

**THE MIGRATION OF THE TERM 'CIVIL WAR': A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST
EXPLANATION**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

to

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

LAWRENCE CRAIG BAILIE

December 2009

ABSTRACT

Although the occurrence of wars between states has been in decline, the same cannot be said of conflict within states – especially when considering the innumerable ‘Civil Wars’ said to have occurred since the end of the Cold War. In this context the use of the word ‘innumerable’ is qualified more by the variance in how ‘Civil War’ is understood as a concept (leading to different claims as to how many conflicts of this kind may have occurred over a period of time) and less by their large number. Claims regarding the occurrence of ‘Civil War’ suggest this type of conflict to be the dominant form at least since the end of World War Two. This prevalence in the face of a decline in inter-state warfare has afforded greater interest to ‘Civil War’ as a topic of inquiry. The understanding that ‘Civil Wars’ have with time increased in their occurrence and changed in their nature comes under investigation in this thesis and is seen as problematic in that the means by which a phenomenon is measured (i.e. through its nature) must be fixed so as to measure the frequency of that phenomenon. Using Social Constructivism as a theoretical lens of inquiry, sense is made of this understanding and, furthermore, the true meaning behind the claim that ‘Civil War’ has changed is revealed. The empirical evidence that accompanies this theoretical work exists in the American Civil War of 1861–1865 and the debate over the conflict in Iraq following the U.S. invasion in 2003. This debate is used as a means by which to bring the contestation over the notion of ‘Civil War’ to the fore, while a comparison of this conflict with the quintessential American Civil War reveals the migration of the term.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
PREFACE	iv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO: MIGRATION IN THEORY AND ‘CIVIL WAR’ DEFINED	10
- Introduction	10
- Two ‘worlds’ constituted by different ‘objects’	11
- The constitutive role of language vis-a-vis the social world	13
- Time and the challenge to Realism	14
- A critical disclaimer: Constructivism and the danger of relativism	17
- Opposing notions of ‘Civil War’	20
- The Realist notion of ‘Civil War’	22
- Advantages in using the Realist notion as a point of comparison	26
- Conclusion	29
CHAPTER THREE: ‘AMERICA’ AND ‘IRAQ’ – DIFFERENT CONFLICTS UNDER THE SAME TERM	31
- Introduction	31
- The interest in ‘Iraq’ as a case study	33
- The politics of language	35
- The history behind the physical reality	38
- Which state and whose people?	39
- ‘War’ as the kind fought in America	41
- Civilians as primary targets	45
- Authority: present and contested	47
- A struggle over what and between whom?	49
- Conclusion	55
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION	56
BIBLIOGRAPHY	60
INTERVIEWS / SEMINARS / LECTURES	63
ELECTRONIC SOURCES	63

PREFACE

At the time of my registration as a first year student at Rhodes University the thought of doing a Masters degree in International Relations was the furthest thing from my mind. The challenges met and overcome in my time at Rhodes extend beyond those of this thesis and academics. I have been educated not only in the Humanities, but also in life. The academic growth pains experienced while doing a Masters degree that has culminated in this work coincided with my acceptance of a new life in Christ. With this came the challenge of professing my faith in a world that challenges His very existence, if not through word, then through deed. Here I am obliged to offer my deepest thanks and gratitude to my supervisor, Peter Vale, for his patience and grace extended towards me at times when the work at hand lacked my full devotion as I had my attention divided between work in the Department, a year of service in the local church, and the completion of this thesis. Had it not been for his encouragement and interest taken in me towards the end of my honours year this thesis would not have been written. He has in many ways been an ‘academic father’ to me and it has been a privilege to work under him.

I thank my parents who have never pressured me into living their dreams, but have always been content in allowing me to discover and pursue my own. Their interest, together with that of my sister, in the progress of my work and the encouragement that came with it has proven to be invaluable. What my mother has lacked in the provision of finances she has certainly compensated for in the form of prayer and I thank her for her strength and sacrificial love that she has shown towards her whole family. For many years now I have been afforded the luxury of not concerning myself with the financing of my studies. In this regard I thank my Dad who has extended his provision and generosity beyond that of any other father I know.

My deepest appreciation is extended towards my family at church and my many friends who have shown unending encouragement and interest in my work. I also express my sincere gratitude to Lester Bhana and the ‘Year-of-Your-Life’ team who have been more than accommodating in allowing me to take time from church duties and for standing in for me during my absence.

Finally, I thank my gracious King for His unconditional love and abundant gifts. I pray that as I continue to serve Him those who have shown faith in me and love towards me will witness and share in the spoils of His glory.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Civil Wars are believed to have experienced a steady increase in their “number, duration and sheer destructiveness” since the beginning of the 19th century. (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 3) Of the 124 cases of „Civil War“ that have been identified between the years 1816 and 1988, almost half of them occurred between 1945 and 1998. (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 3) Duyvesteyn (2000: 93) writes that “civil war has been the dominant form of war at least since the end of the Second World War.” Another count indicates that more than a hundred Civil Wars have taken place since the end of the Cold War in 1989. (Smith 2006: 3) Furthermore, there is an abundance of writing touching on or devoted entirely to the idea that „Civil War“ is changing. The significance of this idea has led to a distinction being made between „new“ and „old“ „Civil Wars“. However, writing in 2006, Keegan argues for the existence of only five „clear-cut“ cases of „Civil War“ in history (Wong 2006: 2), while Kalyvas (2001) and Berdal (2003) respectively, dispute the validity of a distinction between „old“ and „new“. These alarming and contradictory claims form the backdrop to this study on how contemporary International Relations studies define and classify „Civil War“.

The increasingly prevalent claim regarding „Civil Wars“ – that they have increased in their number and changed in their nature – is one that requires careful consideration. To say that a phenomenon has increased in occurrence while at the same time changing in nature seems problematic. How can it be known that „Civil War“ is increasing in occurrence if the nature by which it is understood is believed to have changed and continues to change? Put differently, how do we measure what we consider to be „Civil War“ as having increased if what we classify it by is believed to have been changing? The answer, to be revealed in the chapters that follow, is that the same term has come to be used to classify intra-state conflicts that are understood to be different from each other in their natures. Thus the perception has been created that „Civil Wars“ have been on the increase while also changing in their nature, when in fact the conceptual understanding of „Civil War“ has changed. This claim – that the notion of „Civil War“ is a contested and

shifting one – is foundational to the purposes of this work which explains the contradictory claim that Civil Wars have increased in occurrence while changing in nature. This is illuminated by the two contradictory paragraphs that follow.

Realist theorists describe „Civil War“ as “protracted internal violence aimed at securing control of the political and legal apparatus of a state” and have argued that “a conflict does not take on the characteristics of a civil war until an attempt is made to take over the basic functions of the state”. (Evans and Newnham 1998: 64, Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 1) An iconic Realist thinker, Lawrence Freedman (2006: BBC News), Professor of War Studies at London University, suggests that an essential condition in classifying „Civil War“ is a scenario “in which it is possible for one side to defeat the other in battle” in pursuit of state control as opposed to a conflict in which there is “a complete breakdown of social order so that there is no effective government at all.” Thus, for Realists, regardless of the fact that „war“ – “a socially recognized form of intergroup conflict involving violence” – may be taking place, an essential characteristic of a „Civil War“ is that the protagonists involved must be vying for control of the state. (Wright 1964: 6)

In posing a number of questions to supposedly secure Realist understandings, theoretically sensitive interpretations suggest this conceptual ground to be unstable. Subsequently, Kennedy-Pipe & Jones (1998: 1) argue that: “Quite often what constitutes civil war is in the eye of the beholder”. Retired British military officer, Major-General Arthur Ramsay, reinforces this argument when describing how the Mozambiquan „Civil War“ “had gone on for twenty to thirty years, depending on which definition you choose.”¹ Kennedy-Pipe and Jones (1998: 2) argue: „Civil War“ implies, perhaps, “more than just state collapse” or a contest for the control of the state, but also includes “societal conflicts of a particular character and expressed in different ways.” Jeffrey Dixon (2006: 3) argues that Civil Wars have become more complex and “more fragmented, more internationalized, and less dyadic over time.” Alain Joxe (2002: 131) describes “every

¹ Quote taken during a seminar presentation by Major-General Angus Ramsay entitled “The Modalities of a Ceasefire”, Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University, 16 May 2008

civil war” as being “made up of strategic choices by local or individual regional powers aimed at the survival of these powers in the absence of protection from a higher level ([because] it has been destroyed).” (Joxe 2002: 131) Assuming Joxe means the state when referring to „a higher level“, this description is very different from the perspective adopted by Freedman who, as previously mentioned, puts emphasis on the existence of an effective government. The LSE’s Gwyn Prins (1999: 17) describes „Civil War“ in the end of the 20th century as “most uncivil in its manner of conduct” in that “it neither recognizes any value or humanity in the enemy, nor does it distinguish between war and crime.” Donald Snow highlights the “changing character of Civil Wars, particularly in Africa, where competing factions in states...vie not so much for political power but rather for what remains of the wealth of the country” (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 11) Dr. Peter Kagwanja encapsulates this line of thinking by describing how “Africa is configured as a continent with these strange wars”.² This simple truth sets the problématique: the perceived “persistence and brutality of contemporary civil wars have left many analysts puzzled.” (IISS 1998: 1) Thus – the concept of „Civil War“ looks to be theoretically unstable, driven by changing conceptual maps and by events on the ground. It is these events on the ground that inspired the agenda first set by the inaugural publication of the *Civil Wars* journal in 1998. This agenda is to publish pieces that “push against narrow conceptions of „Civil War“, encourage us to think in more general terms about both aspects of the compound term”, and “develop deeper understandings and interpretations of the phenomenon that is civil war.” (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 1, 3)

This thesis will aim to use thinking around contestation of the notion of „Civil War“ and its new points of conceptual departure to reveal the true meaning behind the claim that Civil War has changed. It will be argued that the term „Civil War“ is migratory in nature, allowing greater inclusivity of contemporary intra-state conflicts under its category, despite the perceived difference in their nature from more historical wars. This is the case, rather than it being a fixed term, as suggested by those who argue for a more

² Quote taken during a seminar presentation by Dr. Peter Kagwanja entitled “The 21st Scramble for Africa and the Emerging PAN-AFRICAN Security Strategy”, Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University, 7 May 2008.

vigilant social science approach. What will be provided in doing so is not only empirical evidence for the „migration of terms“ illuminated by Social Constructivist theory, but also an explanation for the seemingly contradictory claim that Civil War is increasing in occurrence while changing in nature. These objectives are to be pursued over the chapters that follow – the contents of each to follow very briefly here.

- Chapter 2 will explain the meaning behind what this thesis refers to as „migration“ and provide a theoretical explanation for the changes in the idea that is „Civil War“. To say that „Civil War“ as a term is migratory in nature is to say that there is a current understanding or perception of what „Civil War“ is that is different from a previous conceptual understanding from which the idea of „Civil War“ has shifted. This prior conceptualisation of „Civil War“ is the traditional or conventional definition as set out by Realists. An understanding of this definition, also to be discussed in Chapter 2, is indispensable in as far as it will serve as a point of comparison from which the migration of „Civil War“ can be gauged. An understanding as to how and why it is that this notion has migrated will be found in an explanation of Social Constructivist theory. Social Constructivism (in short hand: Constructivism) essentially holds that the social world is of our making. In attaching understanding or knowledge to physical realities – this happens through interpretation and language – „objects of our knowledge“ or „ideational structures“ are created and for Constructivists it is these that constitute the social world.
- The difference in how a classificatory term has come to be understood with time becomes apparent when that same term is applied to physical realities that are perceived to be different and are separated by time. It is here that the American Civil War of 1861–1865 and the conflict in Iraq following the American invasion in 2003 find their purpose as comparative case studies in Chapter 3. (Heidler 2000: xxxiii, xl; Dumbrell 2005: 36) After showing the classification of the American conflict as a „Civil War“ to be undisputed, this chapter will show that this classification is based on the conventional Realist definition of „Civil War“. This will be done by confirming the conditions set out in this definition, and

explained in Chapter 2, as being present in that conflict. The purpose in doing so will be to root the conventional Realist definition in history so as to credit its use as a conceptualisation of „Civil War“ from which the migration of this term can be made visible. The instability of the conceptual ground surrounding this definition was revealed by the challenges that originated in theoretically sensitive interpretations of „Civil War“ employed in the debate over how the conflict in Iraq was to be classified. This debate not only showed the term „Civil War“ to be a contested one, but also revealed what was argued to be the contrary nature of the conflict in Iraq to the American Civil War. In comparing these two conflicts with one another, in regards to the conditions for Civil War as set out in the conventional Realist definition, evidence for the migration of the term „Civil War“ will be provided.

Before moving beyond these introductory pages, there is something to be said about the distinction between „old“ and „new“ Civil Wars, the difficulties in employing a comparative method, and the significant reliance on internet sources as references for the work done in this thesis. Because this thesis contends that „Civil War“ is a migratory term (with time, the meaning underlying the term „Civil War“ has come to be understood in a different manner), it agrees with the observation that a distinction has been made between „old“ and „new“ „Civil Wars“. To claim that a distinction has been made between an „old“ kind of „Civil War“ and a „new“ kind of „Civil War“ is to imply that our concept of „Civil War“ has shifted. To this end, those who make such a claim are in support of the argument made in this thesis. The distinction between „old“ and „new“ „Civil Wars“ is highlighted in two articles authored by Mats Berdal and Stathis Kalyvas respectively. Both their articles, however, (“How „New“ are „New Wars“? Global Economic Change and the Study of Civil War” and “„New“ and „Old“ Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?”) highlight this distinction with the purpose of arguing against the validity thereof. (Berdal 2003: 477, Kalyvas 2001: 99) In Berdal’s article the idea that „Civil War“ has taken on a new nature primarily because of global economic change is contested. Berdal (2003: 490) gives three broad reasons – bulleted in brief below – as to why the distinction between „old and „new“ „Civil Wars“ is a false dichotomy:

- “The failure to account for the full range of motives that inspire or incite violent behaviour.”
- “The absence of a proper historical perspective.”
- “The tendency to simply and, in many cases, exaggerate the relative importance of global economic processes in sustaining civil wars.”

Similarly, Kalyvas (2001: 99) challenges the distinction between „old“ and „new“ „Civil Wars“ by arguing that, “On the one hand, information about recent or ongoing civil wars is typically incomplete and biased; on the other hand, historical research on earlier wars tends to be disregarded.” To elaborate on the reasons given in support of their argument is not necessary. This is because deciding on whether the distinction between „old“ and „new“ „Civil Wars“ is a valid one is irrelevant to the purposes of this thesis. What does matter, however, is the existence of the perception that „Civil Wars“ have changed and that those intra-state conflicts exhibiting what some believe to be new characteristics are classified under the term that is „Civil War“. This term is being described in this thesis as having migrated because people have come to call contemporary conflicts that are believed to be different from those in the past by the same term. Whether this belief is true or false has no bearing on whether the term is of a migratory nature or not. In achieving the objectives set out in this thesis, „belief“, „understanding“ and „perception“ are therefore of greater value than „hard fact“. In regards to the case studies, the idea is therefore not to determine that the American Civil War and the conflict in Iraq were different, but to show that they are perceived to be different, and then provide the necessary evidence in support of the claim that such a perception does exist.

The concerns held by Berdal and Kalyvas over how it is that contemporary „Civil Wars“ are interpreted should hold as much relevance to how conflicts were interpreted in the past as they do to the interpretation of conflicts in contemporary times. Any depiction of the American Civil War or the conflict in Iraq will therefore be open to the influence resulting from the concerns raised by Berdal and Kalyvas above. These concerns point to the problems inherent in comparative studies – problems that require some brief attention in a study whose empirical evidence in support of its theoretical argument involves a comparison – more specifically between the American Civil War and the conflict in Iraq.

It is the “how and why political phenomena might be compared” that marks comparative politics as a special area within political science. (Mair 1998: 309) This field of study is concerned with making comparisons with “the intention of identifying, and eventually explaining, the differences or similarities between them with respect to the particular phenomenon which is being analysed.” (Mair 1998: 310) “[T]he emphasis...is often on theory-building and theory-testing, with the... [political phenomena]...themselves acting as cases.” (Mair 1998: 310) Put differently, “comparing has been a particular way of connecting ideas derived from political philosophy and theory to empirical events and phenomena.” (Apter 1998: 372) In this thesis the idea of „Civil War“ as a migratory term – an idea supported by Constructivist theory – is connected to the American Civil War and the conflict in Iraq from 2003–2008. The latter empirical events are compared with the purpose of affirming the claim that the term „Civil War“ has migrated – a claim rooted in Constructivist theory.

Comparative Politics is also concerned with the “limits...of comparison itself.” (Mair 1998: 310) This concern is related to *how* political phenomena might be compared. The primary unit of analysis in the process of comparison is the institution, whether it is the state or the institutions that circumnavigate it. (Mair 1998: 312, 328) This being considered, Mair (1998: 324) makes the following commentary in highlighting the primary obstacle that arises in comparative studies: “[T]o the extent that national institutions and national governments lose their capacity to mould their own national environments, then to that extent the study of comparative politics faces potentially severe problems...If institutions do matter, how can those countries be analysed in which these very institutions change?” (Mair 1998: 324) The key issue addressed here is the use of analytical categories – that are not fixed in their meaning or function – when making comparisons between phenomena. In Chapter 2 it will be argued that with time we are encouraged to rethink concepts (or institutions) used in making sense of our world because of how new events or relations on the ground challenge their meaning and function. The greater the amount of time that has passed between the empirical phenomena being compared, the more likely it is that the obstacle noted by Mair above will then be aggravated. In this thesis a comparison between a contemporary and a

historical phenomenon, both of which are classified under the same term, raises this issue. The possibility always exists for the manner in which we think of the historical in the contemporary to be different from how the historical was conceived at the time of its happening. If how we think of the American Civil War is different today from how it was thought of when it happened the possibility exists for a current interpretation of that war to be distorted. The difficulty in making comparisons is therefore in making judgements on the past when how we conceive of that past is informed by current-day understandings that may be different from how that past happened. It has already been noted that „perception“ matters more than „truth“ in showing „Civil War“ to be a migratory term. This being the case, the use in this thesis of potentially distorted understandings of the past in making a comparison, should have no bearing on the mentioned objectives.

Finally, the significant reliance on internet sources as references for the work done in this thesis, particularly in relation to the debate surrounding the classification of the conflict in Iraq is related to two factors. First, the debate occurred in concurrence with the conflict and second, that it was short-lived. The „Iraq“ debate was one that may be said to have begun when on May 1 2003, George W. Bush, aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, declared that major combat operations in Iraq had come to an end. (Bash 2003: 1) His “speech and events surrounding it were widely publicized and served as the symbolic end to the war in Iraq.” (Bash 2003: 1) The question that arose subsequent to this announcement (made despite the continuation of conflict in that country) was this: in what terms were the events on the ground to be understood if not as a war between two states? The answer to this question was contested in a debate that continued – not after – but as the conflict in Iraq unfolded and became increasingly multifarious in its dynamics. It was therefore a debate over events that had occurred in what was at the time very recent history. Furthermore, because the „Iraq“ debate was founded predominantly on short-term political concerns – namely, the consequences that the „Civil War“ classification would hold for the United States (U.S.) Administration under Bush – the debate itself was short-lived. Political reasons for contesting the meaning of „Civil War“ and how the conflict in Iraq was to be classified became less important as Bush’s tenure drew to a close. It is for these reasons that references in this thesis relating to the conflict

in Iraq and the debate surrounding the meaning of „Civil War“ find their origin largely in „on-the-hour“ news reports and articles published by news agencies on the internet and during the time under consideration.

CHAPTER 2: MIGRATION IN THEORY & 'CIVIL WAR' DEFINED

INTRODUCTION

The written and spoken word frames and shapes our world because it changes our thinking, which in turn, can change circumstances. The word, therefore, has creative power over the social world.

“[A]...key tool man has to transform the world is the word...Man speaks to create and sustain culture...man uses his own word to establish dominion, to create culture, even to assign human identity...By his words, man brings civilisation to society through law, progress to the world through language and science, and beauty to the world through literature and music.” (Miller 1998: 230-231)

Consequently, the philosophy of language is an incredibly powerful tool to understand the world in which we live. It is one that has, however, been neglected in International Relations (IR). As a result, little attention has been given to how the core concepts of IR are constructed and reconstructed (with the latter process encompassing what one might call the „migration of terms“). The material that follows will be dedicated to providing empirical evidence for the contention that our understanding of „Civil War“ has changed with time. By showing the classification of a contemporary conflict as „Civil War“, despite its perceived difference from a Civil War further back in history, this thesis will show that the manner in which we conceive of „Civil War“ has shifted rather than having remained static since its initial classification. This is what makes „Civil War“ a term that is migratory in nature. It is therefore the intention of this thesis to show, particularly in regards to the term „Civil War“, how the meaning or understanding of a term we use is not always fixed but may rather change over time. The purpose of this chapter is first of all to provide a theoretical understanding of this process. The importance of this task lies in the fact that if we cannot describe something with words, we cannot understand it. In order to understand and recognise the conceptual migration evidenced in the subsequent chapter, its process must be described in words. Secondly, the chapter will provide an

understanding of how the term „Civil War“ has traditionally been understood before succumbing to the process of migration. This is to arrive at an understanding of the conditions inherent in the conventional Realist definition of „Civil War“, and necessary for a conflict to be classified as a „Civil War“ in Realist terms (i.e. the definitive criteria). To begin with some theoretical rumination is necessary.

TWO ‘WORLDS’ CONSTITUTED BY DIFFERENT ‘OBJECTS’

Constructivism came slowly to the study of IR but it has helped to situate issues of language alongside those of understanding and policy. In its essence, Constructivism holds that “we occupy a world of our making”. (Fierke 2007:183) Proponents of this approach claim that “the objects of our knowledge are not independent of our interpretations and our language.” (Adler 2002: 95) In making reference to “objects of our knowledge” Constructivists mean that there are also objects not of our knowledge. To say that an object is of our knowledge is to say that it comes from our knowledge, is a product of our knowledge, exists because of our knowledge, and is created by our knowledge. To say that an object is not of our knowledge would be to mean that it does not come from our knowledge, but exists irrespective thereof. This distinction is important because it brings understanding to the Constructivist code that “we occupy a world of our making” and more particularly, it brings understanding to what that „world“ is and how it is made. (Fierke 2007: 183) Put in the form of a question: what are these so-called „objects“ and what, besides the fact that one kind exists irrespective of our knowledge and the other because of our knowledge, distinguishes them? As this explanation suggests,

“[S]ocial facts, which are facts only by human agreement and which account for the majority of the facts in IR, differ from rocks and flowers, because, unlike the latter, their existence depends on human consciousness and language. In other words, social facts depend, by way of collective understanding and discourse, on the attachment of collective knowledge to physical reality.” (Adler 2002: 100)

Similarly,

“Most objects of international relations, unlike trees, rocks, or glaciers, exist only by virtue of human acts of creation which happen in a cultural, historical, and political context of meaning. They are social facts, rather than purely material ones, that exist because of the meaning and value attributed to them.” (Fierke 2007: 171)

For Constructivists, those objects not of our knowledge are therefore the physical phenomena that make up the natural world. So, as noted: rocks, flowers, trees and glaciers all exist prior to and apart from our knowledge. The objects of our knowledge are the social phenomena (referred to above as „social facts“) that make up the social world. They come into being when we attach knowledge to physical reality. Men and women for example, “make...states which are historical constructs. States are artificial creations and the state system is artificial too; it is made by men and women and if they want to, they can change it and develop it in new ways.” (Jackson & Sørensen 2007: 164) Therefore, the difference between objects not of our knowledge and objects of our knowledge is that the former constitute a concrete physical reality that can be touched and seen, while the latter is an abstract notion denoting a physical reality that cannot be touched because it is not concrete, yet can be seen because it exists in relationship between concrete entities. This is the reason why Constructivists contend that, “the social world is in part constructed of physical entities. But it is the ideas and beliefs concerning those entities which are most important: what those entities signify in the minds of people.” (Jackson & Sørensen 2007: 165) It is the ideas and beliefs concerning physical entities and the communication of these ideas and beliefs through language that is most important in the construction of the social world. Normative or ideational structures are therefore more important than material structures in shaping the behaviour of social and political actors.

“Where neorealists emphasize the material structure of the balance of military power, and Marxists stress the material structure of the capitalist world economy, constructivists argue that systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values also have structural characteristics, and that they exert powerful influence on social and political action.” (Reus-Smit 2001: 216-217)

THE CONSTITUTIVE ROLE OF LANGUAGE VIS-A-VIS THE SOCIAL WORLD

The „attaching of knowledge“ to physical reality involves interpreting the physical reality (i.e. making it understandable) through the use of words (i.e. language). This is where the constitutive role of language comes into play and it is why Constructivists argue that “the objects of our knowledge [i.e. social phenomena] are not independent of our interpretations and our language.” (Adler 2002: 95) The creative power of language has, very briefly, been referenced above. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein argues that “language itself is constitutive of reality.” (Van der Westhuizen 1997: 43) In a similar vein, Constructivists believe that “(l)anguage is bound up in the world rather than a mirror of it.” (Fierke 2007: 174) “Without language we could not begin to communicate with one another, attribute meaning to objects or acts in the world, think individual thoughts, or express feelings.” (Fierke 2007: 175) It is through communication that normative and ideational structures work their influence. (Reus-Smit 2001: 218) Until something can be described or interpreted with words, that thing will not be understood or even exist in the social world. Consequently it is the words ascribed to it that will give it existence and determine how it is understood and what influence it will have. Examples of the social phenomena that result from this construction process would include all those things that Fierke attributes as “objects of international relations” – one of which would be the notion of „Civil War“. These social phenomena make up the social world or the world of human interaction, which would include the political world, as it is made up of interactions between human beings or structures constituted and driven by human beings. This is why Jackson and Sørensen (2006: 164) write that human relations include international relations and why what Fierke (2007: 171) refers to as the “objects of international relations” are also objects of the social world. The social world, of which „Civil War“ is a constituent, is therefore not something like rocks, flowers, trees or glaciers:

“It does not exist on its own. It exists only as an intersubjective awareness among people; in that sense the... [social world] is constituted by ideas, not by material... [objects or phenomena]. It is a human invention or creation not of a physical or material kind but of a purely intellectual and ideational kind. It is a set of ideas, a body of thought, a system of norms, which has been arranged by certain people at a particular time and place.” (Jackson & Sørensen 2007: 162)

TIME AND THE CHALLENGE TO REALISM

To make a claim that „Civil War“ has „changed“ can therefore mean only one thing – the conceptual understanding of what „Civil War“ is has changed over time. Such a change is made possible by the fact that the construction of the social world is subject to interpretations and language, both of which change with time. Hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) contends “that the process of finding meaning is inherently an interpretivist process of constructing a reality that is conditioned by time.” (Van der Westhuizen 1997: 43) Scholars of hermeneutics argue then that the manner in which we construct the social world is conditioned by time. The meaning of „conditioning“ is “circumstances...affecting the functioning or existence...of something”. (Swannell 1992: 214) Consequently, it is not time in and of itself that conditions the construction of the social world, but rather the physical reality of events and circumstances that arise with the passing of time. As much as physical reality is the basis upon which humans construct the social world through interpretation and language, so too is this physical reality the basis upon which the social world is subject to change. Change occurs in the social world as interpretation and language is applied to the physical reality. As time passes, relationships change, effectively forming new kinds of relationships. In this process, the terms we use to identify concepts or social phenomena, that are the products of how we interpret previous relations, may be used to identify the new relations. Miller (1998: 125) tells us for example that, “As worldview changes, so do the words that mark it. Sometimes the words stay the same, but their meanings are changed.” Thus Constructivists believe that, “The subjects of international politics...are not static but ever evolving as they interact with each other and their environment” – that is, “In a situation of change, categories of identity or action are not likely to be static.” (Fierke 2007: 171, 175)

Tim Shaw refers to “the continuing „crisis“ in international relations at the end of the twentieth century: a somewhat disorganised world, in both intellectual and existential terms, of proliferating state and non-state actors, issues and institutions.” (Van der Westhuizen 1997: iii) This crisis in IR is a direct result of the passing of time and the inevitable change that comes with it. This change can either come to infringe upon or discard entirely the functionality of the concepts we conceive and use to describe (and to understand) the world in which we live. In the early 1970’s, for example, “the possibility that IR theorizing would...be reflective of the world it proclaimed to be capable of examining” was challenged. (Van der Westhuizen 1997: 22) For Van der Westhuizen (1997: 22) one of the most profound challenges against this function, and more particularly, “Realism’s state-centric affliction”, came when the concepts of „transnationalism“ and „interdependence“ were introduced in coming to terms with new events or relations on the ground. In their formulation they would have challenged and encouraged a rethinking of both the long-standing and more contemporary notions of „sovereignty“, „government“, „security“, and „democracy“. These are all examples of social phenomena whose conceptualisations have the potential to change, leading to a migration of the terms that identify them. The topic of this study, „Civil War“, must be viewed in a similar light.

In as far as IR has been in crisis because of the challenges it faces in describing the world today, so too has the theory that has dominated IR since the end of the Second World War. World War Two formed the watershed between IR that concerned itself with how things ought to be and IR that concerns itself with how things really are. (Burchill 1996: 68) The latter mode of thinking is what gave rise to Realist theory which viewed sovereign states as the primary units of analysis in an international system characterised by struggle and anarchy. (Burchill 1996: 80) The ability of the once dominant IR theory of Realism to understand, define, explain, and predict the political movements of the world in which we live has however, come under siege. This has happened because the core concepts with which it made these understandings, definitions, explanations, and predictions fall short of bringing understanding to contemporary events on the ground. It is no longer the case that the political events happening within states, between states, and

across states necessarily fit the conceptual moulds set out by Realism. This is why criticism has been levelled at Realist Theory for naturalising or reifying “the international system by treating structures [embodied in terms and] which have a specific and transitory history as if they were „permanent“, „normal“ or „given“ political fixtures.” (Burchill 1996: 88-89) Where the need has existed new terms have come into being in order to make sense of and classify an unknown or not yet seen social (or political) world. Alternatively, longstanding terms have come to adopt new meanings. With regards to the latter, the Realist understanding of „Civil War“ – challenged by the classification of „new“ intra-state conflicts – is a case in point. Writing in 1997, Van der Westhuizen (2) observed that,

“As states continue to concede much of their primacy to other non-state actors, transnational flows and new global processes, mainstream IR theorising finds itself increasingly in disarray, unable to account for the multitude of forces sweeping through and simply past state borders.”

Similarly, Berdal (2003: 488) explains how an important aspect of the fragmentation and multi-factionalism that is seen as an element unique to contemporary „Civil Wars“ “lies in the transnational or transborder characteristics that many modern war economies have acquired.” “This is one reason why the terms „intrastate“, „civil“ or „internal“ used to describe conflicts are often so problematic.” (Berdal 2003: 488) It is because of the forces (noted by Van der Westhuizen and Berdal above) that show little regard for state sovereignty that Dr. Peter Kagwanja described how “Africa is configured as a continent with these strange wars”.³ The greater the impact of such forces on the internal workings of a state during a time of conflict, the more likely it is for the conflict in question to be different from the conventional Realist conceptualisation of „Civil War“. Those academics, laymen, and politicians who have come to understand and name these „strange wars“ as „Civil Wars“ could not have done so had they not moved outside of the conventional Realist understanding of what „Civil War“ is. This understanding has more

³ Quote taken during seminar presentation by Dr. Peter Kagwanja, entitled, “The 21st Scramble for Africa and the Emerging PAN-AFRICAN Security Strategy”, Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University, 7 May 2008.

and more been unable, as is the case with IR in general, to account for what is happening on the ground. With time, circumstances or events on the ground arise that may come to affect (because of interpretation) the functioning or understanding of a concept. In this process, the perception of the existence or occurrence of the social phenomena that this concept identifies is also affected. With the inevitable passing of time, the possibility exists for the conceptual understanding (i.e. the „construction“) of a social phenomenon that constitutes the social world to change with it. This explains how the perceived occurrence of „Civil War“ has varied among academic and political commentators because the function of the concept (i.e. the understanding or interpretation it exudes) has changed with time.

It is within this Constructivist camp that this possibility for change with regards to the social dimensions of international relations is emphasised. (Fierke 2007: 167) This is based on the Constructivist belief in “difference across context rather than a single objective reality.” (Fierke 2007: 168) Rather than a single objective understanding of what „Civil War“ is, there can be different understandings expressed across context. So, while one understanding of the term „Civil War“ is applied in thinking about the American Civil War, a different understanding is applied by those classifying the conflict in Iraq by the same term. Different understandings can therefore be expressed across contexts. This is why Keegan’s classification of what he argues to be the only five cases of „Civil War“ includes the American Civil War but excludes the conflict in Sierra Leone from 1991–2002 for example (classified by many as a „Civil War“). (Wong 2006: 2, Abdullah 2004:1)

A CRITICAL DISCLAIMER: CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE DANGER OF RELATIVISM

For Constructivists the degree to which an understanding or conceptualisation holds creative currency (i.e. its ability to construct reality or what is accepted as the truth) at any particular time will depend on the degree to which it constitutes what Adler (2002: 100) calls “collective knowledge” or what Jackson and Sørensen (2007: 162) call an “intersubjective awareness among people”. In another way, Alexander Wendt argues that

concepts (or what he calls social structures) “are defined, in part, by shared understandings, expectations, or knowledge.” (Jackson & Sørensen 2007: 165) The truth of whether a social structure (like „Civil War“) exists or not is therefore dependent on agreement as to how it is defined. Adler (2002: 100) argues that a „social fact“ is a fact only by human agreement and we find human agreement where there is collective knowledge or an intersubjective awareness. An epistemological conundrum arises however – as evidenced in the debate over Iraq – when a significant number of people inherit a collective knowledge or have intersubjective awareness that is different to that held by another group of people that is also significant in number. It is for this reason that, as Kennedy-Pipe & Jones (1998: 1) put it, “Quite often what constitutes civil war is in the eye of the beholder”.

The purpose behind the world being classified, or knowledge being concept-bound, is to bring understanding and, in turn, order to the world in which we live. „Order“ being the ideal state of existence by which life on earth with other human beings is made not only possible, but also mutually beneficial. Consider the Constructivist tenant: it is the ideas and beliefs concerning physical entities and the communication of these ideas and beliefs through language that is most important in the construction of the social world. A cornerstone in the foundation of order must therefore be conceptual order. The extent to which we as humans succeed in attaining an ordered existence is therefore dependent upon the manner and degree to which we objectively define or understand different terms and then abide by them – for example, „right“ and „wrong“ or „just“ and „unjust“. Constructivism, as a theory, explains how the concepts that constitute the social world can migrate. The obvious consequence of this is the creation of a world that is relative because it is governed by concepts that are made relative by the fact that their meaning is dependent on interpretation and language that is subject to time. The greater the relativity and subjective character of a concept – what can be called conceptual or ideational disorder – and the greater significance and purpose that concept holds in creating and maintaining order in the physical, the more likely disorder is to prevail in relations between human beings. For this reason, Constructivism gives too much credit to the knowledge of man – knowledge dictated by interpretation, language and time – in the

construction of what is considered to be true or real to the social world. For this reason – for the sake of truth – Constructivism is a theory which, while it does well to explain the migration of terms, it cannot (for the reasons given above) be applied wholesale in arriving at an understanding of how the social world in which we live was and continues to be created. Put differently, it cannot be said that knowledge only results from individuals acting within a group and that knowledge therefore does not “in any sense pre-exist its knowers”. (Archer 1998: 2)

“An inherent weakness of postmodern assertions in general is what appears to be the self-contradiction of its basic position. Can it be said in truth that reality contains no inherent truth? As Anderson, Reder, and Simon (1995) put it, „radical constructivists cannot argue for any agenda if they deny a consensus as to values.“” (Archer 1998: 11)

Apart from a wholehearted acceptance of Constructivism having dire consequences for the maintenance of the kind of order previously mentioned, it also comes into direct contention with a worldview that, for anyone of Christian faith, serves as the foundation for the truth that is so necessary in the maintenance of such an order. Archer (1998: 12) makes the observation that “Constructivism is a theoretical framework that has gained prominence...in recent years.” He argues however, that “this framework is based on premises not acceptable within a... [Theistic]...worldview.” (Archer 1998: 12) Simply put, a Theistic worldview is one that believes in a God who is supernaturally revealed to man and who sustains a personal relation to his creatures. (Swannell 1992: 1134) From this perspective, the universe is therefore seen as ultimately personal in the sense that it is relational. (Miller 1998: 292) Like the social world for Constructivists, the physical world for those of a Theistic worldview, came into existence through the expression of thought between related beings. (Barrett & Klanderian 2006: 4) Like Constructivism, the Theistic worldview therefore places primary value on relational and linguistic creativity. The difference between Constructivism and Theism in this regard exists in two ways. First, this creativity is believed by Theists to be rooted in an Entity that is independent of human beings, as opposed to being exclusive to humankind. “Man has been *delegated* the ability to act creatively, to originate ideas, and, with his own hands, to bring those ideas into the physical world.” (Miller 1998: 157) Second, this creativity is believed by Theists

to have played (and continue to play) a foundational role in *both* the physical and the social realms. We are “given breath, set into relationship, [and] called to give names to order the creation in a language system.” (Barrett & Klanderman 2006: 4).

Subsequently, the Theistic worldview in light of Constructivist theory and the danger of relativism, posits that while all concepts have the potential to migrate or change in meaning, not all are open to having their meanings changed (irrespective of what we might believe or say as human beings) – they are fixed. Here the Constructivist distinction between objects of our knowledge that make the social world and objects not of our knowledge that make the physical world is contested. Rather, the social world is made up of objects of our knowledge as well as objects not of our knowledge, while the same can be said for the physical world. From a Theistic worldview a concept is fixed as long as it exists as an object not of our knowledge. However, to explain the distinction between migratory concepts of this kind, whose truth is independent of man’s agreement, and those migratory concepts whose truth is dependent on the agreement of man, would be to elaborate on an argument that extends beyond the ambit of this thesis. The point to be made over the preceding passages is that Constructivism cannot be applied wholesale in arriving at an understanding of how the social world in which we live was and continues to be created. What matters beyond this point (and as far as the purposes of this thesis are concerned) is that „Civil War“ is shown to be a migratory term and that Constructivism offers a theoretical understanding of how and why this migration takes place. Because the understanding of what „Civil War“ means is dependent on evolving interpretation and language, it is liable to change. It is because of the migration of „Civil War“ that sense can be made of the concurrent claims that Civil Wars have increased in occurrence while also changing in their nature.

OPPOSING NOTIONS OF ‘CIVIL WAR’

Constructivism, therefore, offers a theoretical explanation as to how „Civil War“ can be a migratory term. What remains in this thesis is to show that it has in fact migrated. It is here that we find value in the debate that surrounded events in Iraq following the

American invasion of 2003, particularly the conflict that ran between the declared end to the invasion and the end of the U.S. Administration of George W. Bush. It was in the debate over whether the conflict in Iraq constituted a „Civil War“ or not that Stanford University Professor, James Fearon (2006: 1), had the following to say:

“Politics aside...the definition of civil war is not arbitrary. For some – and perhaps especially Americans – the term brings to mind all-out historical conflicts along the lines of the U.S. or Spanish Civil Wars. According to this notion, there will not be civil war in Iraq until we see mass mobilisation of sectarian communities behind more or less conventional armies.”

Fearon’s commentary brings to light the value of the debate over Iraq for the purposes of this thesis. He not only draws to our attention the posterity of the American Civil War and the conceptual understanding of „Civil War“ that evokes thinking about this historical war, but also how it was drawn in opposition to the nature of the conflict exhibited in Iraq between the years 2003 and 2008. According to this notion of „Civil War“ (that brings to mind all-out historical conflicts such as the American Civil War) the conflict in Iraq was not a „Civil War“. However, as will be seen in Chapter 3, there were those who classified Iraq under this term. Subsequently, different conceptualisations of „Civil War“, brought together in opposition to one another in the debate over „one“ conflict, will be evident in this thesis. In providing evidence for the migration of the term „Civil War“, Fearon’s statement above necessitates a number of questions, the first of which is to be answered in what remains of this chapter, namely: what is the notion of „Civil War“ that brings to mind all-out historical conflicts like the American Civil War?

This leads us to the second question: does a correlation exist between this notion and the physical reality of the American Civil War. In other words, is this idea of „Civil War“, argued by Fearon as having been attached to the physical reality that is the American Civil War, reflective of that physical reality? If so, this notion of „Civil War“ is a conceptual understanding that is rooted in time and from which the term „Civil War“ can then be shown to have migrated. If the American Civil War serves the purpose of showing where „Civil War“ as a term has come from in its migratory journey, then the

conflict in Iraq will serve the purpose of showing what has become of the understanding attributed to this term. The third question to be asked is how those who classified events in Iraq as a „Civil War“ understood this term? The degree to which their notion of „Civil War“ differs from that notion used to classify the American Civil War will not only confirm the migration of „Civil War“ but will also indicate the extent or direction of that migration. How those who classified events in Iraq conceived of this term and to what degree their conceptualisation differed from the understanding of „Civil War“ rooted in earlier history will be made apparent in the chapter that follows, as the nature of the conflict in Iraq is compared to that of the American Civil War.

THE REALIST NOTION OF ‘CIVIL WAR’

To begin with the first question and in pursuit of this chapter’s second objective: what is the notion of „Civil War“ that for some, as Fearon (2006: 1) tells us, brings to mind all-out historical conflicts like the American Civil War? It is the same notion of „Civil War“ advocated by Keegan and Bull in the debate over Iraq – a notion that for them not only disqualified Iraq from being a „Civil War“, but also includes under its classification the American Civil War. For these scholars passing the test of posterity and achieving historical status as a civil war is extremely rare. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) In the time of the debate over Iraq they could think of only five clear-cut cases, one of which was the American Civil War of 1861–1865. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) This notion embodies the conventional Realist understanding of „Civil War“ and will be referred to as such during the remainder of this work. In this understanding, „Civil War“ is understood as revolving around one of the core concepts of Realism – sovereignty – because it encompasses a fight for the sovereign control of the state. In order for a conflict to be classified as „Civil War“ Keegan and Bull (2006: 18) argue that it needs to fulfil the “three principal defining aspects of a civil war”: “The violence must be „civil“, it must be „war“, and its aims must be either the exercise or the acquisition of national authority.” These three aspects on their own fall short of offering a decisive understanding as to what „Civil War“ is and may well in fact come to recognise more than the five conflicts classified by Keegan and Bull as „Civil War“. With this in mind Keegan and Bull (2006:

18) follow the principal defining criteria with what they describe as the “numerous subsidiary requirements”. It is to these definitive criteria and their subsidiary requirements that the work now turns.

What makes a war „Civil“ is that “the struggle must be conducted within a national territory, and that it must be carried on largely by the people of that territory, fighting between themselves.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) „National territory“ is the territory of the state in question – the state being that entity in IR that possesses “a permanent population, a defined territory and a government capable of maintaining effective control over its territory and of conducting international relations with other states.” (Evans & Newnham 1998: 512) To say however, that a „Civil War“ need only be conducted within a national territory would allow for no distinction between inter-state wars that can and have been fought in one national territory and intra-state wars, that can only be fought in one national territory. Consequently, that which is important for distinction is that the conflict must be engaged largely by the people of that territory. In other words, the war is known as „Civil“ because it pertains to or involves a conflict fought between the citizens of one state.

For a conflict to be classified as a „Civil War“ the violence must constitute „war“. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) For Wright (1964: 6), war is (from the sociological point of view) “a socially recognized form of intergroup conflict involving violence”. Keegan and Bull (2006: 18) settle on “hostile [i.e. violent] contention by means of armed forces” that are military in nature. So how is it that „war“ is different from things like *coups d'état*, communal conflict, terrorism and common crime? For Keegan and Bull the existence of armed forces contending with one another in a hostile fashion will depend, apart from the fact that they are armed, on the violence in the conflict being of a military character. These military characteristics include: battles, “uniforms, clear chains of command, acknowledged leadership, and official, public war aims.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 19) They purvey a “minimum degree of organisation, formality and identifiability of the combatants.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 1) So, rather than the battles having to be organised, their criteria require that the people are. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) By this

they mean that “war requires leaders who say what they are fighting for and why, and a public that understands what it is all about – the divisions...and the goals.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) It is only when the public have an understanding as to what the conflict is about together with the factions that constitute it, and their goals, that they can participate to a degree that may be described as „popular“. Despite Keegan and Bull not making it clear as to what the definitive aspects embodied in such a description are, it is in a comparison between the American Civil War and the conflict in Iraq that we gain a better understanding of what „popular participation“ looks like and how it differed between the two conflicts. Although Keegan and Bull (2006: 18) are particular in naming this subsidiary requirement under the „civil“ part of their definition it is well suited under this second definitive aspect of „war“ because it does better in distinguishing the conflict that is „war“ from the other forms of violence previously mentioned, than it does in adding to an understanding of the „civil“ aspect of „Civil War“.

The final subsidiary requirement for violence to be considered „war“ is that it must be directed in a manner whereby civilians are not the “principal targets”. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 20) It is when civilians become the principal targets that the classification of „war“ comes into question. The reason for this is quite clearly that civilians are distinguished by the fact that they fall outside of the armed forces and so, if those who fall outside of the armed forces come to be the principal targets of violence, that violence moves closer to being of a one-sided character and further away from being “hostile contention by means of armed forces”. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) A conflict may exist, however, whereby state forces are not primary to it and civilians are killing one another – the violence is directed between factions or regions. In this situation, “The looser definition of the „war“ part of civil war...acknowledges that if factions or regions are killing enough people for enough time, it can be petty not to recognise the conflict as something very like war.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 20) That which distinguishes such a conflict from „Civil War“, however, is the exclusion of state forces as primary to the violence. If the war is one over state control, it must be assumed that the soldiers of the armed forces defending the state and those of the armed forces fighting against the state must be the principal targets of violence, rather than civilians. If this is not the case, the objective of the conflict and, in

turn, its classification as a „Civil War“ at least in the conventional Realist sense, comes into question. This is not to say that a Civil War cannot incur any degree of civilian casualty. The point to be made is that if civilians are dying they cannot be the principal targets in the conflict if that conflict is to be classified as one in which acquisition of state authority is the primary objective.

Essentially, the third defining aspect of a „Civil War“ for Keegan and Bull (2006: 18) is authority. The aim of the violence must be “either the exercise or the acquisition of national authority.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) In other words, “The point of the violence must be sovereign rule: combatants must be trying either to seize national power or to maintain it.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) IR theorists who describe „Civil War“ as “protracted internal violence aimed at securing control of the political and legal apparatus of a state” and who argue that “a conflict does not take on the characteristics of a civil war until an attempt is made to take over the basic functions of the state”, confirm this third aspect. (Evans and Newnham 1998: 64, Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 1) What does it mean however to take over the basic functions of the state? “[W]hat William Zartman refers to as „the basic functions of the state“” are born in the Westphalian ideal that revolves around “the provision of security, welfare and representation.” (Williams 2008: 2) These basic functions are expressed more specifically in

“the right of states to exercise five monopoly powers: the right to monopolize control of the instruments of violence; the sole right to tax citizens; the prerogative of ordering the political allegiances of citizens and of enlisting their support in war; the sovereign right to adjudicate in disputes between citizens; the exclusive right of representation in international society which has been linked with the authority to bind the whole community in international law.” (Williams 2008: 2)

If „Civil War“ implies “the exercise or acquisition of national authority” or an attempt “to take over the basic functions of the state”, it follows that authority or the basic functions of the state must be in place for the conflict to be classified as a „Civil War“. It is here that Freedman (2006: BBC News) argues for the following condition as an essential requirement before classifying a conflict as „Civil War“: one “in which it is possible for

one side to defeat the other in battle” in pursuit of state control as opposed to a conflict in which there is “a complete breakdown of social order so that there is no effective government at all.” In other words, even if all the basic functions of the state do not exist, there must be a significant level of social order that makes visible some form of effective government that in turn makes visible a fight for national authority. Fighting for “the exercise or the acquisition of national authority” could involve either “fighting for control of the political center or control over a separatist state” (Wong 2006: 1) Fighting for accession to the state or succession from the state implies explicit territorial ambitions – the final subsidiary requirement set out in Keegan and Bull’s third definitive aspect of „Civil War“. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 20)

ADVANTAGES IN USING THE REALIST NOTION AS A POINT OF COMPARISON

The advantages inherent in the use of this Realist notion exist because of the conservative nature of the notion itself, and also because of its conceptual link to the quintessential American Civil War specifically. A brief explanation of both these considerations, in addition to the consequential advantages, will now follow. With regards to the conservative nature of the notion, it narrows the occurrence of Civil War down to 5 clear-cut cases in history (at least until 2006) – these being the English (1642-49), the American (1861-65), the Russian (1918-21), the Spanish (1936-39) and the Lebanese (1975-90) Civil Wars. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) The conservative nature of the conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“ therefore excludes any other intra-state conflict ever fought from being identified in the same manner as these conflicts. Further reference to and analysis of those Civil Wars apart from the American conflict is unnecessary for two reasons. First, the remaining conflicts were classified with the American Civil War because, for Keegan and Bull, they fulfil the same requirements for „Civil War“ classification as set out in the Realist notion. The American Civil War will therefore serve the same purpose as a case study, as any one of the other „Civil Wars“ classified by Keegan and Bull. Reasons for choosing the American Civil War in particular, will be discussed shortly. Second, it is only necessary to show the correspondence between the notion and one physical reality to judge the migration of the

term. The conservative understanding of „Civil War“ adopted by Realists has a number of advantages for this analysis.

- First, it is in no danger of exceeding what is argued to be the necessary vigilance in the social sciences to ensure that useful concepts do not become devalued through overextension.
- Second, the more conservative the parameters, the more assured we can be that those conflicts classified as „Civil Wars“ within those parameters are agreed upon as of this kind.
- Third, its narrow scope of inclusivity will give a greater sense of the conceptual migration of „Civil War“ as a term, when bearing in mind how „Civil War“ is thought of today, particularly in the debate over Iraq.

The American Civil War falls on one side of the Cold War that serves as a watershed in history – a watershed that has shown the conventional classification of Civil War to be ineffective in understanding post–Cold War intrastate conflicts – as Alley (2004: 3) observes, “Reviewing post–Cold War conditions, Hobsbawm found that these activities [intra-state wars] did not fit conventional classifications of either international or civil war [such as the American Civil War] resulting „in a global disorder whose nature was unclear.”” Hobsbawm believes therefore that post–Cold War intra-state conflicts do not fit conventional classifications of „Civil War.” Similarly, Kalyvas (2002: 99) argues that “the end of the Cold War has robbed analysts of the clear categories that had made possible an orderly, if ultimately flawed, coding of civil wars.” In addition, he states that

“The demise of the Cold War potentially affected the way in which civil wars were fought, if not their frequency...At the same time, it is often overlooked that the end of the cold war has decisively affected how civil wars are interpreted and coded by both participants and observers.”
(Kalyvas 2001: 117)

For Berdal (2003: 477) the Cold War “distorted thinking about war and peace” – this being “true in particular for the study of civil or intrastate wars”. He goes on to argue that the Cold War “had a liberating impact on the study of conflict, causing a „strong feeling

of living in a period of transition“ to again permeate much of the writings and debates about sources of war and peace in the international system.” (Berdal 2003: 477) Whether the view that post–Cold War conflicts are different from pre–Cold War conflicts is distorted or not, is of no concern. What matters for the purposes of this thesis is that conflicts perceived to be different are shown to have been classified under the same term. This being the objective and considering the claims made with regards to the effect of the Cold War on the conceptual understanding of „Civil War“, it would be beneficial to choose conflicts from either side of the Cold War in a comparative analysis. It is in comparisons of this kind that evidence in support of the argument that „Civil War“ is a migratory term is likely to be found. The advantage therefore in using the conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“ as a point of comparison is that it has been linked to a conflict that falls on one side of the Cold War. Another advantage in the use of this notion of „Civil War“ is its link to a conflict whose classification as a „Civil War“ remains uncontested.

The fact that the idea of the American Civil War – a conflict that took place more than a century ago – is still evoked today in considering the meaning of „Civil War“ suggests the distinction and posterity, not only of the American conflict but also of the notion that classified it. There are a number of factors that have encouraged this posterity. In his study, Yee (2002: 131) finds an analysis of the American Civil War compelling because “it was the country’s most momentous event since its founding.” Keithly (2001: 35) describes it as having “an unshakeable hold on the American imagination, largely because it was the defining moment in the country’s history and its paramount emotional experience.” Robert Warren “opens his book, *The Legacy of the Civil War*, with the dual claim that the Civil War was the entrance of the U.S. into history, and the origin of the U.S. not as a state but as a nation.” (Burt 2007: 2) “The Civil War, in the doing of it, would mark the country’s most tragic time, but the war, in the meaning of it, became its finest hour.” (Heidler 2000: 8) Pressly (1962: 17-18) explains that “part of the sustained interest in that era would seem to be due to the fact that the Civil War has appeared to later generations as one of the pivotal events in the nation’s history, comparable to...the seventeenth century Civil War in the history of England.” In providing strict terms for

the classification of „Civil War“ Freedman (2006: 1) also sights the American Civil War; he argues that, “The American Civil War fits the category”. Keegan and Bull (2006: 19) argue that, “In its intensity and totality, it anticipated the big civil wars that were to follow in the 20th century.” In this sense the American Civil War served as a forerunner to the manner in which the notion of „Civil War“ would be perceived. What matters therefore is not whether this notion serves as a holistic conceptualisation of „Civil War“ – it makes no reference to the required death toll for example – but that it stood in opposition to those notions classifying Iraq as a „Civil War“, while also including the American Civil War, under its category. In taking cognisance of an idea expressed in a *New York Post* article – “As Goes America, Goes the World” – it is conceivable that despite this sentiment surrounding the American Civil War being expressed particularly in America, the conflict is also likely to have found agreement as a Civil War by academic communities beyond American borders. (Hanson 2008: 1) This is likely to be the case because the academic community in America has largely “dominated the research agenda of the „global discipline“ of International Relations.” (Schmidt 2001: 968)

CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on two objectives, the first of which was to use Constructivism as the theoretical explanation underlying the argument made in this thesis – that „Civil War“ is a migratory term. With this in mind the second objective was also necessary, namely, to make known the conceptual understanding of „Civil War“ from which the term is argued to have migrated. To achieve this objective, was simply to come to an understanding as to what the conventional Realist definition of „Civil War“ entails – the same conceptual understanding of „Civil War“ that classifies the American Civil War and that stood in opposition to the conflict in Iraq coming under the same classification. If we have a conflict that is known and agreed upon as a „Civil War“, we also know that in the very least, the same could once be said of the concept underlying the term used to classify that conflict. Based on two factors, it is true to say that it is the conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“ that has been attached to the physical reality that was the American

Civil War (the uncontested classification of the American Civil War has just been discussed). The first is Fearon's (2006: 1) comment that "the term [„Civil War“] brings to mind all-out historical conflicts along the lines of the U.S. or Spanish Civil Wars. (Fearon 2006: 1) Secondly, we know that the "term" mentioned by Fearon encapsulates the conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“ because Keegan and Bull use this notion in including the American Civil War as one of their five „clear-cut“ cases.

It was in illuminating the definitive criteria of this historically driven concept that we now have a point of conceptual comparison whereby the notion of „Civil War“ forwarded in the debate over Iraq by those thinking outside of the Realist paradigm, is seen to be very different. What that different understanding is or how far „Civil War“ has come in its migratory journey will form the second objective of the next chapter. Here the task will be to compare the nature of the American Civil War, classified in Realist terms, with the very different conflict in Iraq. It is here that two conflicts, different in nature, yet classified by some under the same term, will reveal the migration of „Civil War“. What remains to be done as the first task of the next chapter however, is to show that the conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“ is in fact reflective of the physical reality that was the American Civil War. This will be done by showing the conditions for „Civil War“ inherent in the conventional Realist definition as having been present in the American Civil War. In doing so, the conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“ will be rooted in time, making it a point of comparison from which the term „Civil War“ can be shown to have migrated.

CHAPTER 3: 'AMERICA' & 'IRAQ' – DIFFERENT CONFLICTS UNDER THE SAME TERM

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter there are two objectives to be pursued in concurrence. The one is to provide empirical evidence in support of the link between the concept – being the Realist notion of „Civil War“ – and the physical reality – being the American Civil War. To do so, the three conditions for „Civil War“ together with their subsidiary requirements contained in the conventional Realist definition, must be shown as present in this conflict. While the location in this chapter of these criteria in the American Civil War will confirm that „Civil War“ has traditionally been thought of in the conventional Realist terms explained in Chapter 2, the debate over the conflict in Iraq between the years 2003 and 2008, and more specifically the views held by those in favour of „Civil War“ classification of the conflict, will reveal how „Civil War“ has come to be conceptualised. It was in the debate over Iraq that these two ideas of „Civil War“ met in opposition to one another – one rooted in history and Realist terms; the other conceived in the Constructivist mindset that says “we occupy a world of our making.” (Fierke 2007: 183)

The second objective is to reveal the migration of „Civil War“ by comparing the nature of the American Civil War (that confirms its classification under Realist terms) with the nature of the more contemporary conflict in Iraq. Based on the given material, both conflicts will be perceived as different from one another. Keegan and Bull asked whether Iraq could be, “the first civil war ever without battles, generals, explicit war aims, the use of partisan public rhetoric by civilian leaders, mass public participation and targets of a predominantly military nature?” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 20) They argued that these are the “civil war ingredients missing from the conflict in Iraq.” (Brenjo 2006: 1) Keegan went on to say that up until “the feuding groups are vying for national authority, have leaders who publicly announce what they are fighting for and clash in set-piece battles while wearing uniforms”, what is happening in Iraq will remain separate from „Civil War“. (Wong 2006 2) Where differences exist between the American Civil War and the

conflict in Iraq, this comparison will happen immediately following the location in the American Civil War of the definitive criteria set out in the Realist definition.

Before locating the conventional Realist definition of Civil War in history, and highlighting the differences between the American Civil War and the conflict in Iraq, a number of preliminary comments must be made. First, the intention in this chapter is not to argue against „Iraq“ being classified as a „Civil War“, but to show how, despite it falling short of the conventional Realist criteria, there were those who insisted on calling it a „Civil War“. The attention given to Iraq is therefore not to take a position on whether the country was in a state of „Civil War“ between the years 2003–2008 or not. Rather, it is to reflect on some of the arguments and perspectives of those on both sides of the debate and how their contributions raised questions concerning events in Iraq that pertain to how „Civil War“ is understood. Who in Iraq was the legitimate government? To what degree was it an effective one? And what degree and direction of conflict would have constituted a war – civil or other? Put differently, were those engaging in conflict in Iraq conducting a Civil War, and for what reasons did those considering this question hold any particular answer? The varied answers to these questions suggested two things: the understanding of „Civil War“ is a contested one; and because one side of the debate was contested by a notion that classified a historical conflict understood to be very different to that in Iraq, the term „Civil War“ is of a migratory nature. It is this migration that encouraged debate in the first place. Second, it is not the intention, nor is it necessary, to search and argue for the absence in the Iraq conflict of every criteria for „Civil War“ classification as set out by Keegan and Bull, and found in the American Civil War. Rather it is sufficient to show that the Iraq conflict was different based only on the conditions described in the debate, and to an extent that makes the migration of the notion of „Civil War“ evident.

Third, the challenge against the Realist notion of „Civil War“ exists, not because the conflicts that have fallen under its classificatory parameters are not believed to be Civil Wars, but because intra-state conflicts that fall outside of these parameters are being labelled as „Civil War“ – the conflict in Iraq being the example in this thesis. In other words, the challenge exists because of the exclusivity of the notion – related to the

waning of Realism noted in Chapter 1 – as opposed to its inclusivity. The debate over the classification of the conflict in Iraq happened because the concept that classified the American Civil War has become as porous as the theory in which it is sourced. This porosity is what has encouraged the migration of „Civil War“. The idea is therefore not to reclassify conflicts of the past, or the five „clear-cut“ cases included in Keegan and Bull’s classification, as something other than „Civil War“, but to show that conflicts that are different from how „Civil War“ was understood in the past are being classified under the same term in contemporary times. The American Civil War therefore maintains its status as the quintessential „Civil War“, irrespective of the migration of the term that classified it.

THE INTEREST IN ‘IRAQ’ AS A CASE STUDY

In his book entitled *The Assassins Gate: America in Iraq*, George Packer (2006: 335) refers to “the first year of the war after the war”. The significance of his referral is that it illustrates the belief that that which followed the end of the war between America and Saddam Hussein’s government was in itself a war, but a war that was separate and different, in Packer’s view, from the one that took America from being an invading force to an occupying one. It was the debate surrounding the classification of the conflict that followed Bush’s declaration of an end to major combat operations, that further encouraged an academic interest in what constitutes „Civil War“, and for the purposes of this thesis – the conceptual understanding thereof. Sociologists, writing in the twentieth century, describe war as “a socially recognized form of intergroup conflict involving violence.” (Wright 1964: 6) If „war“ is one kind of conflict, the question debated over events in Iraq was what makes this kind of conflict „Civil“? If there was a “war after the war”, as Packer’s commentary suggests, what made the latter different from the former, and for what reasons were commentators divided over how this difference was to be understood? The answers to these questions reveal the shifting notion of „Civil War“.

„Iraq“ is not of interest to this thesis because it is unique in the dynamics that, for Realists, made it something other than „Civil War“. It is here that Keegan and Bull (2006: 20) gave

too much significance to the nature of the conflict in Iraq when they asked whether it could be, “the first civil war ever without battles, generals, explicit war aims, the use of partisan public rhetoric by civilian leaders, mass public participation and targets of a predominantly military nature?” Although the conflict in Iraq may well have been without these elements, Donald Snow’s reference to the “changing character of Civil Wars, particularly in Africa” suggests that it was not unique in this regard. (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 11) Apart from Iraq, up to as many as a hundred conflicts since the end of the Cold War have also been labelled as „Civil Wars“ – this, despite the perception that they are different in their nature from the kind of conflict portrayed in the conventional Realist definition of „Civil War“. (Smith 2006: 3) This existence of this perception is confirmed by the fact that none of these conflicts are included in Keegan and Bull’s classification that contains only five cases of „Civil War“. The conflict in Iraq was therefore not as unique as Keegan and Bull may have suggested. The point to be made is that „Iraq“ is not the first conflict, classified by some as „Civil War“, without at least one of the conventional Realist conditions set out by Keegan and Bull. Prior to Iraq we had already begun to think of „other types“ of conflict as „Civil War“. The value of the conflict in Iraq as a case study in this thesis exists then not because it serves as a break-away case in how „Civil War“ is defined and thought of, but because it brought the new way of thinking about „Civil War“ to light. It was the debate over how the conflict in Iraq should be named that highlighted the migration of „Civil War“. Had it not been for the shift in how this term is understood, and the added involvement of a world superpower that did not want „Civil War“ status to be given to the violence in Iraq, the classification of the violence as such a conflict would not have been contested at all. The Bush Administration would not have had the need to avoid „Civil War“ classification of the conflict in Iraq (or argue against those who had already done so) had it not been for the fact that „Civil War“ is a migratory term – a term thought of today in a manner very different from the notion that, “For some – and perhaps especially Americans...brings to mind all-out historical conflicts along the lines of the U.S. or Spanish Civil Wars.” (Fearon 2006: 1)

THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE

The debate over Iraq's „Civil War“ classification was rooted in the Bush Administration's political considerations that, specifically in America, also came to involve the academic community, but for reasons aside from short-term political concerns. The debate was politically driven in as far as the classification of the conflict in Iraq held implications for the U.S. Administration. These implications are briefly mentioned here because of the important role they played in publicising and bringing to light the shift in the notion that is „Civil War“. The political debate was being driven not so much by the multifarious dynamics that characterised the conflict, as it was by the manner in which those dynamics were classified, and the consequences the classification would hold for one of the conflict's main players. Freedman (2006: BBC News) postulated that if the conflict was sectarian in nature, implying that the violence was directed between rival communities rather than against the government *per se*, then the possibility still existed for an agreed upon and broadly-representative government to bring some order to the situation in Iraq. A „Civil War“ however, would have meant a contest for control of the state and by implication violence directed at the government. If this were the case, hopes of an agreed upon representative-government would have been dashed, with the police and armed forces being seen as “the partial instruments of the Shia majority” at the same time becoming “just one militia among many.” (Freedman 2006: BBC News) Writing in 2006, Freedman (2006: BBC News) believed that if this was the case, “[t]he coalition forces might as well give up and go home”. “Governments embroiled in civil wars often do not want to label them as such” because in America's case specifically, it would give the impression of “chaos and disastrously failed policy.” (Wong 2006: 1, Brenjo 2006: 2) *The Guardian's* editorial makes a valid argument that “public opinion in democracies is not concerned with fine points, but...whether the judgements of their governments have taken their countries toward disaster or toward success.” (The Guardian 2006: 1) For the U.S. Administration to have adjudged itself as being involved in a „Civil War“ would have meant it no longer had a tight hold on the situation in Iraq and that it may well have managed to bog itself down in yet another „Vietnam“. There would have been too much

at stake for the Bush Administration to „give up and go home“ and so the best way of avoiding such a scenario would have been to argue that it did not exist.

In 2006 the White House Press Secretary, Tony Snow, rejected the notion that a „Civil War“ was happening in Iraq based on the understanding that there were not yet “two clearly defined and opposing groups vying not only for power, but for territory.” (Smith 2006: 2) Officials of the Bush Administration also argued that because “there is no obvious political vision on the part of the Sunni-led insurgent groups...„civil war“ does not apply” to Iraq. (Wong 2006:1) Not only did the U.S. Administration deny the existence of „Civil War“ in Iraq – it went one step further by denying the existence of the term altogether – at least as far as the political environment at the time required it to do so. It is unlikely to be coincidental that the Pentagon’s *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (amended through April 2006), while including the definitions of a number of forms of conflict that may play themselves out within a state, neglected to provide a definition for „Civil War“. (Smith 2006: 2) Smith tells us that, “[f]or the military, a concept or event not officially defined does not exist, and thus it does not require resources, planning, or further consideration.” The debate around how the conflict in Iraq was to be classified was engaged also by the academic community, more so because of the meaning of the term „Civil War“ and less because of short-term political considerations. Fearon (2006:1) explains why:

“Politics aside...the definition of civil war is not arbitrary. For some – and perhaps especially Americans – the term brings to mind all-out historical conflicts along the lines of the U.S. or Spanish Civil Wars. According to this notion, there will not be civil war in Iraq until we see mass mobilisation of sectarian communities behind more or less conventional armies.”

Apart from the need to avoid or to highlight political misfire (depending on one’s position in the debate) the classification of the conflict in Iraq was also being contested amongst academic circles because it was believed by some and not others to be different in its character from the traditional notion of „Civil War“ – one that, as Fearon says, brings to mind the U.S. Civil War. In this academic context the debate occurred

irrespective of what its outcome might have meant for the American government, but rather because the manner in which the conflict was classified

“also matters for people who study peace and war because these analysts use definitions to distinguish different types of violence from each other. Without these different definitions and categories it is not really possible to understand important differences.” (CBC News 2006: 1)

In a similar vein, some are concerned that the normal approach in the social sciences is vigilance to ensure that useful concepts do not become devalued through overextension. Concepts are useful and differences are important because they bring order to our knowledge and, in turn, also to the world made by that knowledge. In academic terms, and because ideas have consequences (that in this case would have extended beyond the concerns of the U.S. Administration), the debate also held relevance to IR in general. This is because the manner in which „Civil War“ is understood would also come to affect political and social processes beyond America’s involvement in Iraq and further on in time. For this same reason, Kalyvas (2001:101) argues that, “The adoption of the distinction [between a conflict that is „Civil War“ and one that is not], is not a mere academic exercise insofar as it motivates specific policy demands, including „humanitarian law enforcement.”” An example from history was when,

“the 1999 agreement ending the Civil War in Sierra Leone met with opposition from many human rights activists, journalists, and opinion makers who believed that the rebels were violent criminals and not political revolutionaries and that it was therefore immoral to grant them amnesty and invite them to participate in the new government.” (Kalyvas 2001: 101)

Reflecting on the academic implications of this shifting term is therefore also to bring consideration to the social and political implications that its academic understanding will have when using it to classify intra-state conflicts post-Iraq. This is in fact the only reason that there will ever be concern over the implications of academic classifications, because it is ultimately the abstract notions, many of which are found in academia, that (as Constructivists say) have implications for our social and political worlds. However, to consider the consequences of the migration of the term that is „Civil War“ would be to go

beyond the ambit of this thesis, which is simply to show the migration as an explanation for the idea that „Civil Wars“ have increased in their occurrence while changing in their nature. The shift in how „Civil War“ is understood was seen in the debate over Iraq between those who claimed Iraq wasn’t a „Civil War“ based on the conventional Realist understanding of this term and those who classified it as a „Civil War“ based on an alternative understanding that challenges the Realist notion. What remains in this chapter is to locate the conventional Realist conditions for Civil War in history so as to root it in time, while at the same time comparing these conditions with the nature of the conflict in Iraq, specifically where differences were highlighted in the debate that contested its classification. Before proceeding however, a brief description of the backdrop to the American Civil War will be helpful when searching out the conventional Realist criteria.

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE PHYSICAL REALITY

In the 1850’s the United States of America, not yet made up by the number of states that constitute it today, was still expanding westward. (Heidler 2000: xxix) It was the disagreement over the status of newly acquired territories, specifically with regards to slavery, that ultimately incited the American Civil War. “[S]lavery in the South had given rise to antislavery movements in the North as early as the American Revolution...The movement also provoked a proslavery reaction from Southern whites that enlarged the breach between North and South” (Heidler 2000: xxix) The antislavery stance in the North increasingly came to embrace the sentiment that “slavery was wrong and at least should not be extended to the nation’s western territories.” (Heidler 2000: xxix) Abraham Lincoln expressed this exact sentiment in the time running up to the presidential elections of 1860: “Stating a moderate antislavery position, Lincoln insisted that slavery could not be molested where it existed, but it must not be allowed to spread to areas where it did not.” (Heidler 2000: xxxi) Shortly after the election of Lincoln as President and bearing in mind his position on slavery, “seven states had seceded from the United States and formed a separate nation.” (McPherson 2009: 58) They formed the Confederate States of America, with Jefferson Davis as their President. (Heidler 2000: xxxi) In his first inaugural address Lincoln said that secession was “the essence of anarchism” and that “if

one state may secede so may any other until there is no government and no nation.” (McPherson 2009: 58) The spark that ignited the war came when the South fired on American troops at Fort Sumter in South Carolina. (McPherson 2009: 58) With the South appearing as the aggressor, Lincoln’s summoning of men and arms with the intent of suppressing the rebellion was made all the more easy in what came to be the beginning of the war. (Heidler 2000: xxxiii) While the status of slavery in the extending territories of the west served as a profound contributor towards the anxiety between North and South that led to the secession of the seven Southern states from the Union, it was this act (perceived as a rebellion) and the attempt on the part of the North to retain the Union that made the Civil War. It was therefore a fight for authority and not a fight to end slavery.

“As late as August 1862 – sixteen months into the war – Lincoln declared that, „my paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that.” (McPherson 2009: 58)

It was the secession of the South, the manner in which the North perceived it, and its subsequent actions that therefore set the scene for a conflict that has been classified as a „Civil War“ because the violence was „civil“, it constituted „war“, and its aim was the acquisition of national authority by secession. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18)

WHICH STATE AND WHOSE PEOPLE?

There is no evidence to suggest that the American Civil War was fought outside of a single national territory. An argument that might be raised in opposition to this sentiment is that the violence was between what were effectively two separate states and as such, was also fought in two separate national territories – separate because each faction had its own government led by their respective presidents. In terms of government for example, both the North and the South had their own Secret Service activities. (Feis 2000: 1723–1724; Tidwell 2000: 1722) While the North had in it, by the start of the war, an established judicial system, that of the South (an entity that had in practice become

separate from the U.S.) came to be established through Article III of the Confederate Constitution, drawn following the start of the war. (Heidler 2000: 506) To make such an argument, however, would be to miss the point of the entire conflict, which for the North, was to retain the Union and for the South, to secede from it. Until the victory was decisive, either for the North or the South, statehood and therefore also separate national territories, is what was being contested. Until such a victory, the U.S. (in theory) would have remained as a single national territory. The South could not have been considered a state as long as its statehood was still under dispute. In any event, it lacked the international recognition required for this kind of status.

The American conflict was one conducted largely by the people of the U.S., with the combatants divided either into the Confederate forces of the South or the Federal forces of the North. (Heidler 2000: xxix-xxxiii) While the former had high hopes of securing foreign recognition and intervention, their efforts to do so failed. (Heidler 2000: xxxvii) There were foreign elements engaged in the American Civil War, but not of a nature that would have swayed it from being a conflict fought largely amongst the people of the U.S.

“Not only Americans...but newcomers of the last two decades, shouldered the musket and learnt the manual. Out of the eastern cities came the Irish, driven from their old home by starvation and induced to enter the American militia by the deep hope of a future war for Ireland, and now paying for their military tuition. Out of the western cities...came the Germans, immigrants of ‘48 and later, many of them trained as soldiers in the Fatherland.” (Paxton 1911: 60)

From what Paxton says these soldiers of foreign origin, however many they may have been, had settled in the U.S. prior to the commencement of the Civil War. They emigrated to the U.S. with the purpose of living there rather than fighting in the war. They therefore arrived in the U.S. as immigrants and not as soldiers. As such, and depending on the U.S. immigration laws at the time, one could speculate that they may well have been considered as U.S. citizens. Even if this was not the case, they would have arrived as individuals rather than soldiers who formed part of a united foreign invasion. It

is these factors that distinguish the „foreign elements“ in the American Civil War in nature from the foreign forces that descended upon Iraq in 2003.

Up until February of 2007 the „Coalition of the Willing“ had on its own, and excluding the U.S., involved the presence of nationals from as many as thirty-four different countries on Iraqi soil, while Fearon (2006: 2), writing in 2006, noted that “neighbouring countries [such] as Iran and Syria are more covertly involved.” (Global Security.org: 2007) According to U.S. military and Iraqi sources, in 2006 Iraq had in it “several thousand Iranian agents of all kinds”. (Byman & Pollack 2006: 5) In his article describing Iran’s role in Iraq, Doron Zimmermann (2007: 8) claims that the violence “directed at the coalition forces and their Iraqi allies is a tool of Iranian statecraft in pursuit of checking perceived coalition and US regional ambitions.” Iran is believed to have been nurturing local proxies of anti-US sentiment in Iraq, among which are the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigade, with Tehran also reported to have “invited its longtime client, the Lebanese Hizballah, into Iraq.” (Zimmermann 2007: 13) It is with this foreign involvement in mind that Thomas Friedman made the following argument: “Iraq is broken into so many pieces, „divided among warlords, foreign terrorists, gangs, militias, parties, the police and the army“, that the conflict can’t be said to constitute civil war.” (Brenjo 2006: 1)

‘WAR’ AS THE KIND FOUGHT IN AMERICA

In regards to popular participation, the American conflict is described as being a true “civil war in that common people were hugely involved.” (Keegan & Bull 2006: 19) For Neely (2004: 440) it was a war to which all resources and the whole population were committed. Marten (2003: xi) captures this sentiment in analysing a letter written by the “leaders of the New York City medical establishment and philanthropic community” to the Secretary of War. The letter was written five weeks prior to the beginning of the conflict in an attempt to offer assistance in quelling “the fledgling rebellion in the Southern states”. It,

“articulated a vision of the coming clash of North and South as „essentially a people’s war. The hearts and minds, the bodies and souls, of

the whole people and of both sexes throughout the loyal States are in it. The rush of volunteers to arms is equalled by the enthusiasm and zeal of the women of the nation," and Americans „vie with each other in their ardor to contribute in some manner to the success of our noble and sacred cause.“ (Marten 2003: xi)

Marten (2003: xi) goes on to describe these words as prophetic to the degree in which, “The Civil War did become a „people“s war“, drawing into it every man, woman, and child in both the North and South.” The thinking of Southern general, Robert E. Lee, was indicative of the kind of participation that the American Civil War would render:

“According to one of his staff officers, Lee „thought that every other consideration should be regarded as subordinate to the great end of the public safety, and that since the whole duty of the nation would be war until independence should be secured, the whole nation should for the time be converted into an army, the producers to feed and the soldiers to fight.“ (Neely 2004: 450)

Writing in the latter half of the 1800“s, James Schouler argued that the term „Civil War“ should be used to designate the conflict of 1861–1865 rather than „conspiracy“, „treason“ or „rebellion“ because “the Southern people had been united to a considerable degree behind their leaders” making it clear “that it was not the crime of a few men which had produced secession and war.” (Pressly 1962: 161) In drawing a distinction between the Greek „Civil War“ and the American Civil War, the following passage confirms the „popular participation“ believed to have characterised the American Civil War:

“the people were...evenly divided and the issues were of...depth...Such considerations do not apply to the Greek Seditious which attained the magnitude but not the nature of an indigenous revolutionary civil war. The Seditious is not to be explained in terms of any popular grievances.” (Kalyvas 2001: 100)

The underlying reason for the American Civil War being able to draw participation from and exude effect over such a vast terrain is that the issues underlying the war could be explained in terms of popular grievances rather than grievances confined to a small sect, ethnic group or community that was small in comparison to the total population. This was

the case with the American Civil War not only because these grievances were internalized, understood and identified with by the larger population but even prior to this because they were well and publicly articulated by their leaders, both of whom had been voted in as the respective presidents shortly before the official commencement of the war. One instance of such public articulation was when, prior to 1862, Lincoln announced a preliminary proclamation in which he promised that if the rebellion in the South were to continue, emancipation of slaves would become final with the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 (Heidler 2000: xxxvii) Here the objective of the war – to suppress the rebellion of the South – was clearly articulated. Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation undoubtedly served to strengthen popular participation in the American Civil War as it “paved the way for the enlistment of significant numbers of African-Americans into the U.S. military.” (Heidler 2000: xxxvii)

In the North popular identification with the purpose of the war was evidenced as “Republicans, Democrats, and men of all factions were now to be seen shaking hands, and party differences seemed to be almost obliterated in the widespread agreement that the Union must be maintained.” (Pressly 1962: 28) In the South “the opening of the Civil War was marked by enthusiasm and unity of sentiment of a high degree.” (Pressly 1962: 81) The magnitude of what was at stake, or the issues at hand, allowed the extent of the popular participation that was evident between 1861 and 1865. Such participation was garnered and encouraged by the public announcement of war aims. The Emancipation Proclamation, as a consequence of the continued rebellion in the South, made clear, what the war was being fought over and so allowed the public to understand what it was all about. An important feature of the conflict in Iraq that distinguished it from „war“ in this regard was “the lack of public rhetoric against the enemy by popular leaders.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 20) “All of Iraq’s leaders call constantly for unity, tolerance and an end to the violence.” (2006: 20) This was far from the case with the leaders in the Civil Wars cited by Keegan and Bull (2006: 20), among which was the American Civil War. Popular participation in the American Civil War, was not only reflected in an understanding on the part of the American people of the issues being fought over, and the subsequent action encouraged by that knowledge, but was also evidenced by the significant military

numbers involved. Over 2.5 million men served in the Northern army and between 750 000 and 1 250 000 in the Southern forces. (Young 2000: 111; Weeks 2004: 1)

Although the criteria for „Civil War“ set out in the conventional Realist definition require the occurrence of battles, an element that characterised the American Civil War, it is the people that have to be organised, more so than the battles themselves. (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18) Not only did the American Civil War have leaders who said what was being fought for and why, and a public that understood the divisions and the goals, but the violence was also of a military character that reflected a “minimum degree of organisation, formality and identifiability of the combatants.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 18)

“[Th]ere were regular armies and fronts; the central command structures attempted to carry out their strategic objectives in a planned way through strict control of their troops. As a rule there was political as well as military leadership, following clearly defined goals, and ready and able to negotiate when necessary.” (Kalyvas 2001: 114)

Although Northern army organisation is described as having been primitive at the start of the war, it is with time that its strategy eventually became “honed to embrace something resembling a modern, coordinated war effort.” (Powell 2000: 109; Heidler 2000: xxxv) “The total Northern force organised by war’s end amounted to...a grand total of 3559 independent units” that consisted of battalions, regiments, batteries of light artillery and companies of engineers, “Sharp Shooters”, infantry, cavalry and heavy artillery, and a military intelligence section. (Young 2000: 111; Powell 2000: 110) Both armies were “built on infantry regiments, grouped into brigades, with those brigades grouped into divisions.” (Powell 2000: 108) Both forces also consisted of artillery battalions and cavalries. (Powell 2000: 108) The Northern and Southern forces were therefore organised into various formations that had their respective functions, thereby contributing towards the conditions of minimum organisation and formality that are required for violence to be classified as „war“ in Realist terms.

What made the respective armies identifiable from one another was their uniforms, although this was only the case from 1862 when “the Union took steps to bring some

level of standardisation to the uniforms of the army.” (Bielakowski 2000: 1995) One of the reasons for this was that “the lack of conformity among uniforms often made it difficult to determine friend from foe on the battlefield.” (Bielakowski 2000: 1995) “By 1863 the standard Union uniform had been largely established throughout the army.” (Bielakowski 2000: 1995) The South also attempted to bring about a standard uniform that was different from the Northern uniform in its colour – „cadet“ grey, rather than dark blue. (Bielakowski 2000: 1995)

CIVILIANS AS PRIMARY TARGETS

Comparatively speaking, the civil violence in Iraq was “for the most part decidedly unmilitary” and it is only the state forces in Iraq that exhibited “the military characteristics of the principal actors in the five conflicts” that Keegan and Bull (2006: 19) recognise as „Civil Wars“. Keegan and Bull (2006: 20) also argued that Iraq lacked „Civil War“ status because “There are no, or almost no, battles in Iraq’s domestic killing. Civilians are the principal targets.” It is in Neely’s objection to the classification of the American Civil War as a „total war“ that we are given insight as to whether the violence in this war was directed in a manner whereby it can be said that civilians were not the principal targets. To say that a war is „total“ in its nature is to say that “all possible means of attack, military, scientific, and psychological [are used] against both enemy troops and civilians.” (Neely 2004: 440) The relevance of this notion to the status of a conflict is therefore founded on a breakdown in the “distinction between soldiers and civilians, combatants and non-combatants” in the direction of attack, whatever form it may take. (Neely 2004: 458) To describe a war as being „total“ in nature would therefore mean to say that civilians were as exposed to attack as the soldiers were. Neely (2004: 441) argues that the American Civil War couldn’t by any definition of the term be said to be a total war, meaning that the distinction between soldiers and civilians, in as far as the execution of violence is concerned, was maintained. If this was the case it can be certain that civilians were not the principal targets of violence in the American Civil War.

The litmus test for this argument should be none other than the prominent and what was and continues to be perceived as the most ruthless Northern figure of Major General William T. Sherman. (Neely 2004: 441) Sherman is cited by Neely (2004: 443) as one of the three Civil War generals who are “obvious figures” in measuring the “proximity of the Civil War” to “the dictionary definition of total war”. Sherman is also “the Civil War soldier most often quoted on the subject of total war.” (Neely 2004: 443) It was in fact an article on Sherman that gave rise to the erroneous idea that the American Civil War was a „total war“. (Neely 2004: 443)

“The grimness of Major General William T. Sherman’s 1864–65 campaigns in the South is legendary, and much has been made over the years of his army’s pitiless marches. To this day, the image of Sherman as a great destroyer is etched on many American minds south and north.” (Keithly 2000: 17)

Sherman was once recorded as having said, ““We cannot change the hearts of those people of the South, but we can make war so terrible...and make them so sick of war that generations would pass before they would again appeal to it.”” (Keithly 2000: 23) Despite the reputation that Sherman had gained through this kind of commentary and the undeniable destruction that was left behind as his army made its way through the south, the violence that he employed wasn’t directed at civilians themselves, and certainly not at civilians as principal targets. While marching his army from Atlanta towards Milledgeville, Sherman’s men

“took what they wanted, and destroyed a great deal more. Without a regular supply line, troops lived off the country, seizing livestock, farm produce, or anything else of value...Expressions of outrage at Sherman’s actions received wide currency, especially in the post-bellum south. Be that as it may, Sherman’s army advanced in good order, retained its fighting trim, and while it showed scant regard for property, perpetuated little violence on people.” (Keithly 2000: 25)

Sherman himself wrote that “War at best is barbarism, but to involve all – children, women, old and helpless – is more than can be justified.” (Neely 2004: 444) Neely (2004:

458) concludes his article by arguing that no one in the Civil War, including Sherman, systematically employed the concept of total war:

“He and his fellow general”s waged war the same way most Victorian gentlemen did, and other Victorian gentlemen in the world knew it. That is one reason why British, French, and Prussian observers failed to comment on any startling developments seen in the American war: there was little new to report.”

Despite World War One not being considered as a “Civil War”, it is in comparing the newly birthed atrocities of this intra-state conflict with the nature of the violence in the American Civil War, that Gamaliel Bradford provides insight as to the primary direction of the violence in the earlier conflict:

“Events...have made the vandalism of Sherman seem like discipline and order. The injury done by him seldom directly affected anything but property. There was no systematic cruelty in the treatment of non-combatants, and to the eternal glory of American soldiers be it recorded that insult and abuse toward women were practically unknown during the Civil War.” (Neely 2004: 445)

In this comparison Bradford highlights the direction of the violence in the American Civil War. Thus, the conflict was one in which civilians had seldom borne the brunt of violence, and were certainly not the principal targets.

AUTHORITY: PRESENT AND CONTESTED

From what has been said we know not only that the American Civil War was a battle over state authority (in this case of a secessionist nature) that involved explicit territorial ambitions, but also that the acquisition of state authority was a feasible objective in that it existed. This is what made the conflict in conventional Realist terms, at least as far as the required objective is concerned, a „Civil War“. It was therefore a conflict in which it was “possible for one side to defeat the other in battle” in pursuit of state control as opposed to a conflict in which there was “a complete breakdown of social order” so that there was “no effective government at all.” (Freedman 2006: BBC) The war was a secessionist

struggle with the South attempting to separate itself from the Union and the Northern states fighting to maintain the Union. It was the intention of the North, under the leadership of Lincoln, to restore order and regain national authority over the break-away Southern states. In this contest there was at no stage a vacuum of power at the centre of what remained as the Union, following the secession of the Southern states. At no stage during the secession or during the conflict that ensued in an attempt to renew national unity between the North and the South was there an absence of effective state authority, at least not to a degree whereby there was a complete breakdown in social order.

Evidence in support of this existed in the organisation and formality of the American Civil War that was brought to bear on the public through governmental structures and institutions. The implementation of military conscription on the part of both the Northern and Southern governments was one such institution. (Carlson 2000: 486, Gaul 2000: 487) For the North, the Enrolment Act of 3 March 1863 “also established military commissions and invested these bodies with the power to try civilians suspected of spying and where appropriate, to impose the death penalty”. (Gaul 2000: 488) Where the pressures of war had made it impractical or burdensome for the judiciary to preside over issues of certain character, these had come to be addressed by the political system and the military. (Heidler 2000: 508) Apart from the continued organisation of the war, that which most exemplified the existence of a functional executive and a populace that continued lending its support to the state’s war effort, was the re-election of Lincoln into his second term of office as President of the U.S. in November 1864. (Heidler 2000: xl) Lincoln’s annual address to the U.S. Congress in December of that year was suggestive of anything but an absence of state authority:

“It is of noteworthy interest that the steady expansion of population, improvement and governmental institutions over the new and unoccupied portions of our country have scarcely been checked, much less impeded or destroyed, by our great civil war which at first glance would seem to have absorbed almost the entire energies of the nation.” (Neely 2004: 458)

The existence of an effective government was only highlighted by the fact that the attempt on the part of the southern states, under Jefferson Davis, to secede from the

Union met resistance right up until the war was won. The pursuit of state control therefore remained as the primary objective driving a war in which this objective was attainable, thereby contributing towards its status as a „Civil War“ classified according to conventional Realist terms.

A STRUGGLE OVER WHAT AND BETWEEN WHOM?

In regards to a fight for territory in the Iraqi conflict, Keegan and Bull suggested that if it was the case that “Iraq’s violence involves separatist and regional tendencies, the lack of any public aspect to the factional desires” revealed an absence of explicit territorial ambitions. In a similar vein Brenjo (2006: 1) argued that:

“[A]part from state actors, state police and the army, the other sides in Iraq’s conflict – different Shia and Sunni factions – have never claimed their struggle was for the sole authority of the state. Thus, it’s more of a „politico-military struggle for power“ than civil war”.

Freedman (2006: BBC) distinguished what he called a „classical civil war“ from the situation that was likely in Iraq in which the violence may not lead to „Civil War“, “in which it is possible for one side to defeat the other in battle, but instead to a complete breakdown of social order so that there is no effective government at all”. During his visit to Iraq in November 2006 George W. Bush handed Nuri Kamal al-Maliki (Iraqi Prime Minister) “a memorandum advising him that, without additional American resources, the Iraqi leader would almost certainly be unable to turn back the tide of sectarian violence.” (The Guardian 2006: 1) Byman and Pollack (2006: 6) only referred to the U.S. and its allies in prescribing possible solutions to the complications caused by the foreign intervention of Iran and made no mention of the role to be played by the Iraqi government itself. Packer (2006: 336) added to this sentiment of ineffectiveness on the part of the Iraqi government and a sense of complete breakdown of social order when describing how “[t]he CPA’s [Coalition Provisional Authority] failure to disarm the militia...left almost every city in Iraq under the real control of an ethnic group rather than the government.” For Freedman, (2006: BBC News) an important factor indicating the effectiveness of a government is its ability to provide a basic level of security to its

people – a situation that was made unlikely in Iraq by the high levels of routine violence. Despite having a perspective different from that posited by Freedman, Matt Lauer, while arguing that Iraq is a „Civil War“ because “two Muslim groups, the Sunnis and the Shiites, are using violence against each other”, also recognises that “the Iraqi government is unable to protect the people.” (Janensch 2007:1) Lauer therefore believes „Civil War“ can exist, despite the absence of a government that can protect its people.

What Freedman effectively argued then is that chronic inter-communal violence may result in one of two possible scenarios, the former constituting „Civil War“ and the latter, which he said was likely in Iraq, a failed state. In support of the latter, Fearon (2006: 1) defined „Civil War“ as “involving attempts to grab power at the centre of government or in a given region” and argued that because there was a “vacuum of power” at the centre of Iraq, “communal violence will inevitably be tied to struggles for political power and control”, rather than a struggle for state control. According to this view there was no state control to be fought over, so it wasn’t a Civil War. In direct opposition to this line of thinking however, Sam Gardiner, a retired U.S. air force colonel argued that, “Iraq is a failed state...and cannot provide security, so the fact that the government remains in place is irrelevant to the debate about whether the conflict is a civil war.” (Brenjo 2006: 1) Gardiner’s understanding of „Civil War“ does not consider the existence of a government, let alone an authoritative or effective one.

Wong (2006: 1) stated that “one of the sides in a civil war is almost always the sovereign government.” It is with this condition in mind that some scholars argued that the „Civil War“ in Iraq began “when the Americans transferred sovereignty to an appointed Iraqi government in June 2004.” (Wong 2006: 1) This was believed to have “officially transformed the anti-American war into one of insurgent groups seeking to regain power for disenfranchised Sunni Arabs against an Iraqi government led by Ayad Allawi [interim Prime Minister of Iraq prior to the country’s 2005 legislative elections] and increasingly dominated by Shiites.” (Wong 2006: 1) This line of thinking raises the question however, as to whether the Iraqi government, seemingly ineffective in providing a basic level of

security to its people and still very much aided by U.S. and coalition troops was sovereign during the time of the conflict in question.

In the southern half of Iraq the city of Kirkuk came to be embroiled in a malaise of residential claims and counter-claims in the period following the U.S. invasion. Kirkuk had been the centre-stage for Saddam Hussein's program of „Arabization“ – a strategy that saw Kurds being expelled from the region, partly because they had been regarded as a threat to the oil fields outside the city and essentially because the rich cultural history and cosmopolitan demography of Kirkuk were considered “an affront to the fascist dreams of the Arab Baath Socialist Party.” (Packer 2006: 341) The commentary of the first deputy prime minister of the Iraqi interim government, Barham Salih, that “Saddam wanted to create the environment for a permanent civil war between Kurds and Arabs”, reflected his opinion as to the state of affairs between Arabs and Kurds, if not throughout the whole of Iraq, then certainly in Kirkuk. (Packer 2006: 363)

With Saddam out of the picture, Iraq's interim constitution called for “„the injustice caused by the previous regime's practices in altering the demographic character of certain regions, including Kirkuk“ to be redressed.” (Packer 2006: 356) Returning Kurds believed they had the right and freedom to reclaim what was theirs prior to Saddam's reign. Consequently “Kurds were often considered collaborators of the Americans”, while many of the Arabs imported by Saddam's regime “sympathised with the Sunni or Shiite resistance forces.” (Packer 2006: 354) The so-called insurgency had thus served to intensify the Arab-Kurdish conflict. After being displaced by returning Kurds an Arab man asked, “Where is the government that will give us our rights? Is it from America? From the Iraqi government? We don't know.” (Packer 2006: 352) A Kurdish man repeated this sentiment when, while returning to Kirkuk, he remarked: “I really don't know who will give us a house, because there are many governments in Iraq”. An Arab man claimed that “Only god and America can solve the problem.” (Packer 2006: 361) Upon being asked about the role to be played by the new Iraqi government a Kurdish woman interrupted by asking, “Is there a government right now or not? I know nothing.” (Packer 2006: 361) The question as to who actually constituted the Iraqi government and

its degree of effectiveness therefore resonated in a part of the country that offered further insight into questions over the effectiveness and sovereignty of the governing authorities.

A retired U.S. army colonel, Dan Smith (2006: 1), referred to the conflict in Iraq as an „uncivil civil war“. “The persistence and brutality of contemporary civil wars have left many analysts puzzled” – this is especially so after the war in Iraq. (IISS 1998: 1) Fearon (2006: 1) showed the correlation between the death toll in Iraq and, “numerous other conflicts that are commonly described as civil wars”: “Current estimates suggest that more than 25 000 Iraqis have been killed in fighting since the U.S.–led invasion in March 2003 – a level and rate of killing that is comparable to...Lebanon (1975-1990) and Sri Lanka (beginning in 1983).” Frederick Robertson, a 19th Century English Preacher said that “Men will ever distinguish war from mere bloodshed.” (Smith 2006: 1) The debate over Iraq has shown this distinction to be as outdated and challenged as the conventional Realist concept of „Civil War“. This is so because there were those who, having been guided mainly in their knowledge of the death toll and understanding of the levels of violence, came to see Iraq as a „Civil War“. With many scholars claiming that “the bloodshed in Iraq...puts the country in the top ranks of nations stricken by civil wars in the last half-century”, others have been more specific, arguing that “the deaths per year in Iraq...place this conflict among the worst 20 civil wars of the past 60 years.” (Wong 2006: 2) Nicholas Sambanis, a political scientist at Yale University, made the most significant observation when he argued that “The level of violence is so extreme that it far surpasses most civil wars since 1945.” (Wong 2006: 2) It is due to perceptions like these that many have been left dumbfounded as to how Iraq can be denied classification as a „Civil War“.

Those who, in 2006, had described Iraq as a „Civil War“ based on the level of violence exhibited between two sectarian groups, argued that „Civil War“ began earlier in that year, “after the bombing of a revered Shiite shrine in Samarra set off a chain of revenge killings that left hundreds dead over five days and has yet to end.” (Wong 2006: 1) A month after the bombing the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, was recorded as having said that, “If this is not civil war, then God knows what civil war is.” Similarly,

and despite having argued on an earlier occasion that Iraq wasn't a Civil War because of the vacuum of power at the state's centre, Fearon argued that, "the level of violence in Iraq meets the definition of civil war that any reasonable person would have." (Wong 2006: 1) To what degree however was the bombing of the shrine and the violence that ensued, an act of insurgency against the government and to what degree was the government involved in the reprisal that followed the act? Here it may be necessary to note the definition of „insurgency“ offered by Evans and Newnham (1998: 252) who describe it as "an armed insurrection or rebellion against an established system of government in a state." They go on to say that "If the violent challenge by the insurgents is forcefully resisted by the incumbents, and it normally is, a civil or internal war situation will result." (Evans and Newnham 1998: 252) In short, how close is the definition of civil war „that any reasonable person would have“, to the conventional Realist definition – one that requires more than just a certain level of internal violence? Based on the argument made by Fearon and bearing in mind the conditions for Civil War set out in the conventional Realist criteria and exhibited in the American Civil War, the two aren't close at all. Baghdad correspondent for CNN (Cable News Network), Michael Ware, argues: "You drive in a minibus on your way to work. Suddenly, there's a checkpoint. If you're of the wrong faith, you are dead...If that's not civil war...then honestly I don't know what is." (Brenjo 2006: 1) Ware's description does not come close to the conventional Realist conditions set out for „Civil War“ and so the only recognition his depiction of events on the ground would receive from any Realist thinker who has a view on „Civil War“ would be that of sectarian violence.

In addition to and closely related to the levels of violence and questions over the effectiveness of the Iraqi government, there were "several different conflicts going on in Iraq", with many communities divided, "fighting against one another more than against their supposed enemies." (CBC News 2006: 1, Byman & Pollack 2006: 7) Adding to the malaise of fighting was the number of local and foreign „armed forces“ already noted – divided by their different objectives. These observations testify to an element of the conflict in Iraq that contributes significantly towards the multifarious nature of its dynamics and Freedman's sense of a conflict very different from what he calls the

„classical civil war“. The fact that several different conflicts were going on in Iraq during the time under consideration was an obvious consequence of the fact that “not all insurgents in Iraq are the same, share the same ideology or fight for the same end goals.” (Norell 2007: 5) Magnus Norell (2007: 3) described what he believed to be an “insurgency” in Iraq, as having its origin in two sources or groups. (Norell 2007: 1) The largest of these consisted of native Sunni Islamists or former members of the now non-existent Ba‘ath Party. (Norell 2007: 1) Having once dominated Iraqi politics, its actions against the government were motivated by the fear that its members would become second class citizens in a predominantly Shi‘a dispensation. (Norell 2007: 4) The second group consisted of foreign jihadists – recruited by various radical networks in the Middle East and also in Europe. (Norell 2007: 3) Unlike the native Sunni insurgents, the jihadists primarily had a religious agenda. Removing the new government and sparking a „Civil War“ between the Sunni’s and Shi‘a – thereby making it increasingly difficult for the American and coalition operations in Iraq – was only part of its larger struggle with the West and its desire to remove the state enterprise antithetical to its beliefs. (Norell 2007: 4) It is also important to note that the „insurgents“ were not only pitted against the government of Iraq, whoever it was and however legitimate it may have been, but also against one another. The jihad objective of destroying Iraq as a state was in direct contention with that of the indigenous Sunni’s who wanted not a failed state, but a different state. (Norell 2007: 4) It is with this in mind that scholars argued that, “the civil war in Iraq has elements of both an insurgency – one side is struggling to topple what it sees as an illegitimate national government – and a sectarian war – the besieged government is ruled by Shiites and opposed by Sunni Arabs.” (Wong 2006: 1)

While the overall level of violence brought about by these groups may well have been equivalent to that of „an armed insurrection or rebellion“, the violence could only be defined in this way if it was directed against an established system of government in a state. The question remains as to whether there was such a thing in Iraq and if so who exactly constituted it – was it the „incumbent government“ or was it a foreign element? If it was the former that showed forceful resistance to the violence, then, based on the definition of „Civil War“ provided by Evans and Newnham, the conflict in Iraq would

have been closer to a „Civil War“ in Realist terms. If it was not the former, but rather the latter, America was still engaged in a war with Iraq, making Packer’s (2006: 335) reference noted earlier – “the first year of the war after the war” – redundant.

CONCLUSION

The American Civil War is therefore a conflict that in its dynamics adheres to and fulfils the criteria for „Civil War“ classification set out in the conventional Realist understanding of this concept. As such, this understanding of „Civil War“ is one that can be located in history, showing its usefulness as a concept that provides us with a point of conceptual reference from which the term „Civil War“ can be shown to have migrated to „something else“. This „something else“ is the conceptualisation of „Civil War“ held by those who were in favour of „Civil War“ classification of the conflict in Iraq. Despite the conflict in the period under discussion not having met the prescribed conditions for Civil War inherent in the conventional Realist definition, there were those who insisted it was a „Civil War“. It is in their reasoning that we come to see the migration of „Civil War“ as a term from its conventional Realist understanding to a concept of „Civil War“ that is dependent on a collective agreement that will vary cross contexts. The extent of this migration from the conventional Realist concept, particularly in the context of the debate over the conflict in Iraq, is evidenced in the fact that those who argued in favour of „Civil War“ classification based their views largely on the levels of violence, a death toll that was “comparable to numerous other conflicts that are described as civil wars” (some of which are excluded from Keegan and Bull’s category) and the fact that this all happened in the midst of two Muslim groups who were fighting one another within a single state. (Fearon 2006: 1)

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The fact that “conceptual thinking about civil war, at least among political scientists post-1945, has been conspicuous either by its absence or limited presence on the margins of debates about global politics” is in large part due to the traditionally dominant position of political Realism. (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 3) This dominance has meant an emphatic concern with what happens between states, rather than what happens inside of them, when describing world affairs. (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 3) It is conceivable then that as much as Realism has dominated the theory of world politics, so too „Civil War“ has largely found itself outside the political thinking of IR theorists. The fact that the Cold War was dubbed the „Long Peace“ despite the high incidence of internal conflict and its resultant deaths of six and a quarter million people is indicative of this. (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 3) However, America’s invasion of and continued involvement in Iraq, together with the ensuing debate over the nature of the conflict that followed Bush’s declaration of an end in major combat operations, did a great deal to add credence to discussion over „Civil War“ in the arena of political and academic thought. The debate over Iraq was encouraged first and foremost by the political consequences held by the classification of events on the ground and then by the multifarious dynamics that characterised the nature of the conflict and how these dynamics stood in contrast to the traditionally conceived notion of „Civil War“. As unfortunate as the conflict may have been, it was timely in bringing attention first to how „Civil War“ is understood at the end of a century that is argued to have seen a rapid increase in „Civil Wars“ together with a change in the nature of these conflicts, and second, what it means when we say that „Civil War“ has increased in occurrence and changed in nature.

This thesis has gone in search of an answer to this claim that is problematic in as far as it suggests that the occurrence of a phenomenon can be measured across time despite the substance of that phenomenon – what it is measured by – also changing with time. The explanation given in this thesis is that our conceptual understanding of „Civil War“ or

how we think of „Civil War“ has changed with time, thereby making „Civil War“ a migratory term, rather than the practicalities or dynamics of Civil War itself necessarily having changed. We have come to call conflicts that are different in their nature from that portrayed in the conventional Realist concept of „Civil War“ by the same term. This has resulted in the claim that „Civil Wars“ have increased in occurrence while changing in nature. Whether such a conclusion is erroneous or not will depend on the acceptance or rejection of the claim that „Civil War“ is a migratory term. One would be hard pressed to deny such a claim in the face of the evidence given in this thesis. Whether the migrated understanding of „Civil War“ is valid or not, or what the implications of this migration are, has not been the concern of this thesis.

In Chapter 1 the contradictory claims regarding the occurrence of „Civil War“ were introduced as a backdrop to the investigation around the definition and classification of this form of conflict in contemporary IR. In addition to this, mention was made of: the idea that Civil Wars have been changing in their nature; and the theoretically sensitive approaches that challenge the conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“. The suggested common denominator in making sense of all this was the idea that „Civil War“ is a migratory term. In Chapter 2 Constructivism provided us with the theoretical explanation underlying this migration, not only for „Civil War“ but potentially for any object or concept of our knowledge and, in doing so, exposed the true meaning behind the claim that Civil War has changed: „Civil War“ has changed, first and foremost because how we think of it has changed. For Constructivists the social world is made up of ideas rather than material objects or phenomena. To make a claim that Civil War has changed can then only mean that our conceptual understanding of what „Civil War“ is has changed. Thus, rather than Civil War having changed, what we understand it to be has changed from what we understood it to be in the past. Constructivists explain this change by arguing that the constituents of our social world – i.e. the concepts – are dependent on our interpretation and language, both of which are open to the influence of time. It is for this reason that, “As worldview changes, so do the words that mark it. Sometimes the words stay the same, but their meanings are changed.” (Miller 1998: 125) In this thesis „Civil War“ has been shown to be a case in point.

Locating different conceptual understandings of „Civil War“ found to be attached to physical realities or conflicts, separated by time, was necessary in providing empirical evidence for the argument that „Civil War“ is a migratory term. It is here that Keegan and Bull’s contribution to the debate over Iraq held significance. They not only provided an understanding of „Civil War“ that denied events in Iraq from being classified in such terms, but also one that included under its category the American Civil War – a conflict whose classification is uncontested. This conventional Realist notion of „Civil War“, explained in Chapter 2, and shown to be consistent with the nature of the U.S. Civil War in Chapter 3 (for the purpose of rooting it in time) served as an earlier point on the continuum that reflects the migration of the term „Civil War“. In analysing the debate over how the conflict in Iraq following the U.S. invasion of 2003 was to be classified, also in Chapter 3, insight was gained as to what that conflict looked like. Reflecting on a number of arguments centred on different issues along which the debate was divided revealed the reasons as to why „Iraq“ did not meet the criteria for „Civil War“ used in the classification of the U.S. Civil War and therefore also the extent and direction in which „Civil War“ has migrated. These issues included the levels, origins and direction of the violence; questions over the legitimacy, sovereignty and effectiveness of the Iraqi government and the idea of a failed state; and finally the complexity found in the varied factions to the conflict together with their different objectives and end-goals. More particularly, the conflict in Iraq was argued to have fallen short of the conventional Realist criteria for „Civil War“ classification because, unlike the American Civil War: civilians were argued to be the primary targets; violence originated in factions whose intent to fight for control of the state was undetermined; the sovereignty of the state as a party to the violence was questionable; and the conflict fell short of exhibiting the necessary military characteristics that include battles, “uniforms, clear chains of command, acknowledged leadership, and official, public war aims.” (Keegan and Bull 2006: 19) In comparing the nature of the conflict in Iraq to that of the American Civil War we came to see how and why the two conflicts are perceived to be different. It was therefore the conflict in Iraq and more importantly the perspectives drawn from the

debate that surrounded that conflict that served as the latter point on the continuum that reflects the migration of the term „Civil War“.

In light of the fact that the conflict in Iraq fell short of the conventional Realist criteria there are those who may oppose its classification as a „Civil War“ by arguing that the usual approach in the social sciences is vigilance to ensure that useful concepts do not become devalued through overextension. Whether such vigilance was necessary in classifying the conflict in Iraq in particular has not been the concern of this thesis. However, the value and necessity of such vigilance in general has not been disputed either. If anything, it has been supported in the argument that Constructivism can only account for the creation of our social world in as far as that social world is constituted by objects of our knowledge – „Civil War“ being the example in this thesis. Despite the need for vigilance in when, where and how we use terms, „Civil War“ is a term that is of a migratory, rather than a fixed nature. It is this migration that explains how it is that „Civil War“ can be argued to have increased in its occurrence while also changing in its nature.

As such, this thesis has affirmed the challenges against the supposedly secure Realist understanding of „Civil War“ – challenges brought forth by theoretically sensitive interpretations of „Civil War“. Any idea that „Civil War“ is a fixed term has been unsettled by revealing a wider contemporary range in how „Civil War“ is understood. It is not necessarily the case, however, that a „new“ definition of „Civil War“ exists. The concept of „Civil War“, conceived outside of the Realist paradigm and within the Constructivist mindset, does not articulate clearly defined criteria to the extent found in the Realist definition. Where once the classification of a conflict as „Civil War“ would have been based on clearly articulated and definitive Realist criteria, the term now seems to have become more open-ended and less restrictive in its classification to the degree that “Quite often what constitutes civil war is in the eye of the beholder”. (Kennedy-Pipe & Jones 1998: 1)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdullah, I. (ed.), *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War* (UNISA Press, Pretoria: 2004)

Adler, E., "Constructivism and International Relations" in Carlsnaes, W. *et al* (eds.), *Handbook of International Relations* (SAGE Publications, London: 2002), chapter 5.

Alley, R., *Internal Conflict and the International Community: Wars without End* (Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot: 2004)

Apter, D., "Comparative Politics, Old and New" in Goodin, R. & Klingemann, H. (eds.) *The New Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford University Press: 1998), chapter 15.

Archer, A., "Constructivism and Christian Teaching", prepared for the 23rd *International Faith and Learning Seminar*, November, 1998, University of Eastern Africa, Kenya.

Barrett, J., & Klanderma, D., "A Christian Constructivist? The Impact of Worldview on Learning Theories and the Mathematics Education Research Community" in *Journal of the ACMS (Association of Christians in the Mathematical Sciences)*, 2006.

Berdal, M., "How „New“ Are „New Wars“? Global Economic Change and the Study of Civil War" in *Global Governance*, Vol. 9, 2003, pg. 477–502.

Bielakowski, A.M., "Uniforms, Insignia, and Equipment" in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 1995-1997.

Burchill, S., "Realism and Neo-Realism" in Burchill, S. & Linklater, A. (eds.) *Theories of International Relations* (St. Martin's Press, New York: 1996), chapter 3.

Burt, J., "Robert Penn Warren's *The Legacy of the Civil War* and the Meaning of Pragmatism" in *American Literary History* (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Carlson, D., "Conscription, C.S.A." in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 486-487.

Dixon, J., "Organized Anarchy: The Changing Structure of Civil Wars", prepared for the 48th *Annual Convention of the International Studies Association*, February 28 – March 3, 2006, Chicago.

Dumbrell, J., "Bush's War: The Iraq Conflict and American Democracy" in Danchev, A. & MacMillan, J. (eds.) *The Iraq War and Democratic Politics* (Routledge, New York: 2005), chapter 3.

Duyvesteyn, I., "Contemporary War: Ethnic Conflict, Resource Conflict or Something Else?" in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 3, No. 1. 2000, pg. 92–116.

Evans, G. and Newnham, J., *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (Penguin Books, London: 1998)

Feis, W.B., "Secret Service, U.S.A." in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 1723-1725.

Fierke, K.M., "Constructivism" in Dunne, T. et al. (eds.), *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford University Press: 2007), chapter 9.

Gaul, S.J., "Conscription, U.S.A." in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 487-488.

Heidler, D.S., "Introduction" in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg xxix-xli.

Heidler, D.S., "Courts, C.S.A." in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 506-507.

Jackson, R. and Sørensen, G., *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press: 2007)

Joxe, A., *Empire of Disorder* (Columbia University, New York: 2002)

Kalyvas, S.N., "„New“ and „Old“ Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?" in *World Politics*, October 2001, pg. 99–118.

Keegan, J. and Bull, B., "What Is a Civil War?" in *Prospect*, Issue 129, December 2006, pg. 18–20.

Keithly, D., "Poor, Nasty and Brutish: Guerrilla Operations in America's First Civil War" in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 4, No. 3. 2001, pg. 35–69.

Kennedy-Pipe, C. and Jones, C., "An Introduction to *Civil Wars*", in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1998, pg. 1–15.

MacDonald, G., *Ordering Your Private World* (Highland Books, Surrey: 2008)

Mair, P., "Comparative Politics: An Overview" in Goodin, R. & Klingemann, H. (eds.) *The New Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford University Press: 1998), chapter 12.

Marten, J., *Civil War America: Voices from the Home Front* (Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2003), pg. xi-xiii.

McPherson, J., "Lincoln off His Pedestal" in *The New York Review*, Vol. 56, No.14 24 September 2009, pg. 58–60.

- Miller, D., *Disciplining Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures* (YWAM Publishing, Seattle: 1998)
- Neely, M.E., “Was the Civil War a Total War?” in *Civil War History*, Vol. No. 4. 2004, pg. 434–458.
- Norell, M., “Iraq – Quo Vadis?” in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2007, pg. 1– 7.
- Packer, G., *The Assassins Gate: America in Iraq* (Faber & Faber, London: 2006)
- Paxton, F.L., *The American Civil War* (London: Williams & Norgate: 1911)
- Powell, D.A., “Army Organisation, U.S.A.” in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 109- 110.
- Powell, D.A., “Army Organisation, C.S.A.” in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 108-109.
- Pressly, T.J., *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* (Princeton University Press: 1962)
- Prins, G., “Civil and Uncivil War” in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 2, No. 1. 1999, pg. 117-129.
- Reus-Smit, C., “Constructivism” in Burchill, S. *et al* (eds.), *Theories of International Relations* (Palgrave, New York: 2001), chapter 8.
- Schmidt, B., book Review on “International Relations: still an American social science? Toward diversity in international thought” in *International Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 4, 2001, pg. 968–969.
- Swannell, J. (ed.), *The Oxford Modern English Dictionary* (Clarendon Press, Oxford: 1992)
- Tidwell, W.A., “Secret Service, C.S.A.” in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 1722-1723.
- Van Der Westhuizen, J. (ed.), *Ideas, Cultural Forces and the Development of International Relation* (Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Canada: 1997)
- Wright, Q., 2nd ed., *A Study of War* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1964)
- Yee, A.S., “The Integration of Realist and Cultural Analyses of Internal Wars: Interlocking Logics and the American Case” in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2002, pg. 119–162.
- Young, D.C., “Army, United States” in Heidler, D.S. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, Vol. 1, (ABC-CLIO, Oxford: 2000), pg 110-111.

Zimmermann, D., "Calibrating Disorder: Iran's Role in Iraq and the Coalition Response, 2003–2006" in *Civil Wars*, Vol. 9, No. 1, March 2007, pg. 8–31.

INTERVIEWS / SEMINARS / LECTURES

Kagwanja, P., "The 21st Scramble for Africa and the Emerging PAN-AFRICAN Security Strategy." Seminar presented in the Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University, 7 May 2008.

Ramsay, A., "The Modalities of a Ceasefire." Seminar presented in the Department of Political and International Studies, Rhodes University, 16 May 2008.

ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Bash, D., "White House pressed on „mission accomplished“ sign", CNN.com, 29 October 2003 @ <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/10/28/mission.accomplished/> (printed 05/10/2009)

Brenjo, N., *Iraq and civil war: What's in a label?*, Reuters Alertnet, 30 November 2006 @ www.alertnet.org/printable.htm?URL=/db/blogs/1265/2006/10/30-163100-1.htm (printed 17/12/2007)

Byman, D.L. & Pollack, K.M., *What Next?*, washingtonpost.com, 20 August 2006 @ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/18/AR20060818009> (printed 17/12/2007)

CBC.ca, *Q&A: Conflict expert Roland Paris on whether Iraq is in a civil war*, CBC News, 6 December 2006 @ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/iraq/paris-qa.html> (printed 17/12/2007)

Fearon, J.D., *civil war (siv-el wor), n. 1 a violent conflict between organized groups within a country*, Washington Post, 9 April 2006 @ http://cddrl.stanford.edu/news/civil_war_definition_transcends_politics_20060410/ (printed 06/08/2008)

Freedman, L., *What makes a civil war?*, BBC News, 20 April 2006 @ http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/4902708.stm (printed 01/05/2007)

GlobalSecurity.org, *Iraq Coalition Troops: Non-US Forces in Iraq*, GlobalSecurity.org, February 2007 @ http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_orbat_coalition.htm (printed 12/08/2008)

Guardian Editorial, *Language and war: Conflicted meanings*, The Guardian, 30 November 2006 @ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/nov/30/iraq.comment> (printed 04/08/2008)

Hanson, V.D., “As Goes America, Goes the World” in *New York Post*, 19 August 2008 @ http://www.nypost.com/seven/08192008/postopinion/opedcolumnists/as_goes_america_goes_the_world_125073.htm (printed 15/10/2008)

Janensch, P., *Words have meaning in Iraq war*, CONNPOST.com (Connecticut Post), 19 February 2007 @ http://www.connpost.com/pauljanensch/ci_4764620?source=email (printed 17/12/2007)

Keen, D., Adelphi Summary for *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1 July 1998 @ http://www.iiss.org.uk/sys_upl/templates/PT_Directory_details.asp?typ... (printed 01/05/2007)

Smith, D., *A Rising Tide of Blood: The Semantics of Civil War*, Counter Punch, 2/3 December 2006 @ <http://www.counterpunch.org/smith12022006.html> (printed 25/01/2008)

Weeks, D., *The Price in Blood! Casualties in the Civil War*, 11 January 2004 @ <http://www.civilwarhome.com/casualties.htm> (printed 24/12/2008)

Williams, P.D., “State Failure in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Responses” in *General Survey* @ <http://www.gwu.edu/~elliott/assets/docs/research/williams07.pdf> (printed 2008)

Wong, E., *Scholars agree Iraq meets definition of ‘civil war’*, International Herald Tribune, 26 November 2006 @ <http://www.ihf.com/bin/print.php?iddd=3675083> (printed 17/12/2007)