundaries of religious and other identities, we found substantial relationships, particularly regarding the prevalence of conflict. As already noted and in line with theoretical work on the issue, overlaps with ethnic and regional identities have to be taken into account when studying the impact of religion in civil conflict.

There is also some evidence pointing to the role of *religious ideas and leaders* (both can only be partly empirically separated at this stage); this, however, seems to be confined to ongoing conflict only (for practical reasons there is no data on non-conflict cases, and conflict prevalence could not be tested). Any escalating use or role of religious ideas in conflict apparently affects ongoing conflict. Perhaps the most surprising result has already been mentioned in the discussion in the previous section, and it seems plausible that (ongoing) violence stimulates peace initiatives rather than the other way around. On the other hand, these results suggest that on the basis of our operationalization, the actual impact of calls for peace and peace brokering by religious actors is probably fairly limited.

The role of *religious organizations* turned out to be difficult to measure given the time-consuming research required to adequately capture this dimension. Only two indicators were employed, and only connections between warring factions and religious organizations proved to be (relatively) weakly significant for ongoing conflict. The presence or absence of interreligious networks did not produce any significant correlation.

Although it was not possible at this stage—particularly due to the small number of cases—to employ multivariate analyses, the impact of *classical risk factors* generally seems to be somewhat superior in explaining conflict than religious factors, especially vis-à-vis conflict after 1990 and—somewhat less convincingly—conflict intensity (see Table 5). While dependency on primary commodities in 1990 and growth before 1990 apparently have no impact, income level (1990) and prior conflict (before 1990) appear to have an especially strong effect on prevalence and intensity. Ethnic fractionalization shows a more ambivalent pattern. Higher

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[10]   And certainly, it does not seem to be self-evident why intra-Christian polarization should be more harmful to peace than a polarized structure of, for instance, Christianity and Islam. Moreover, there are few examples of intra-Christian and violent conflict in the region (possibly Uganda or South Africa).

fractionalization is positively linked to conflict after 1990, but there is also evidence that points to less intense conflicts in such countries.

Table 5:   Nonreligious Risk Factors and Violent Conflict

Independent variables	Dependent variables			
	Conflict intensities	Time span of conflict	Ongoing conflict 2007?	Conflict prevalence?
	Deaths/refugees/ IDPs (various)	Years affected	Yes/no as of mid-2007	Yes/no after 1990
Nonreligious risk factors				
Income level 1990	-0.53***d			-0.29**
Growth 1986–1990				
Human development 1990				-0,53***
Dependence on primary commodities 1990				
Prior conflict (before 1990)	0.45***a 0.38*e	0.66***		0.42***
Regime stability before 1990	-0.37*d		-0.31*	
Ethnic fractionalization ca. 1990	-0.36*b -0.44**c			0.42***

*   Significant at the 0.1 level.
**   Significant at the 0.05 level.
***   Significant at the 0.01 level.
a   Total battle deaths.
b   Total battle deaths/population.
c   Total battle deaths/population/conflict years.
d   Average conflict intensity per year (PRIO).
e   Maximum number of internally displaced persons.

Source: Authors' compilation; for details of operationalization and coding see Annex, Tables A1-A3.

All in all, we find that different religious dimensions or factors indeed matter as regards civil conflict. Moreover, there is empirical support pointing to a substantial role of religion in civil conflicts. The relative weight, however, should not be overrated for at least two reasons: First, there is little support for the hypothesis that religious or theological issues are often at the heart of conflict. Second, risk factors have superior explanatory power and, due to an absence of multivariate analysis, the correlations we have detected may be spurious.

4.3   Further Results

It is beyond the scope of this paper to present all the results of the project.[11] However, one further finding referring to the interplay of several religion-specific variables and religion in conflict may be of particular interest: According to the literature, connections between political leaders, warring factions, and the overlap of religious boundaries with other social cleavages might make religions more vulnerable to manipulation by political actors (Hasenclever/Rittberger 2003, Fox 2004). In fact, we find that connections between political leaders

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[11]   The interested reader may refer to Basedau et al. 2007, which shows many more detailed results. The paper is available from the author upon request.

and religious organizations which exceed simple personal contacts are systematically linked to the use of religious ideas for conflict escalation and to the overlapping of religious and other boundaries. Out of 10 cases which show at least a personal overlap between political and religious organizations, eight show at least partly (or largely) overlapping religious boundaries and conflict cleavages (see Table 6). All of these cases demonstrate the abuse of religious ideas in conflict and also show religious boundaries that run parallel to both ethnic and regional cleavages. Only Rwanda and Somalia deviate from this logic and they might constitute special cases.[12] In sum, one may conclude that the abusive use of religion in conflict typically takes place in settings where overlapping religious and other boundaries as well as organizational connections between religion and politics offer the opportunity for the mobilization of religion.

Table 6: Conflict Cases with Connections between Conflict Parties and Religious Institutions

Use of religious ideas for escalation	Religious boundaries (partially or largely) parallel to conflict cleavages	
	Yes	**No**
Yes	CAR* Congo Republic* Côte d'Ivoire* Nigeria (North)* Senegal* South Africa* Sudan (SPLA)* Uganda*	Rwanda Somalia
No	-	-

* Overlapping religious and ethno-regional boundaries.

Source: Authors' compilation.

5   Summary of Results and Conclusion

The role of religion in civil conflict in Africa has been a neglected area of research, at least in terms of a general empirical assessment. A newly compiled database on religious factors in civil conflicts shows that, indeed, religion plays a role in conflict more frequently than is usually assumed and that this role is principally ambiguous. Using bivariate statistics and macro-qualitative comparison, we find that there is also plenty of evidence that links religious factors to conflict. And while the de-escalation of conflict through the use of religion is more common at the descriptive level, most of the religious variables that proved to be significant are negatively related to peace, mainly as regards conflict termination and conflict after 1990. The ef-

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[12]   In Rwanda, individual Roman Catholic priests took part in the genocide while the Rwandan Catholic officials remained silent (Longman 2001, 2005; Rittner 2004). Somalia's Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) is one of the rare cases where warring factions and religious organizations are at least partially identical (Maliach 2006; International Crisis Group 2005).

fects of religion on conflict duration are almost absent, and they are inconsistent as regards conflict intensity. In general, one must not overestimate the relative weight of religion. A similar test of classical risk factors returns results which are somewhat superior in explaining conflict than religious factors, and religion is relatively rarely at the heart of conflict.

As regards different dimensions of religion, the role of organizations seems limited. This also holds more or less true for religious demographics. The strongest relationships are returned when testing for religious identities (overlaps with other identity markers) as well as—though in a somewhat less clear-cut way—the role of religious ideas and the behavior of religious leaders. A further finding suggests strong support for the hypotheses that the mobilization of religion in conflict depends on several characteristics of various religious dimensions: The abuse of religion in conflict is particularly likely when religious and other boundaries run parallel, when religion distinguishes the conflict parties, and when stronger connections exist between religious organizations and political actors.

At first sight, the most astonishing finding refers to the positive relationship between the pro-peace use of religion and (ongoing) conflict. We believe, however, that this must be interpreted in terms of a sequential direction of causation, where violence stimulates religious actors to stage peace initiatives and not vice versa. Yet, at the same time, peace efforts seem to generally have a limited impact once violence has broken out.

Apart from these findings—which should be treated with caution—we have to concede that our paper undoubtedly leaves many pertinent questions unanswered. In particular, the relative weight of ambiguous religious factors vis-à-vis other conditions, and their interplay, could not be tested to our full satisfaction. Further, due to the lack of data, we were equally unable to test the role of religious identities apart from their overlap with conflict and other societal cleavages. Other crucial questions may refer to the conditions of effective peace brokering by religious institutions or the preemptive effects of interreligious dialogue and networks. All in all, the main finding of the paper is that there is no simple nexus between different religious factors and conflict.

Generally, many pressing methodological challenges persist and should be addressed in future research. Without doubt, an *improved database* remains of utmost importance:

a) Refining and completing our database is indispensable with regard to adding several variables, especially those which are not readily available but require costly and time-consuming research.[13]

b) Some variables already included merit refinement as regards their coding. These variables include, for instance, the exact nature and date of establishment of religious networks as well as the use of escalating and de-escalating religious ideas by domestic reli-

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[13] To these variables belong information on the organizational structures of individual religious organizations; the behavior of governments towards different religious groups; the intensities and characteristics of religious identities—for which representative survey polls would be needed; and almost any information on African traditional religions. Moreover, it may be worthwhile to collect more data on surrounding conditions—such as socioeconomic and political system variables beyond the classical risk factors.

gious and conflict actors. In particular, we should be able to have a closer look at sequences and dynamics.

c) Finally, the database should be extended to the non-conflict sub-Saharan cases where applicable, particularly as regards interreligious networks, in order to capture the preventive effects of religious factors. A comparative perspective would also be greatly facilitated by a pronounced longitudinal perspective, which looks beyond our period of observation (that is, before 1990) and also recognizes different periods within a particular conflict.

The refinement and completion of the database is closely related to *other methodological challenges*, particularly the use of different methods and research strategies. Given the apparent complexity of the topic, we consider a combination of different—both quantitative and qualitative—research strategies and tools as inevitable. We have employed a, somewhat, unsophisticated type of empirical strategy including macro-qualitative comparison and bivariate statistics. Both research strategies have the considerable disadvantage of not controlling for context conditions in multivariate analysis. The data type we can offer may be most suitable for formal macro-qualitative methodologies such as QCA (or the different variants of the "fuzzy sets"), which are able to control for other variables.[14]

The key method to be added, however, may be a sophisticated small-N comparison. The obvious advantage of such an undertaking is the evident necessity of embarking on an in-depth analysis of individual cases. Moreover, if cases are carefully selected, a small-N comparison can contribute significantly to the identification of crucial relationships. Usually, the most promising most-similar-systems design is hardly applicable since the empirical conditions of such a natural experiment are rarely present or the information required is not available. In the case of Africa it might be different. For the study of the ambivalent character of religion in African conflicts, the database may provide the necessary information to choose cases that, for instance, show many similarities as regards crucial features of religious demographic structures and other relevant surrounding conditions but differ in terms of both the role of religion in conflict and the prevalence or intensity of conflict. Such studies will possibly provide the knowledge about the role of religion in conflict which we need in order to avoid religion's escalating effect and make optimal use of its pro-peace potential.

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[14] Moreover, there is no principle reason not to employ pronounced quantitative multivariate measures since some of our variables can be coded accordingly and would clearly add value to the rather limited use of proxies in the relevant studies thus far. Given the limited number of cases thus far, however, this should be accompanied by the already recommended extension of observations on non-conflict cases and longitudinal perspectives.

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Annex

Table A1: Conflict-specific Variables

Variable	Response options/ scale	Source*	Remarks
Conflict name	Country name (regionally specified)	GIGA	Specified in case of several conflicts in country
Conflict parties/warring factions	Conflict parties' names	AKUF + GIGA	
Conflict period/time span	First year and last year 1-	AKUF, UCDPc	
Conflict type	Anti-regime Autonomy Others	AKUF	Domestic conflicts only
Direct external involvement	Yes/no	AKUF	
Conflict cleavage	Ethnic Quasi-ethnic (clan/race) Regional Religious Social (class)	GIGA	
Cause(s) of conflict	National power Autonomy Domestic / regional predominance Resources Others	HIIK	
Conflict intensities			
Battle deaths	1,000-	Marshall (2004/2007)	
Battle deaths/population	0.00-	Marshall (2007)/UN	
Battle deaths/population/ conflict years	0.00-	Marshall (2007)/UN/ GIGA	
Cumulated conflict intensity	0-45	UCDP	1990–2005
Average conflict intensity	0-3	UCDP	1990–2005
Refugees (maximum)	0-	UNHCR	Year of maximum number indicated
Refugees (maximum)/ population (2000)	0.00-	UNHCR/UN	Year of maximum number indicated
Maximum number of IDPs	0-	IDMC	Year of maximum number indicated
Maximum number of IDPs/ population (2000)	0.00-	IDMC/UN	Year of maximum number indicated
Conflict termination	Yes/no	GIGA	As of early 2007
Mode of termination	Military victory Agreement with external involvement Agreement without external involvement	GIGA	

* GIGA = German Institute of Global and Area Studies
   AKUF = Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung
   UCDP = Uppsala Conflict Data Programme
   HIIK = Heidelberger Institut für Internationale Konfliktforschung
   IDMC = Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
   UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table A2: Religion-specific Variables

Variable	Response options/ scale	Source*	Remarks
Interreligious demographic structures			
Christians %/population	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
Muslims %/population	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
African traditional religion %/population	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
Polarity I	1-4	GIGA	All African cases Unless one group over two-thirds (1), number of groups over 25%
Religious Fractionalization	0.00-1.00	Alesina et al. 2003	All African cases
Polarization Index I (three religious families)	0.00-1.00	GIGA	All African cases Constructed according to Montalvo/Reynal-Querol (2005)
Intra-Christian demographic structures			
Catholic as % of Christians	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
Anglican as % of Christians	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
Other protestant as % of Christians	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
Orthodox as % of Christians	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
Pentecostals/Evangelicals as % of Christians	0-100	WCD (2007)	All African cases
Polarity II	1-4	GIGA	All African cases Constructed according to Polarity II
Polarization Index II (intra-Christian)	0.00-1.00	GIGA	All African cases Constructed according to Montalvo/Reynal-Querol (2005)
Combined interreligious demographic structures			
Polarity III (with intra-Christian structure)	1-4	GIGA	All African cases Constructed according to Polarity I + II
Polarization Index III (with intra-Christian structure)	0.00-1.00	GIGA	All African cases Constructed according to Polarization Indices I + III
Changes in religious demographics			
Cumulated changes ca. 1987–2005 in percentage points	<5-<35	WCD (2007)/ Clévenot (1987)	All African cases without intra-Christian differences Calculated by GIGA
Group with biggest gains	Christians Muslims "nimists" (ATR)	WCD (2007)/ Clévenot (1987)	All African cases without intra-Christian differences Calculated by GIGA
Other characteristics			
(Existence of) interreligious networks	Yes/no: Local level National level	GIGA	
Overlap of religious boundaries and other social cleavages?	Ethnic Quasi-ethnic (clan/race) Regional Religious Social (class)	GIGA	Principally (not necessarily) independent of conflict cleavages

* WCD = World Christian Database

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table A3: Religion in Conflict-specific Variables

Variable	Response options/scale	Source*	Remarks
Overlap of religious boundaries and conflict cleavages	No Partially Largely	GIGA	
Relations between religious actors/institutions and conflict parties	None Personal contacts Overlap in personnel Overlap in organizational structure	GIGA	
Escalating role of religious ideas			
Role of religious ideas as partial conflict cause	Yes/no	GIGA	
Use of escalating religious ideas by religious actors	None Legitimization of violence Incitement of violence Active engagement	GIGA	To be refined
Use of escalating religious ideas by conflict actors	None Legitimization of violence Incitement of violence	GIGA	To be refined
Any escalating role of religious ideas	Yes/no	GIGA	"Yes" if at least one of the other three related questions is positive
De-escalating role of religious ideas			
Use of de-escalating religious ideas by domestic religious actors	None Calls for peace Active engagement	GIGA	
Use of de-escalating religious ideas by external religious actors	None Calls for peace Active engagement	GIGA	
Any de-escalating role of religious ideas	Yes/no	GIGA	"Yes" if at least one of the other two related questions is positive

Source: Authors' compilation.

Table A4: Risk Factors (as of 1990)*

Variable	Response options/scale	Source	Remarks
Income level in US$ p.c. 1990	120-3300	African Development Indicators 1992	All African cases
Average growth rates 1986–1990	n.a.	African Development Indicators 1992	All African cases
Human Development Index value 1990	0.000-1.000	Human Development Report 1992	All African cases, numerous missing data
Dependency on primary commodities (exports as % of GDP) 1990	0-100	African Development Indicators 1992	All African cases
Prior conflicts (cumulated conflict intensities before 1990)	0-	UCDP/PRIO	All African cases Calculated by GIGA
Regime stability before 1990 (years since last regime change)	0-	http://africanelections.tripod.com/	All African cases Calculated by GIGA
Ethnic fractionalization	0-1	Alesina et al. 2003	All African cases
Government effectiveness	-2,5- + 2,5	World Bank Governance Indicators	All African cases Not yet in the database

* Risk factors include variables that are listed in the literature (Collier et al. 2003, Elbadawi/Sambanis 2000, and others). Data from Marshall et al. included too many missing values.

Source: Authors' compilation.

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