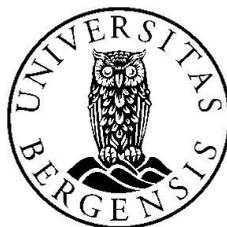


Inequality and conflict in the 21st century

A theoretical evaluation of the IC-nexus

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Abstract

For over fifty years scientists have attempted to prove a causal relation between inequality and conflict and how this relation influence societies, but with no clear result. Theoretic assumptions on the relation between inequality and conflict appear more unified than the empirical results from testing it, and overall, there is a mismatch between theoretic postulations and empirical scrutiny on the relation between inequality and conflict. The aim of this thesis is to enter this sphere of scholarly discourse and to analyze whether some elements may be highlighted that may contribute to close the gap between theory and empirical evidence on the issue. This will be done from the perspective of political theory, where a combination of theory, empirics and concepts will provide the basis for this approach, by presenting some concepts of the so-called Inequality-Conflict (IC)-nexus, scrutinizing some aspects of theory on the IC-nexus, including some empirical results from IC-nexus studies and theorizing on that basis. The main argument of the thesis is that the concepts utilized when studying the IC-nexus may have been too incompatible to provide any unified empirical result, and which also have provided unsatisfactorily ground for comparisons between empirical studies. To try to battle this problem, I conclude my thesis by providing a two-part outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus supported by the theorizing done in this thesis, and based on the findings in this study. The two-part outline of the general framework consists first of a support for one clear theoretic position which is a positive linear relation between inequality and conflict, and the second part consists of a conceptual framework which takes it departure from the concepts of inequality and conflict, supported by some of the features of these concepts. A conclusive additional remark is that it is here also argued, as a result of this study, that on a general level, the use of a broad form of political theory and more practical application of political theory, can be a remedy for confronting issues of conceptual confusion in political studies.

Content

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	5
Chapter 2: Inequality, conflict and optimal inequality	9
Chapter 3: Political theory in political studies	22
Chapter 4: Methods in political theory	30
Chapter 5: Theoretic overview.....	40
Section I: Theoretic framework.....	42
Part I: Conflict vs. consensus	42
Part II: Rationality vs. Deprivation.....	45
Part III: Horizontal and vertical inequalities	48
Part IV: Diachronic theories.....	49
Section II: Theoretic foundation.....	51
Part I: Aspects of conflict theories.....	51
Part II: de Tocqueville	53
Part III: Marxism	61
Part IV: Ethnic conflict	67
Part V: Structural theory	70
Part VI: The relative deprivation theory	73
Theoretical summation	81
Chapter 6: Empirical research and the IC-nexus.....	82
Chapter 7: Discussion and results	95
Chapter 8: Conclusion	100
Bibliography:	102

Chapter 1: Introduction

The history of *inequality*, writes Thomas Piketty:

(...) has always been chaotic and political, influenced by convulsive social changes and driven not only by economic factors but countless social, political, military, and cultural phenomena as well. Socioeconomic inequalities (...) are always both *causes* and effects of *other developments in other spheres*. All these dimensions of analysis are inextricably intertwined (Piketty 2014, 274-275; emphasis added).

It is particularly the relation to *one* specific outcome which *inequality* is considered to be a *cause* of that will be investigated in this thesis, and that is how *inequality* may cause *conflict*. This is the central theme for this thesis, how inequality might cause conflict and how this mechanism is, have, and can be understood. This function between inequality and conflict will be known and referred to throughout this thesis as the IC-nexus. As the inequality side of the IC-nexus seems to have a wide range of area of influence, for the conflict side of the IC-nexus, it is reasonable to also include one aspect of this part of the nexus as well, here done by highlighting its central role in politics: "The grand strategy of politics deals with public policy concerning conflict. This is the policy of policies, the sovereign policy – what to do about conflict." (Schattschneider 1957, 935). And if it is possible to identify the source, or at least *a* source of conflict, it is reasonable to infer that that would be a practical knowledge to have available when trying to decide what to do about conflict, and thus how to structure, modify and prepare societies for contemporary and upcoming challenges. The contribution of this thesis for trying to achieve this objective, that is to reveal the mechanisms of the IC-nexus, is done by evaluating some aspects of the IC-nexus, mainly in the theoretic domain, but also by including some empirical studies, with a continued emphasis on the use concepts. This is all done by approaching the study of the IC-nexus from the field of political theory.

For close to fifty years, scholars had tried, without luck, to unravel the relation between inequality and conflict, but the results of these studies in total are inconclusive (Østby 2013, 206). Critics have pointed to several possible causes for this inconclusiveness in the studies of the connection between inequality and conflict, pointing to missing control variables, inadequate data, issues regarding temporal and spatial choices, and that how inequality have been conceptualized may also be a hindrance in providing more conclusive results from these

kind of studies (Østby 2013, 211). The issue of conceptualization, and in addition the use and understanding of concepts, is a main area which will be evaluated in this thesis, i.e. in how concepts have been used and understood in the studies of the IC-nexus. It is in this thesis considered that the challenges regarding conceptualization of the IC-nexus relates to both sides of the nexus, i.e. both *inequality* and *conflict*. The reason for specifying this focus on conceptualization in the initiation of this study is because the way concepts have been used, understood and constructed in trying to resolve the inequality-conflict riddle is here considered to be a potential reason for why it hasn't been resolved.

A central aim of my thesis is to seek to bring clarity to the relation between *inequality* and *conflict*, and this relation will consequently in this study be derived from the main term which is, and will primarily be referred to as the IC-nexus. Though at times referred to only as the *nexus*, or the IC-puzzle, or other closely connected terms for this nexus, but when such alterations are made, it should be apparent from the context from which they emerge that the reference is to the IC-nexus, i.e. the relation between *inequality* and *conflict* in society. To repeat and specify, the IC-nexus is thus the relation between *inequality* and *conflict* in a society, and points to the mechanism of how this relation operates in that society. In addition, to include the theoretic support of this mechanism as it is understood in this thesis, is that it is understood such that a rise in inequality increases the *probability* of conflict in the society which harbours those inequalities. So the *causation* in the IC-nexus is here understood to mean that an increase or decrease in inequality, is likely to cause increases or decreases in conflict. The reason it operates through probability is because there are assumed to be several factors which can neutralize, dampen or even amplify this main effect of the IC-nexus. Support for this position will be documented and shown through this thesis.

The IC-nexus has been studied under a variety of names, and any reference in this thesis to other studies which have tried to elaborate on the IC-nexus, but which have utilized other more or less closely connected concepts while studying it, will when referring to them often be transformed into the unified container of the IC-nexus by using the concepts of *inequality* and *conflict* as two general containers for a plethora of related concepts which have been in use. Usually in IC-nexus studies where related concepts of *inequality* and *conflict* have been used, inequality is often reduced to a particularly type of inequality, as it is with the concept of conflict as well, but in addition conflict is sometimes also changed to a conflict related concept. It should be added on this matter, that inconsistency in the use of concepts is a

collective problem in the field of social sciences where concepts are not easily agreed upon (Collier and Mahon 1993, 845). Either way it is here attempted to avoid, and even battle the problems rising from inconsistent use of concepts, emerging both from collective and individual inconsistency, in this instance by providing a clear understanding for the IC-nexus, though mainly as a precursor for the sake of the study in this thesis.

The IC-nexus was in 1964 explored by Bruce M. Russett (Russett 1964), which is a study that by several scholars have been identified as the origin of the quantitative empirical testing of the now more developed IC-question (see e. g. Lichbach 1989, 433-434; Østby 2013, 209; Bartusevicius 2014, 37). But after the nearly fifty years of empirical research, these efforts had not been able to provide statistical evidence of a robust link between inequality and conflict (Østby 2013, 206). And even though IC-nexus studies by recently shifting the focus from *individual* inequality, which had been the usual approach when studying the nexus, to *group* inequality seems to have made some gains in providing evidences for a more thorough empirical link of the IC-nexus (Østby 2013, 206), and may also raise hopes that it is possible to understand this connection solely by scientific approaches, this is not the avenue which will be followed in this thesis. I will follow another path which seems to have been neglected when studying the IC-nexus, which is here considered, through its neglect, as another possible cause for the inconclusive results assembled in the first fifty years or so of the study of the IC-nexus. The trail that will be picked up here for trying to contribute to unravel the mechanism of the IC-nexus is through utilizing the field of political theory. On this specific occasion, in this thesis that is, this approach will also entail the employment of a broader form of political theory than usually applied in political studies, an approach which was almost abandoned with the attempt to exclude it from political science as occurred in the first part of the twentieth century (Alexander 2018, 406), and which is in this thesis seen as a possible reason of incomplete findings in political studies, especially regarding scientific tests and evaluations of the IC-nexus.

It should be noted that even if the evidence of the existence of the IC-nexus through the effort of contemporary scientific approaches has not yet been able to provide conclusive results of if the nexus even exists, and if it exists what kind of function it has in a society, the theoretic support for its existence runs deep in the field of political theory, and can at least be traced back to thoughts about politics originated in ancient Greece (Nagel 1974, 453). I will return to

this point and elaborate on the theoretic lineage of the IC-nexus at a later stage, when the evaluation of the theories related to the nexus is carried out.

All this taken together signifies that the main focus for this thesis is to try to contribute to the understanding of the IC-nexus by utilizing a theoretic approach set out from the field of political theory, with an emphasis on the use and understanding of the concepts involved in studies of the IC-nexus. The objective of this theoretic advance is to try to outline out a general framework for understanding the IC-nexus based on theorizing on available theory and empiric studies, and through clarification of concepts. By this approach the ambition is to be able to contribute to the field of political studies by providing a platform which can function for both continued empirical testing of the IC-nexus which are compatible even when testing different dimensions of the nexus, and also to try to combine central aspects of the IC-nexus for further theoretical evaluations of its nature.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Following this first introductory chapter, the second chapter consists of a short presentation of some central concepts utilized in this thesis. In the third chapter the focus is laid on the position of political theory in political studies and its relation to political science, both historically and contemporary. This is because there have been major alterations in the positioning of political theory in political studies, and since this thesis is centred in political theory, it is here considered preferable, even necessary, to provide a framework of the standings of political theory in political studies as a point to debark from when utilizing political theory as the approach for this study. In addition, through reflecting on the standings and development of political theory in political studies in the third chapter, this chapter will also function as a prologue for the fourth chapter which consist a presentation of some of the methods available for contemporary political theorists. The fifth chapter consists of an overview of some central theoretical influence for the understanding of the IC-nexus, which also works as a backdrop for the selection of concrete empirical studies included in this thesis and the general understanding of the IC-nexus. The sixth chapter of this thesis consists of a view on a selection of empirical work that have been performed when trying to unravel the IC-puzzle. The reason for just including a selection scientific empirical studies of the IC-nexus is based on a methodical rationale, where the main purpose is not to evaluate the results of the empirical tests, but extract information from them to highlight other, mainly conceptual, issues in the study of the IC-nexus. When these six first chapters are completed, the attention will turn to the discussion and evaluation of the findings revealed until this point,

and will consist of a two part outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus. This two part outline will consist of a support for a specific theoretic position of the function of the IC-nexus, and the second part of the outline consists of a conceptual framework of the same nexus. This two part general framework constitute chapter seven. Finally there will in the eighth and last chapter of this thesis be presented a conclusion of the findings detected in this study, and also provided recommendations for further research based on those results, both in the empirical and theoretical domain, especially for political studies.

Chapter 2: Inequality, conflict and optimal inequality

The purpose of this second chapter of this thesis is mainly to provide a conceptual toolbox for the theorizing done in this thesis. That means just that the most central concepts employed in this thesis gets a closer look and explanation, and for this thesis these main concepts are *inequality* and *conflict* which constitute the central part of the IC-nexus, and in addition the concept of *optimal inequality*, a concept which is generated here for the purpose of explaining some features of the IC-nexus while theorizing about it. The reason that optimal inequality is included in this part of conceptual clarifications, except for being a new concept, constructed for the purpose of this study which in itself requires an explanation of it, though based on already established ideas, is that this concept is considered to provide an instrument which makes the final outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus, which is the one objective of this thesis, easier to assemble.

Social sciences are riddle with concepts of multiple meanings (Collier and Mahon 1993, 845), and it is preferable that a researcher at least provide the understanding of the central concepts that are utilized in the current study, to prepare for a clearer dialectic advancements of the matter at hand, as is done here, or at least to provide a foundation for a clearer analysis of empirical results if that is the object of the study. And even if it is political theory which is the approach utilized here, not social science per se, as political theory can by some be seen to resemble humanistic research more than scientific research (Grant 2002, 578), these concepts of science and theory to a certain degree must overlap since they still both contains political studies, and must utilize the same concepts, even though the understanding of concepts may diverge. In addition, even if some prefer to have more or less clarified

distinctions between science and theory as with the division, or rather the divisions, between political science and political theory, the concepts themselves drift between the two disciplines more fluently since: "(...) concepts are not only elements of a theoretical system, but equally tools for fact-gathering, data containers." (Sartori 1970, 1052). From this it can be inferred that whatever choice one takes to contribute to understand a subject, as in this case in trying to understand the IC-nexus through theorizing about it and clarifying concepts, the use of concepts still relates to associated disciplines and other approaches for research, as in this case to those disciplines who are more occupied with empirical testing, and thus the concepts should not be used haphazardly as if closely related concepts are equals.

As indicated in the introduction, it is in this thesis considered that conceptual inconsistency is an event that has occurred in the study of the IC-nexus by researchers not being unified in the use of concepts when researching effects of the IC-nexus. I do not claim that this inconsistency of the use of concepts when relating to the nexus is a conscious choice by the researchers of this nexus, but rather a consequence of a broader neglect of the contribution that theory can provide by reducing the position of political theory in academia, and in a belief that science alone can produce insights as an automatic consequence of producing scientific results. This seems at least to be the issue of the IC-nexus, where an overabundance of production of empirical results has not led to any conclusive conclusion, rather a mixture of diverging results, which were already detected for these types of studies around thirty years ago (see Lichbach 1989, 436-440). This is not so strange either, since the production of facts are not enough to settle disputes (McDermott 2008, 22). I won't proceed any longer at this point, but I will return to it, into this debate of the standings of political theory and political science more than it is here considered that the neglect of political theory is in this thesis understood as one of the causes of why political science in many instances seems disorientated in the jungle of available concepts, which appears to stem partly from the neglect of political theory, and thus neglecting a source of conceptual clarity.

Another reason for using time at the start of this thesis in clarifying and developing concepts is that this venture has also been encouraged, i.e. that a demarcation of classifications should be a preparatory undertaking to arrange a ground for better scientific interchanges (Sartori 1970, 1040). And as mentioned for the specific ambition of this thesis, in trying to contribute to establish an active and dynamic theoretical framework for the IC-nexus by presenting an outline of a general framework, it is here considered essential to address the primary

challenge of the multitude of concepts used in the studies of the IC-nexus, and not get entangled in the net of confusions it creates.

Thus, to be able to provide such an outline of a general framework, this outline has to be able to be utilized both for further theoretical advances and evaluations regarding the IC-nexus, but it also has to be a framework that has the potential to provide a unified basis for empirical investigations of the same nexus. This last part also makes some limitations on the level of abstractions for the concepts used, since they must be of a certain capacity that makes them amendable to reduced abstractions. This means that the most abstract concept used on this occasion must be what Giovanni Sartori calls *empirical universals*, which are universal concepts that are amendable to empirical investigations (Sartori 1970, 1035). This is in this thesis achieved with the use of *inequality* and *conflict* as the most abstract level of the IC-nexus, and will shortly be explained how it can connect with empirical investigations. The concept of *optimal inequality* on the other hand, does not have the same empirical connection as the two other concepts, but this concept is not foremost applied to be positively identified, but rather it exist as a concept for helping to explain the mechanisms of the IC-nexus, and thus is on this occasion relieved for the requirement of being subjected to positive observations. But for the concepts of both *inequality* and *conflict*, the demand for being empirical universals applies. This will be done by applying the functions of *the ladder of abstraction* provided by Giovanni Sartori, where a central function of this ladder is that it has a vertical dimension for reduced and increased level of abstraction, with a relation to a reduced and increased level of analysis, though this relation between abstraction and analysis is not absolute (Sartori 1970, 1040-1041). This function will be used on the change of abstraction applied on the two central concepts of the IC-nexus, i.e. *inequality* and *conflict*, with reduced level of abstraction in the lower level of these two main dimensions, which at the same time increases the level of analysis when descending into these lower level dimensions.

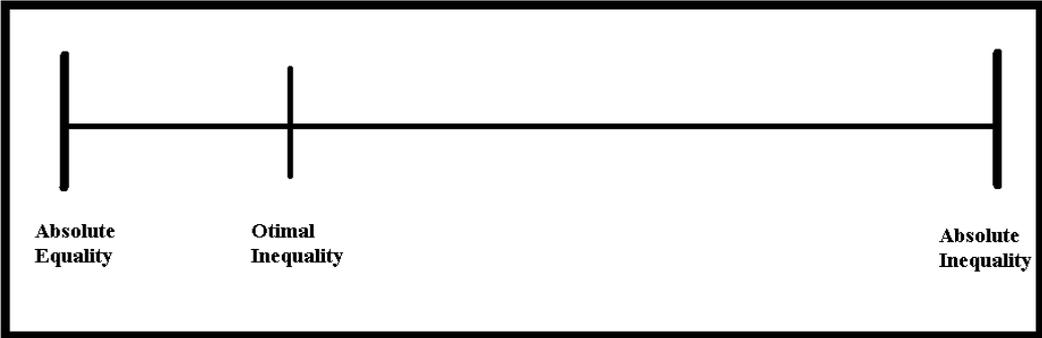
There are certainly many concepts that could be examined here, but the decision made for this thesis is that it is preferable to focus on the two central concepts of this thesis, i.e. *inequality* and *conflict*, and in addition to include the concept of *optimal inequality* introduced in this thesis, or at least formulated as optimal inequality in this thesis, though it is possible to identify related ideas of this concept which I will return to when explaining the concept of optimal inequality.

The reason for this limitation of only focusing on these three concepts, is based on a consideration that this will provide the necessary tools to carry out the discussion of the IC-nexus, by keeping the number of concepts to a minimum as this reduction offers necessary clarity through manageability and relevance. The purpose here is to present an understanding of these concepts in the context of this thesis to have them available as a reference point while discussing the focal issue of this thesis, which is the IC-nexus, and have them available to be utilized in a conceptual framework of the IC-nexus, by giving them a bit of conceptual depth. A special note for the concept of *inequality* is that this concept will sometimes be highlighted through the discussion of the concept of *equality*, since these two concepts are closely connected, at least in this thesis, as they are here seen as two extremities of a scale.

This scale where equality and inequality are the two extremities, is here named *the scale of inequality*. On this scale one finds *absolute equality* on the far left side, and *absolute inequality* on the opposite extreme, with gradation of inequalities in-between (see Model 1 for a visual presentation of *the scale of inequality*). The setup of the scale of inequality is also relevant to a primary understanding of the concept of *optimal inequality*, which is also located on this scale, positioned between the middle position on the scale and absolute equality. In this understanding, it is possible to see *equality* as just a form of *inequality*, when inequality has reached zero, i.e. when a society does not harbour any more inequality. Though that phrasing requires a little specification, since it is in this thesis considered that when equality is achieved, society disappears. This is based on the same idea that Thomas Hobbes writes of the equality of men. He claims that in the natural condition men are equals to each other, this even as there naturally also exist differences between men in their capacities as in strength of body or the possession of wit, both can outperform each other which provides a condition of equality. This situates a condition of war: "(...) where every man is enemy to every man; (...), wherein men live without other security, than their own strength, (...). In such condition there is no place for industry; (...) no culture of the earth; (...) no arts; no letters; no society; (...)." (Hobbes 1996, 82-84). So by writing that society harbours equality is somewhat illogical since it is here considered that there is no society without inequality, but for the sake of the explanation of the scale of inequality it is allowed to stand as a supplementary phrasing to support the idea of the scale of inequality. The scale of inequality presented in this thesis, can also be seen as related to the idea supporting the Gini index. Since the Gini index 0 means total equality and 1 means absolute inequality (Pedersen 2019, 13). However, the scale of inequality produced and used for this thesis has greater capacity for theoretic utilization, while

the Gini-index have more direct empirical utilisation capability, which makes the scale of inequality more proper for this project.

Model 1: The scale of inequality



To start with presenting the concept of inequality, I'll start at the end of *equality*, since one of the central discussion around the concept of equality has been *the equality of what?* question, based on writings by Amartya Sen, that the question of what that should be distributed when it comes to equality, is influenced by several issues, e.g. which principle of justice should be at the base of evaluating equality and *what* it is that should be distributed to achieve equality (Pedersen 2019, 22). Sen emphasizes one of the difficulties with handling equality, and this difficulty is based on the different needs of the relevant comparable actors which makes it hard to decide what constitute equality. He identifies that an issue of concern when debating equality is that humans differ, and human actors in society have different needs and interests that makes it hard to evaluate how distribute in a way that enhance equality (Sen 1979, 202). As a simple example it is possible to consider two men's nutritious needs if one of them is healthy man of 2.00 meters with a weight of 100 kg, and the other is a man on 1.70 meters with a weight of 70 kg with several health conditions, it is understandable that to find an equal share of rations between the two is not straight forward if one consider the prospect of equally fulfilling the need of the receiver, and at the same time giving them the same amount of whatever that is supposed to be distributed. This is just a simple analogy, but it is possible to extrapolate this example to other concerns relating to a plethora of physical and psychological issues, influenced by factors like gender, culture, race, and age which can influence needs that may not easily be solved through equal measures, and what this equality should rest on. A

small note to mention here is that there exist several other understandings of equality than the one which I extracted above from Hobbes, so when discussing equality in general I am not extrapolating my understanding of equality to others, though when discussing and understanding the IC-nexus in this thesis, the Hobbesian understanding of equality applies.

Even if there are some issues with how to understand equality, there is a divide that will be utilized in this paper which is the divide of equality of *opportunities* and *resources*. The reasons for dividing equality into these two dimensions are several, but it is here mainly a practical choice since these two categories of equality considered here include at great length possibilities for evaluating different forms of equality, while not being too narrow an approach by just rely on resources alone which is a tempting thing to do, since in a empiric perspective monetary demarcation of resources is cost effective, though may not be able to provide complete understanding of the issue which is tried highlighted. The reason for choosing *resources* and *opportunities* as sub-dimensions of equality is based on David Millers position that human beings have certain needs that has to be fulfilled to live a decent life, which includes *opportunity* and *resources*. Though he also include freedom, beside resources and opportunities (Miller 2007, 5), but the concept of freedom is for this paper excluded since it is judge here to not contribute to the understanding of the IC-nexus. Freedom is in this thesis, as with several other concepts, considered to be found inside, and in the intersection of the dimensions of *opportunity* and *resources*. In addition, freedom would most likely become a nuisance when evaluating how to understand that concept in itself, and also in an eventuality where one would have to evaluate on how to proceed from theory to empirical testing. So to lay the foundation for a conceptual framework of the IC-nexus which also includes the opportunity for easier applications to empirical testing, freedom is excluded at this point.

By looking at the scale of inequality (shown above in Model 1), and as explained, *equality* is just one extreme of that scale, and by moving away from the level of equality, which only have one condition, which is *absolute equality*, the dimensions of *resources* and *opportunities* follows along. In that way, this understanding of the central components of equality is transferred over to inequality, and thus concept of inequality is in this thesis also considered to consist of the two dimensions, which are *resources* and *opportunities* (see Model 2a below on page 21). This distinction is here also just placed on an abstract level for the sake of discussion, though a bit less abstract than solely relying on inequality as a standalone concept. It is also possible to continue this reduction of abstraction into subsections of inequality of

resources into *political*, *social* and *economical* resources, as mentioned, though in another setting, by Frances Stewart (Stewart 2002, 3), and this further categorization with reduced abstraction and heightened concretization can apply for opportunity as well, with the same categories (see Model 2b below on page 21). But it is here considered that the primary division into *resources* and *opportunities* is satisfactory and even preferable when dealing with the IC-nexus on from a theoretic perspective.

The reduction or increase of abstraction will also be applied when presenting these models with the utilization of the three levels of abstraction provided by Sartori, which consist of a *high level* (HL), a *medium level* (ML) and a *low level* (LL), where the level of abstraction increases on the way up, and decreases on the way down (Sartori 1970, 1041). Any further concretization from the *medium level*, which is where *resources* and *opportunities* are located, as is their immediate subordinate categories of *economy*, *social* and *political*, is in this paper viewed as dilemma foremost for empirical scientist, and not necessarily a problem that has to be solved here, since the discussion in this thesis relates mostly to the theoretic level. It could even become a hindrance in certain situations to include particular possible but unnecessary instances of reduced abstraction or operationalization, by obscuring the wider picture of the theoretic proposals, which is one area of where the problem arises within the IC-nexus.

The other concept of the IC-nexus, i.e. the concept of *conflict*, will get a shorter presentation than inequality, but as with the concept of inequality, the concept of conflict is also presented foremost for the purpose of presenting the concept of how it is understood in this thesis. The concept of conflict will also be divided into two subsections, just as with inequality with its two dimensions of resources and opportunities, where the two sub-dimensions for conflict are divided into a violent and a non-violent distinction. The understanding of conflict is for this paper founded in the definition of social conflict provided by Lewis A. Coser, where social conflict is defined as: "(...) a struggle of values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals." (Coser 1956, 8). I will use this definition, though I will only use *conflict* as a term, and not *social conflict*, since that distinction does not provide any additional understanding for the issue of the IC-nexus in this context, even though it is to a large extent social conflict that is the matter discussed throughout this study. This choice is based on that since one of the issues with the IC-nexus is that there have been utilized an excess of concepts when approaching this nexus, if *social conflict* were to be used, other types of conflict which could be relevant to the

IC-nexus could by this premature reduction of abstraction, in the context of this thesis, lead to problems similar to the ones which are here trying to be solved, or at least confronted. In addition, the specification of *scarce* in the citation above is not a specification that is transferred into the understanding of conflict in this thesis. This instance of definitional modification is by the way, based on a concrete method in political theory, where modification of definitions and applying different understandings can be done through reconstruction of the content of writings when interpreting texts (Blau 2017, 251) which will be used in some instances in this thesis. This methodical specification will be returned to in the chapter for the methods in political theory, but is also mentioned here, since it is a position where the actual method is utilized.

The division of the concept of conflict is made into its two subsections, i.e. into its two sub-dimensions, where this understanding of conflict will be, and more, needs to be divided into *violent* and *non-violent* conflict. This is essential to some of the issues that seem to be part of the problem for why studies of the IC-nexus produces varied empirical results, where the non-violent dimension of conflict seems to sometimes disappear. It could be considered that the ignorance of *non-violent conflict* is a natural consequence of its nature, or maybe rather a consequence of the nature of the opposite concept of *violent conflict*, since violent conflict through its distinct nature usually is easier to detect and identify, and thus lures as a mirage of truth in the distance for the empirical scientist, and consequently finds its way into different kinds of research. Either way, this means that as a conceptual tool for this thesis, *conflict* is divided into two subsections which is *violent conflict* and *non-violent conflict*.

The final concept that is found worthy to get its own demarcation here, is the concept of *optimal inequality*. This is a concept presented here to distinguish the point of where at the scale of inequality the optimal point of inequality is found, and is called so because it is considered to provide an optimal output for a society and its members when inequality is located at this position. This is a point which is here considered more productive for all the members of society than absolute equality which as pointed out is equal to the war of all against each other. And as shown in Model 1, the optimal point is placed closer to absolute equality than to absolute inequality.

It should be noted at this point, to reduce possible confusion of this concept that there exist also: "(...) an optimum level of income inequality (...)" (Parvin 1973, 281), which is not the

same concept though similar at certain points, but the optimum level of income inequality points to an economical effect (Parvin 1973, 281), where optimal inequality does have a broader approach, and there exist some other differences in the understanding of the function of increase in *equality* from the optimal level, where an optimum level of income inequality supposes increased levels of conflict when it approaches equality (Parvin 1973, 281), which is not supported in the understanding of optimal inequality, where the level of conflict is constantly increasing based on increased inequality, and reduced the other way around.

A small note on the term of equality here is that the reason for including *absolute* equality, and not only use equality when referring to the extreme left side of the scale of inequality is to connote a diametrically opposite of *absolute* inequality. But in principle, *equality* and *absolute equality* are considered equals because any change in equality beside absolute will be understood as a gradation of inequality. This is done even though I trespass the rule of not treating different concepts as equals, by specifying that the left extreme of the scale of inequality, absolute equality is used as the term for this position of the scale. But I trespass this rule by providing an explanation of this infringement, and it provides a distinction which makes the scale of inequality easier to comprehend by giving it increased clarity. So the dual use of *equality* and *absolute equality* is just to simplify the cognitive utilization of the scale of inequality, and equality will be the term most applied in the text, but as mentioned, the concept of equality and absolute equality are in this thesis in all but name identical.

The concept of *optimal inequality* will be developed throughout the discussion of the IC-nexus in this thesis, but it is judged here that it is necessary to present a preliminary understanding of the concept already here. And as mentioned, this concept can be found connected to other already available ideas, though under other names than optimal inequality which is constructed for the purpose of this thesis, where the choice of the word *optimal* is not a coincidence, but is deemed to provide a specific understanding of this level of inequality in a society. But before the ideas behind *optimal inequality* is pursued, I want to pause on the output of social cooperation, since this is closely related to the concepts used in this thesis and the understanding of the IC-nexus, and is needed for the continued explanation of the content of the concept of optimal inequality.

John Rawls in his work concerning justice writes that: "(...) principles of justice deal with conflicting claims upon the *advantages won by social cooperation*; (...)". (Rawls 1971, 16;

emphasis added). In my own thesis when evaluating the IC-nexus, it is not justice which is of interest, or any sort of just division and distribution of the *advantages won by social cooperation*, but the rather *the advantages* in themselves and the maximization of those advantages. These advantages, i.e. the *advantages won by social cooperation* will from this point in this thesis be referred to mainly as the *social product*, as done by Jørgen Pedersen (Pedersen 2019, 28). The focus in this thesis is more concerned in from where the foundation of which principle of justice originate, in that these principles have to originate in a concrete understanding and precise conceptualization of the mechanisms of social cooperation (Rawls 1971, 9-10). But the *social product* relates to both approaches, i.e. just and actual distribution of the social product, and the focus in this thesis is foremost on the actual distribution of the social product.

To repeat and specify on this matter, the *social product* is advantages won by social cooperation, which individuals by themselves cannot produce since the social product is won by advantages which emerges from cooperation. I.e. the social product function as a sort of surplus won by the social cooperation. It is the mechanisms behind and related to the actual distribution of the *social product* which is the basis for the theorizing in this thesis, through theorizing about, and clarifying the concepts of the IC-nexus. Even though the concern is here of the actual distribution of this social product, indirectly it can relate to just distributions as well, since as specified above the understanding of just distribution of the social distribution is based on the mechanism for actual distribution. But any just distribution of this social product, or mention of it will in this thesis mainly only be included if it can contribute to explain the dimensions and the functions of the IC-nexus.

To return to *optimal inequality*, now with the concept of *social product* available, the point of optimal inequality is considered to be positioned at the scale of inequality where the *available* amount of the social product is maximized. The availability relates to that the social product at this point is not tied up to a specific type of application, for example by keeping the operating social system in place, which here also includes the political and economical dimensions of a society. Thus if a group of individuals arranges themselves in a form of societal cooperation to be able to generate a social product, the *available* social product will when striking the point of optimal inequality be maximized, but while passing the point of optimal inequality, both ways, going up or down, on the scale of inequality, the *available* social product will be reduced. The idea behind this function is based on inequality's relation

with conflict, i.e. the IC-nexus and a central idea to the theorizing about this nexus in this thesis, where the need for inequality for being able to construct a society and harvest its gains is limited to the level of optimal inequality. But is also tied to conflict, and any further increase in inequality in a society from the optimal point will not increase the social product more than the resources needed to handle the extra conflict in society which rises in cahoots with inequality, when the most influential advantages of social cooperation is already achieved, e.g. like structuring the society in a hierarch and utilizing division of labour.

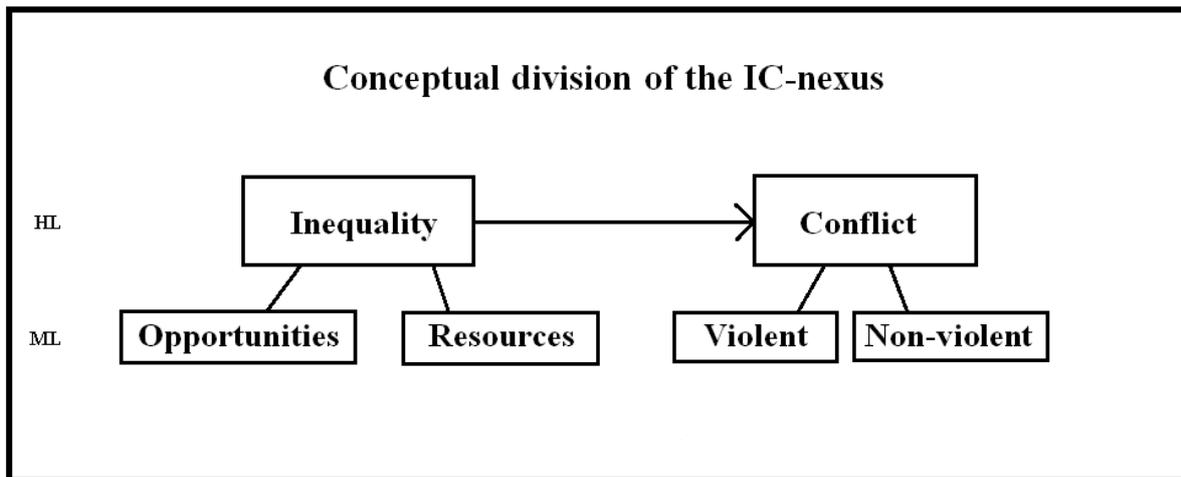
As mentioned earlier, the concept of optimal inequality is in itself based on similar ideas which have been expressed before, such as what Hobbes specifies in that there exist in nature other species than human beings, i.e. animals, which operates in social systems without the ability to discuss and evaluate the system in itself. They may also be considered to produce a social product which is a creation of natural forces, but they differ from humans in certain ways for example by not being able to separate between private and common good (Hobbes 1996, 113). The notion here is that it lays the foundation for an understanding of *optimal inequality*, in that there exists a *natural inequality* which can naturally be found in social systems based on that these systems can provide an advantage for the members of that system in a way which will dispel other systems which harbours a form of natural inequality which is further away from optimal inequality. The optimal inequality is such that it is the optimization of the natural inequality, and another system cannot exceed this position of optimization, since it from that position just will approach either the position of absolute inequality or absolute equality on the scale of inequality, and as a consequence the amount of the *available* social product will diminish. This equation is done on an ideal level utilizing two different societies which, in principle, only differ in their level of inequality. I write *in principle*, because if the level of inequality differs, it should also influence the level of conflict based on the mechanisms in the IC-nexus, but for the sake of argument, they are *ceteris paribus* societies expect for the level of inequality.

By the way, the reason *optimal* is a term used as part of this concept is not just to be able to create a new concept, but it rests on the idea that this position of inequality in a society is optimal for the combination of the collection of collective resources, i.e. resources which surpass what individuals alone can produce, together with a minimum level of conflict which in this thesis is seen as constantly rising with the increase of inequality. And it is considered to be a premise which can function as a clarifier for theorizing done in this thesis.

This all together means that *optimal inequality* consists of an idea which is consistent with a moderate level of inequality in the distribution of resources and opportunities in a society to achieve the main functions of social cooperation. When those goals are reached, continued inequality does not yield equal returns as it does in the first stages of social cooperation, and the effect of the IC-nexus kicks in and overwhelm any gains from further cooperation through increased conflict. This cooperation creates the social product, as seen above is the excess product of social cooperation which the individuals by themselves cannot produce, and where the point of *optimal inequality* identifies where on the scale of inequality a society needs to be to be able to maximize the *available* social product. And in the event of any regression or advance from that point, the social product will in itself be reduced or even increased, *but*, the effect of the IC-nexus will eliminate any increase in the available social product, and any reduction indicates less resources and opportunities to distribute in the society.

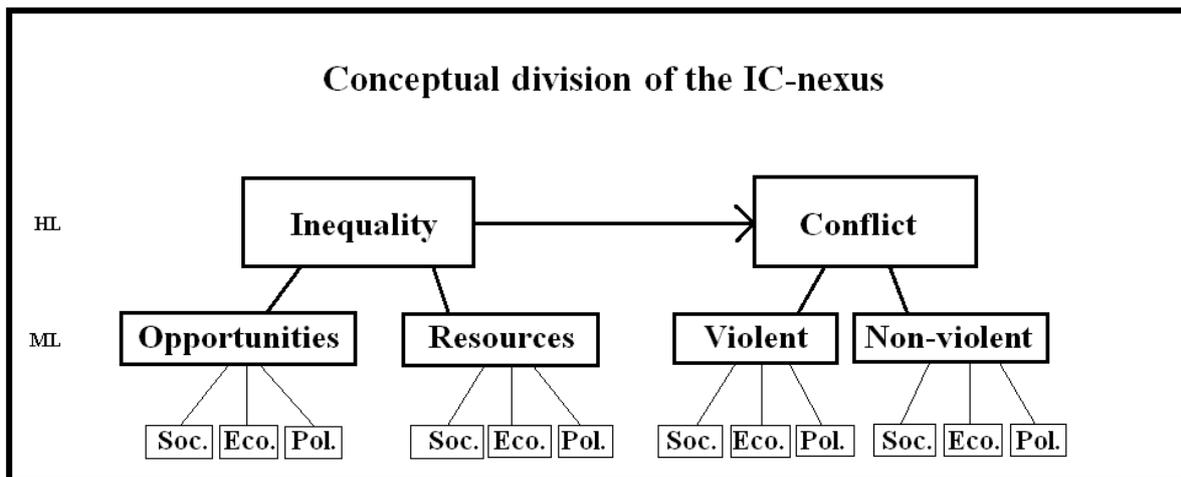
To summarize: For the three concepts presented here, *inequality*, *conflict* and *optimal inequality*, inequality is divided into *opportunities* and *resources*. Conflict is divided into *violent-* and *non-violent* conflict, and *optimal inequality* is the position of inequality which is preferable to have for any society to maximise the *available* social product while at the same time keeping conflict at a minimum. Model 2a and Model 2b below visualises the concepts of *inequality* and *conflict*, with reduced level of abstraction into *opportunities* and *resources* for inequality and into *violent conflict* and *non-violent conflict* for conflict. *Optimal inequality* is shown above in Model 1, and will also be available in the closing chapters of this thesis in a presentation of the central functions of the IC-nexus as it is understood in this thesis.

Model 2a:



HL=High level of abstraction ML=Medium level of abstraction

Model 2b: (Including potential categories for the mid-level dimensions).



HL=High level of abstraction ML=Medium level of abstraction

Soc.=Social / Eco.=Economical / Pol.=Political

Now having presented the concepts and arguments for conceptualising the concepts, the attention turns to discuss political theory, by highlighting political theory's contemporary standings and recent developments in the field of political theory and its application for this specific study of the IC-nexus.

Chapter 3: Political theory in political studies

The reason that the field of political theory has been chosen in this thesis as the appropriate approach for the effort to try to increase the understanding of the IC-nexus in the more general field of political studies, is mainly because it seems that purely scientific advances haven't been able to provide a satisfactory result by testing and retesting spectres of the nexus, as indicated in the chapters above. The understanding here is that political theory has the capacity to go beyond empirical results in a way that science cannot. This will be shown through this and the next chapter. One of the reason for the lack of conclusive results in the empirical testing of the IC-nexus is in this thesis considered to be due to the neglect of the field of political theory in political studies, and this also include a neglect of political philosophy, which is closely connected to political theory at least in its original meaning (Cavarero 2004, 55). Though the direction of political philosophy is not an approach which will be pursued here as a separate approach more than providing a supportive role to enhance the understanding of the IC-nexus when theorizing about the nexus, when and if found necessary. In addition, these two fields, i.e. theory and philosophy tend to overlap, so the distinctions between them is here not seen as an absolute division, but more of a practical one. It is more included as a distinction because it exist in the literature of political studies and is considered practical to have this distinction available to refer to, to enhance some different aspects in political studies, as in this instance to discuss changes in how politics has been and is being studied, when emphasising the role of political theory.

The need for the inclusion of political theory, and even more, the need for pure equality between all the fields inside the study of politics, i.e. political science, political theory and political philosophy, is here considered to be an indispensable approach to be able to discover the political reality. To advance only with the use of science seems unsatisfactorily, as the: "(...) political life is often as opaque as the rest of social life, (...)." (Moon 2004, 14), and to apply an one-dimensional approach by primarily using science to uncover the true character of politics seems insufficient.

James Tully argues that in the history of political studies, through the three different genres, of either science, theory and philosophy, there have existed different approaches and different understandings of which genre that can supply the better understanding of politics, which has

contributed to an continued debate about what political theory really is, but it is difficult arrive at a unison understanding of this matter since: "Because there is no definitive answer, there is no end to this dialogue." (Tully 2004, 80). I find the use of the term *dialogue* of the debate of what political theory is, and how it relates to science and philosophy as a very diplomatic choice of words, since it often seems as polemics is the more utilized approach when discussing how the studies of politics should be conducted, which may be by some considered that this thesis has the tendencies to take the latter approach. Even if that may be the case, the purpose here is to highlight how through its use and support how political theory can provide for an expansion of the understanding of politics through the emphasize on theory, which partly also includes political philosophy, though not so much used here, or at least its use is not demonstrated too much in this thesis. And the stress on the insufficiency of using science alone to understand politics is not to undermine the scientific approach, because as indicated, for this thesis the different ways to studying politics through science, theory and philosophy are considered equals even though they are different and are, even more, considered complimentary, in a way that they together provides the more suitable instrument to understand politics, which they exclusively and on their own seems unable to provide.

The choice of using political theory as the approach for the research done in this study is connected to the results from the scientific studies of the IC-nexus where the excess of concepts in use and the diverging results was considered to not provide satisfactorily guidelines for continued empirical testing of the nexus. And since there exist several different ways of studying politics and no common agreed upon answer to decide which approaches that should be preferred (Tully 2004, 80), the choice of political theory is considered the most reasonable approach to take on this occasion to contribute in the effort to understand the IC-nexus.

If today there exist a clear separation of political studies, even if how this division should be understood is not agreed upon, the division between the three main fields in political studies, i.e. the scientifically, the theoretical and philosophical, was at an earlier point considered more like gradations of a united field of political studies than separate fields of inquiry, where students on politics would use the combined approaches from these subsections of political studies as was considered appropriate (Alexander 2018, 404). From this earlier unison approach it is possible to extract a picture of the evolution of political theory, at least from the point where the traditional unison approach was challenged.

George Alexander has done this by presenting an genealogy of political theory where he uncover four different types of modern political theory which emerge from a traditional canonical form of political theory. The four modern types of political theory he identifies are *positive*, *normative*, *third way* and *sceptical*, and he also include the traditional form, which is a fifth type, found in the canonical approach which is considered the *original* type of political theory which is the common foundation for the four modern types (Alexander 2018, 403).

Alexander writes that the break from the unison study of politics, to what we now know as the more familiar tripartite division, occurred in the early twentieth century from the then dominating canonical approach, i.e. the *original* type of political theory as the predecessor of the four modern types, which based political theory in classical political literature, organized into a whole canonical foundation in the nineteenth century, and where the approach to the subject was solely based on: "(...) reflection on politics in relation to a collection of great works, (...)." (Alexander 2018, 403-404). He also highlights that the reason for the break from the unison approach was based in a problem which emerged from the canonical political theory where it was confronted with some questions to which it could not provide satisfactory answers, and in a reaction political science, i.e. an approach which emphasised observable political activities, gained ground in a process which ended with the suppression of the canonical approach of political theory in favour of political science. One of the causes of this event for this displacement was that the canon was unable to provide satisfactorily answers since it was: "(...) full of antiquated discussions." (Alexander 2018, 405-406), which is comprehensible when knowing the immense political changes that had occurred in the latest centuries before modern times, and that all political issues that arise from new political reality could be handled by identifying discoveries of political mechanisms from past times seems challenging. But by excommunicate the canonical political theory, a side effect may also be that one risk to ignore insights and ideas which had influenced and to a large degree had shaped the foundation for the modern political situation. Though, as Alexander continues, in the situation where science narrowed the field from a more unison approach to political studies, and tried to expel the influence of political theory, this did not hold over time and the ban on political theory had to be lifted through necessity, because this exclusive approach did not work out either since: "(...) eventually political scientists were to realise that they, too, were theorist." (Alexander 2018, 406). This is also at the point from where the modern forms of political theory that Alexander identifies starts to evolve into their more distinct types of political theory. The four types modern political theory that he has distinguished have some

distinct characteristics and influence. But even if each type of modern political theory has its own characteristics, they have also a common denominator which is based in that they all are: "(...) successive fragmentations of and restorations of lost parts of a canonical political theory (...)." (Alexander 2018, 403-404).

The first type of the modern types of political theory is the *positive* political theory. The positive political theory can be considered an offspring of the oscillations between the simultaneous exclusion of and need for political theory after the expelling of political theory in political studies, and a turn to the exclusive focus on political science. Political theory was at this time not become extinct, but had temporary been exiled to the realm of history. But when the scientific approach to political studies started to dominate the field in the early twentieth century, the need for political theory soon became apparent and by the mid-twentieth century the realization that political science also had a theoretical dimension became clearer, and the issue of the division of political science and political theory became a revived issue in political studies (Alexander 2018, 406). The form of this first part of this new and first type of modern political theory took on a structure of a tool for political science, in a way that it explained mechanisms in politics through simplifications by using models and hypothesis to explain processes and causality, but without inclusion of the usual *ought* which tended to cling on to traditional political theory (Alexander 2018, 407). In this way it became tailored to the needs of the current domination of the political science in the field of political studies. But for the capacity of political theory in this form as only in the service of political science, it had some inherent restrictions, since: "(...) political science never really managed to make theory anything other than a tool of quantitative generalisation." (Alexander 2018, 407). This made *positive* political theory a form of theory which linked up with political science focused on inference of deduction and induction, centres on the *is* and excludes the *ought*, and have high levels of abstractions and lack imagination in the understanding of politics. This paved the way for another form of political theory which took on a less brute form than the positive form of political theory and which became known as *normative* political theory, which tried to combine a scientific-theoretical approach with a traditional type of theory in an effort to regain greater sophistication into political theory (Alexander 2018, 408-409).

Normative political theory emerged in the second half of the twentieth century by locating a position in political studies which had been abandoned by the now dominating scientific-theoretical approach which included the type of positive political theory, though this positive

political theory was an integrated part of political science and not distinct from it. The available location for the new type of political theory, by focusing on a normative approach, became available by concentrating on the *ought* in politics which included areas like ideals, values and principles (Alexander 2018, 408-409). Alexander highlights that the settlement in this available area for this new form of political theory was accepted by the dominating political science and its lackey of positive political theory because it did not try to invade its dominion where political science ruled, where the new type of normative political theory rather concerned itself with areas of how to understand justice and rights, equality and liberty. But since the positive political theory was integrated into political science, all approaches concentrating on normative political theory was confused with the complete field of political theory when it emerged, as: "(...), normative political theory laid claim to the entire inheritance of political theory." (Alexander 2018, 409-410). This equation of political theory with *normative* political theory is still currently the dominating view of how to consider political theory when undertaking political studies (Alexander 2018, 411), which understandable can lead to confusion when applying and working in the field of political theory. Though by *normative* political theory finding its place closer to the *ought* than the *is*, this type of political theory distances itself from a general approach to politics and are more connected with the legislative part of society. This again paved the way for another understanding of political theory, which is *the third way* (Alexander 2018, 411-412). This is also warranted, i.e. to try to include all types of political theory inside the field of political theory, since by hiding one type of political theory, i.e. the positive type, inside political science, and claiming the name of political theory for other, i.e. normative political theory, could easily lead to confusion, in instances when relating to the field of political theory, both from the inside and from the outside.

Alexander writes about the *third way* of political theory that this approach is willing: "(...) to see politics in more than one way at once." (Alexander 2018, 413). But with the recent dominion of *normative* political theory and its confiscation of the whole field of *political theory*, the *third way* is an even more recent approach which has provided some novel results, but is too new in itself to have attracted any considerable critic (Alexander 2018, 414), and can be considered to be in an establishing phase which only time can decide if it has the possibility to find a place for itself or even seize territory from the two former modern types of political theory. Even if this form of *third way* political theory as Alexander presents seems more appropriate to incorporate elements of the two former forms, and has a closer link to

politics by having: "(...) emphasised power as an element of politics and emphasised the fact that theory must be political, (...)." (Alexander 2018, 414), he also provides a fourth type of political theory which he prioritizes. He highlights that *the third way* may, and even expects, to change *normative* political theory, but he also specifies that a criticism which can follow *the third way* is that it is liable to commitments issues by being too closely tied up to politics, and therefore suggests a fourth and final type, at least for the time being, of modern political theory which is the *sceptical* political theory (Alexander 2018, 415).

The fourth type of modern political theory, i.e. *sceptical* political theory, tries to highlight the distinctions in political theory, where the others try to pretend that there is only one type of political theory, which is provided through an unspoken assumption that political theory is the one type which it emerges from (Alexander 2018, 415). In this situation if one approaches political theory from one of the first three modern types of political theory, i.e. *positive*, *normative* or *third way*, and only refers to it as just political theory, this can easily create confusion, which is tried to be avoided here by clarifying some distinctions of the current active types of political theory, or maybe it is better to call it subsets of political theory as that seems more accurate of the current positions of the different types of modern political theory.

For this thesis, and for the theorising done on the IC-nexus here, it is not taken an absolute stance on which type of political theory that this instance of theorizing emerges from since they are in flux, but it leans towards the *sceptical* type, though the aspects of division of positive and normative political theory is also supported here, but only as subcategories of political theory proper, which maybe the *sceptical* type could evolve into. The reason I lean to the *sceptical* political theory, is because there is one particular aspect of this approach which is attractive and that is that this type is specifically directed to theorizing about politics, since it is: "(...) a type of theorising, unpolitical in its nature, which takes politics as its object." (Alexander 2018, 415). In addition of this, this type of political theory looks at theory, or rather theorizing as an endless process (Alexander 2018, 415-416), which is a position that is supported in this thesis, by that arguing that there exist no absolute objective to achieve a realization of truth through theorizing, but that the process in itself, i.e. the process of theorizing, can function as a supportive role which can function as a possible provider of guidelines both inside academia and outside in the world of politics, and as in the instance of this thesis, clarifying aspects of the IC-nexus by theorizing about it.

Though a challenge if one were to follow a clear approach of the *sceptical* type of political theory is that, as Alexander writes that it is not yet been established as a complete type of political theory, with the exceptions that it can to a certain degree be identified in past writings, and in one aspect regarding the *original* type of political theory, i.e. the canonical type, the *sceptical* political theorists tries to revive the findings provided there (Alexander 2018, 417).

Anyway, as mentioned, the position of which type of political theory which is followed here is not absolute though with a initial support of the sceptical type because some of its features, but the main support in this thesis is leaning to a broad understanding of political theory which includes aspects of both positive and normative political theory. This is because political theory current status is that it is understood in different ways, and seems to be under development of how it is understood with maybe some major alterations on its way, hopefully some paradigmatic changes. Though I find at this point little to gain by position this thesis clearly inside one specific type of these changing types of political theory, since this thesis tries to include insights from a broad understanding of political theory, and argue that political theory should occupy its own field which includes the necessary subtypes. Though the reason for including this section of the different types of political theory in this thesis, is because by clarifying these available types of political theory, it is considered that the understanding of this theorising can proceed in a more satisfactory way. In addition, this description of the current and former types of political theory provides a prelude to the next chapter in this thesis, which turn the spotlight over to methods in political theory. Since political theory is comprehended in several different ways, it is reasonable to expect some divergence in which methods that are most applicable, in that way that the different understandings of what political theory is can spill over into the methods of political theory, and influence which methods that are available.

To summarize the discussion on political theory: The choice of using political theory as an approach in this thesis is based on that this approach provided opportunities to approach the IC-nexus from another angle than by utilizing a purely scientific approach. Political theory as a field seems still to be fragmented, as shown in the types presented above. The position of this thesis in political theory is leaning towards the sceptical type of political theory, based on some of its features. But the support for a specific type of political theory is in this thesis based on desire for a more unified type of political theory, though with the established

divisions as practical distinctions that can advance a pursuit for a unified broad field of political theory. I have focussed the discussion here on how political theory is understood and separated, and that political theory seems to be in a state of transformation, and its different types are mainly presented to remove potential for confusion, by hindering that the type of political theory utilized in this thesis is assumed to rely on a narrow understanding of political theory, which it is not. The stance of this thesis is rather an encouragement of the continued development of political theory into a more common framework, and a more united front for political theory would be welcome. If that is by wrestling positive political theory away from political science, combining it with the normative political theory and including aspects of the canonical political theory, maybe as three separate but related types of political theory could enhance its usefulness. And the contributing of this thesis to political theory is to operate inside its field, by performing practical political theory, i.e. actual theorizing about politics. In this way it may seem that the approach here is *sceptical* by leaning in that direction and by taking politics as the objective for theorizing, but the final outline for the general framework of the IC-nexus has strong *positivistic* tendencies, which makes the actual position of this approach of political theory hard to clearly distinguish in the available types. But by trying to clarify a sort of position and understanding for this thesis of political theory proper, i.e. a broad inclusive type of political theory, consist mostly of making sense of the capacity of the mind, through philosophy, in combination of the manifestations of the world, through science, and try to make systematic understanding of politics and how it works by combining the main faculties of our existence into clearer understanding, in this case, of politics, and more specific for this thesis, for the understanding of the IC-nexus.

Either way, whatever continued development that contemporary political theory will take, and the actual position of this thesis inside the field of political theory may be partly indecisive based on no absolute positioning in the available subtypes of political theory proper, the focus for this thesis is now turning over to available methods in political theory, that is all types of political theory, and methods emerging from them.

Chapter 4: Methods in political theory

The available methods in political theory is coloured by the disruption of the field as a whole as described above. The divisions between the different understandings of political theory can be translated into the available methods because of this, as: "(...) political theory is an exceptionally wide-ranging and open-ended branch of scholarly enquiry, within which there is very little in the way of settled agreement with regard to questions of method and approach." (Leopold and Stears 2008, 9). This is an understandable consequence of the divergence of the different approaches and understanding of political theory. Why should the field of methods for political theory be in harmony if there doesn't exist a common agreement of what political theory is in itself? But a discussion of the methods is called for nevertheless, and maybe even more so than in other fields where the issue of method is more settled, (as if such a place exists). Maybe a consequence of this disruption of the field of political theory can be identified in the current situation where it is used. Since those who undertake efforts to utilize political theory usually remain silent when it comes to which methods to apply and often offer little reflection of how they are undertaking their studies, where a common approach is just to skip a consideration of method when theorizing about politics (Leopold and Stears 2008, 1).

To try to battle this situation, i.e. to battle the situations where consideration of methods are not applied in actual context where politics is the object of theorizing, in this fourth chapter of this thesis, there will be present some of the methods which can be found in field of political theory, and that means here in all types of political theory. This choice is taken both to prepare the further discussion of the IC-nexus in the upcoming chapters in this thesis, but also to defend the already utilized approaches, as used during the presenting of the concepts of *inequality*, *conflict* and *optimal inequality* in the second chapter of this thesis, and by providing a context by describing elements of political theory. In addition to this, the actual implementation of methods and discussing them in a practical perspective is here also considered to be an essential part of clarifying which methods that works and which that may not work through its manifestation in research, and not just theorizing about the methods in an expectation that the methods will at some point reach a form of infallible existence.

Even though as it is not my main intention to consider or contribute to any discussion about disciplinary disagreements between political science, political theory and political philosophy

in this thesis, by the very fact by positioning this thesis in political theory it can hardly be avoided. And political theory is here considered political theory proper, not one specific type of the divisions of political theory mentioned above, but rather using any available approach which seems appropriate, as is here seen as a reasonable approach as long as the field of political theory is in flux. Or at least a reasonable approach based on political theory's transformative state as it exist now in contemporary political studies, since if one were to consider to wait for the debate to settle on how to understand political theory one would probably have to settle in for a rather long wait. This is because political theory to a certain degree always is in flux (Alexander 2018, 402). So to present the available methods used, or at least present the methods which is considered practical to have available for the theorizing on the IC-nexus, it is considered here that it is necessary to return to the theme of disruption of the field of political theory, since that influence strongly the methods available in what kind of methodology they are founded. This makes political theory fluctuate between philosophical and scientifically methodology, which is here considered not a weakness, but a strength because it forces a political theorist, or at least should force a political theorist to think about how to think, which is a issue that often seems lost at least to purely scientific approaches (Sartori 1970, 1033).

Since both science and humanities departments harbours political theory (Grant 2002, 577), it is not hard to understand that there can appear some disagreements in how to settle its position in academia. This is not only based on professional disagreements, but it has to be appreciated that there are established institutions where there is invested interests both individual and collective, so any reason to settle disagreements must also overcome the organic tendency to defend the domain in which it exist. In addition there can also appear some confusion in political theory, since: "(...) political theorists do humanistic research in a social science discipline." (Grant 2002, 578). This must be acknowledged in a way that the product of political theory must be evaluated with the correct type of methodology, because if not, findings may be discarded on incorrect premises. Though regarding that the usual relation of political theory up to the *normative* tradition, this may be considered a reasonable understanding, but as pointed out above, since the approach to political theory in this thesis is broad, and not only restricted to *normative* or the more scientific *positive* approach, it is not considered here that political theorist *only* do humanistic research, but *can* do humanistic research in their effort to theorize. And if the humanistic approach is utilized, it is essential to be aware that the methods which are available when doing humanistic research differ from the

purely scientific approaches. Though even they may diverge from purely scientific approaches, they are not erratically chosen as if any choice beside scientific approaches are irrational, but rather they: "(...) are interpretative and historical." (Grant 2002, 581). This does not mean that an empirical approach that are more related to political science should be disregarded in political theory, those results are a central component to political theory as a political theorist also should use the knowledge produced in political science through empirical tests of political mechanisms (Grant 2002, 591).

Both political theory and political science have their aim at explaining the world of politics, and at sometimes the result can be incomplete (Grant 2002, 591), but that doesn't mean that it is worthless. As is indicated above, the actual implication of the use of political theory, and this can be regarded relevant to political science as well, is considered a part of its evolution and understanding, simply by quantifying its use beyond complex ideal theories and down to more practical related small scale use. Even so, political studies include both scientific and humanistic elements which are complementary, and where the distinction between the two may at some times be blurred, but it still exist. And for political theory, this entails that it has the option, and even more should apply the opportunities emerging from both approaches, and utilize the historical and philosophical possibilities this entails for the understanding of politics, and thus the humanistic issues concerning politics (Grant 2002, 590). This is also in the agreement with the here understanding of political theory proper, which tries to utilize both avenues for enhancing human understanding about an issue, by using both idea and matter to understand the mechanisms of the world, that is using both humanistic methodology and scientific methodology to understand the mechanisms of the world. And in this instance to make an effort to understand the mechanisms of politics by combining both sets of methodologies through the conductor of political theory.

What the humanistic side of political studies can offer is that it is often concerned with reasonable judgement, where judgement is a necessary feat to apply when studying issues of the world, since the world often approaches us with reduced clarity (Grant 2002, 581-582). This approach could be of great assistance to understand empirical evidence. It is easy to be fooled by a notion that empirical evidence is self explaining, but the evaluation of empirical results can lead in several directions, as has happened with the investigation of the central component of this thesis, i.e. the IC-nexus. And an unguided application of science by leaving political theory behind, or trying to incorporate it as a concealed form of political theory as

happened through positive form of political theory, may rendered political science in a state of confusion, maybe especially when it comes to concepts. And by iterating over the same methods may not be a satisfactory approach to solve these kinds of problems, if the methods used are based on an insufficient methodology for the problem at hand.

In the context for this thesis, the approaches thus are centred in political theory, with tentacles reaching over to both political philosophy and political science, or to humanism and science, or to idea and matter, in a manner that is judged to be most productive at this point while studying the IC-nexus. The way that it seems to be productive is that it appears that this approach is the most useful for this project, with the strength that this approach applies, while at the same time recognizing that: "Both demonstrative reason and empirical evidence have their limits." (Grant 2002, 582). The rationale for including this distinction is just to clarify the position taken in this paper and giving the methodological and methodical choices a framework, and at the same time, and maybe even more important, fending off any methodological and or methodical fanatics.

Since there apparently exists some disagreement about what political theory entails, as an initiation of the methods, one understanding of what it is, which includes both scientific and humanistic tendencies is that political theory is a:

(...) practice involving systematic reflection on the character of politics, the causal forces underlying political stability and change, the institutional frameworks within which certain types of political activity are sustained, and, more normatively, the values or objectives that political activity and organization might realize, and conditions under which they can be realized (Philp 2008, 129).

This understanding opens up approaches that can utilize both humanistic and scientific methodological anchored methods, since it contemplates both facts and values. As the focal point of this thesis contains the relation between inequality and conflict through the scrutinizing of the IC-nexus, it is considered as up until now pointed out that the avenue of a political theory in a broad understanding and any available methods found there is the most suitable place to centre this project. Especially since, related to the citation above, through this study the understanding of the connection in the IC-nexus is considered to be influential both on stability and change, institutional frameworks and underlying societal values. The reason

for me to exclude the word *political* when repeating the content of the citation above in this context, i.e. writing stability and change instead of *political* stability and change, is because it is here found that the inclusion of the term *political* to some degree can confuse the understanding of the underlying mechanisms at play, which is why the term is removed here, to not let it obfuscate a more complete understanding of the mechanisms that theoretically influence stability (read: conflict), through inequality in a society. I also turn the use of the concept *stability* into *conflict* here as I have mentioned I will at times do for conflict related concepts. This choice is related to the specification of concepts in chapter two, where *conflict*, as in opposition to stability or any related concepts that can take conflicts place, is the term used to denote this dimension of the IC-nexus. The reason for specifying this, beside the desire for unifying the concepts used on the conflict side of the nexus, is because the concept of stability is here also found to be too vague to occupy the conflict side of the IC-nexus. Alexis de Tocqueville writes that: "It is important not to confound stability with force, or the greatness of a thing with its duration." (de Tocqueville 2009, 497), which indicates that it lies near to confuse the two concepts of stability and force. Especially may this be the issue of political arrangements, where long lasting regimes resides in power in what may seem as a stable society, though often supported by immense use of force. The understanding for such a condition in this thesis, is that this use of force constitute a situation of conflict, either violent or non-violent, and the use of the concept of stability may obscure this understanding, where it is also judged here that the concept of conflict doesn't carry the same capacity for confusion as stability. Thus if the concept of stability is used without the necessary alteration, this can provide continued fuel of the problem of using closely connected concepts which may not all be equally suitable, at least for the objective here of increasing insight in the mechanisms at play in the IC-nexus. Though at some points in this thesis, the concepts of stability, and also the concepts of instability are used, usually when referring to other sources, but the underlying understanding of stability in this thesis is the one depicted above. Besides, since there is made an amendment from the citation above to make it comply with the structure of this thesis, I find it relevant to repeat the point which was highlighted previous when discussing the definition of conflict, and that is that tool in political theory where one has the possibility to make necessary amendment through reconstruction of the content of text if found necessary, where Adrian Blau writes about this method that: "Reconstruction means testing and potentially supplying, supplementing, modifying or removing presuppositions, definitions, links between comments/ideas and steps in arguments, (...)." (Blau 2017, 251).

This method will also be utilized at later points in this thesis, as it has before and also here, but it will not necessary be mentioned every time this method is utilized beyond this point.

Another reason for centring the thesis in political theory and thus influence the available methods, is because it widens the areas of research, as it is not restricted to politics, but can also apply insight from a broad range of academic disciplines, e.g. among others, history, psychology, sociology and philosophy (Philp 2008, 130). I will not utilize every option within this possibility, but it gives this approach the flexibility to include components of different disciplines which could be harder to justify in more rigid methodological frameworks. But still, it should be noted that by utilizing this broad approach of political theory, it is prudent to be vigilant when using two different methodologies, without automatically mixing them into one common methodology which may make the result of the theorizing inadequate. Or at least be aware that there are two methodologies at play at the same time.

There are several available approaches or methods used in this thesis, and I will attempt to apply the methods that I find most productive in gaining insight in the IC-nexus. David Miller argues that: "(...) even the basic concepts and principles of political theory are fact-dependent: (...)." (Miller 2008, 31), and where these facts validity depend on some kind of empirical investigation. And if it is shown that premises of the facts are impaired, than it is necessary to modify the premises or to discard the fundamental premises that support the facts that do not exist (Miller 2008, 31). The relevance to this study here, is that there is an underlying theoretical foundation that proposes some social and political mechanisms in the IC-nexus, which doesn't provide an unified empirical verification of the theory when it is tested, which provides a reason for approaching this relation with a conceptual view, where I find the methods of political theory more relevant to this endeavour more than an exclusive empirical approach, since that latter approach have not yet been able to provide conclusive results. Though the utilized approach has a scientific tendency, in which available empirical evidence can be utilized to search for reasons shaping a theory in that or this way, either by looking at some of the empirical evidence, or looking for the reasons for the inconsistency in the evidence. As is mentioned before, the lack of consistency of concepts when trying to investigate the IC-nexus in an empirical way seems to be an issue for not being able to solve the IC-dilemma. Though on this occasion, it is not the empirical evidence which is as much in attention, but the way the results from empirical investigations has been labelled with a surplus of concepts. And also the other way around, in how a surplus of concepts have been tested, and then compared as equal types of tests.

Another way to see an approach used by a political theorist is how Adam Swift and Stuart White sees it where they describes the political theorist as in some sort of opposition and relation to an actual politician, not only in terms as an academic enterprise, but as an undertaking which includes an aim to be more connected to real politics (Swift and White 2008, 49). In this capacity one of the enterprises for the political theorist, one of the division of labour between her and the politician, here related to a normative tendency of political theory, is that she has the possibility, or maybe even the duty, to contribute to clarifications about how to distinguish different forms of arguments and other assessments of values and balancing of them. And it is possible for a political theorist to offer arguments of her own and convince others through argumentation and clarification (Swift and White 2008, 54).

It may seem that I have repeated the division of political theory several times up until now, and I will continue to do so throughout this thesis. I just want to clarify that this is intentional. Since as shown above, political theory is understood in several different ways, and the different ways to see political theory is here considered subsections of political theory proper until the concept of political theory has been better sorted out, and its repetition of that division is here seen necessary to not let any provisional understanding of political theory seep back into the text. In addition, clarification is one of the main theme in this thesis, and it is here considered that clarification can be done by repetition.

The reason for this thesis to centre the methods in political theory is partly an issue of the thematic field of study, but also as mentioned that it opens up for investigations into other fields, and thus also other methods, like political philosophy, where one method related to political philosophy is the analytic approach which stresses the use reason itself (McDermott 2008, 11), it may be seen as a bit vague as a specific method, though David Miller is more specific about the kind of reason in conjuncture with political philosophy, where he assert that: "(...) political philosophy is a branch of practical reason - it is thought whose final aim is to guide action, as opposed to having a merely speculative purpose." (Miller 2008, 44). This approach can be considered connected to the presentation above between the politician and the political theorist, where it should not be the sole objective to speculate on terminology, but rather an effort to provide operational tools for politicians, and may I add scientists, philosophers and other theorists which can suffice to provide a common language across the different fields of politics, both in study and in practice.

Reason itself can also be used as proof in regards to utilizing formal analysis in combination with political theory, when providing axioms and deriving certain conclusion from those axioms through consistent reasoning (Hirose 2008, 71), though this is not so much directly in practice in this thesis, but it could be an approach which could be utilized in an occasion of a continued use of a common understanding of the mechanisms in the IC-nexus, which as will be shown later, has the propensities to extract formal structures which can be used to test the nexus at a later stage based on efforts made here with the objective to produce an outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus.

Though by using reason, it should be mentioned that reason is also connected to its contemporary reality which implies some restrictions on pure reason by the reality it exist in, and a critique of reason is that it can never become an instance of pure reason, but it lives in a space between *ought* and *is*, between facts and values, and this complexity should not be disregarded but rather included in an instance of using reason (McNay 2008, 85-86). By including this restriction, that pure reason is just an ideal, doesn't necessarily has to be a weakness as long as it is acknowledge during its use that these restrictions exist. And this is maybe a field where a broad type of political theory can make contributions, in not being restricted to either scientific methodology or humanistic methodology, but has the potential to discover insights in both genres. And even maybe more in a state of division of labour with actors of real politics, discover insights in the intersection between science and humanism, which may be where the core of political theory exist, at least that what is argued here that this is where the centre of political theory can be found, and even more, where it can flourish.

Other methods, the methods of dialectic approaches are also connected to reason, though the dialectic approach is not a method that connotes consensus and there are many different understanding of this approach, where one of these understandings is based in the work of G.W.F. Hegel (Leopold 2008, 106-107), and according to Hegel it is the concept itself which is a basic foundation for the structure of reason, which also is a link between the sensible world and reason, which reason itself has created (Leopold 2008, 115). This would mean to have available clear concepts is a foundation for a dialectical approach, which has already here to a certain extent been provided, or at least made an effort to provided some distinct concepts, on the occasion of the explanation and clarification of the concepts of *inequality*, *conflict* and *optimal inequality*, which also is part of the endpoint of this thesis. But also other concepts or terms have been clarified, or clarified concepts of certain terms have been

included, among others through the dissection of political theory and its different types and with the mention of the social product and natural inequality. Other clarifications will also follow when it is deemed necessary. This is to be better able to discuss the content of the diverse concepts by clarification, and thus also make the concepts included clearer for any discussion of the IC-nexus. A note that can be practical to include at this point is that the rationale for not including every concepts that may be considered relevant to getting its own presentation in the second chapter, or in other chapters, is based on the increased clarity for those which have been included, by exclusion of others and limit the central concepts to a manageable amount. Other concepts which may also require a presentation will get a minor presentation at the instances where they are presented when the current context requires it.

When mentioning the inconsistencies in empirical evidence it is appropriate to mention and to be aware of the distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory, as some of the abstraction levels included in my own discussion are at an ideal level, one has to acknowledge that our worlds societies are rarely ideal (Swift and White 2008, 58). As is the case with the concept of optimal inequality, it is set at an ideal level, though not an unachievable level, but it is presented more as a goal to give direction more than a goal to be realized. This is also an approach that John Rawls points out to that an ideal can be a foundation for clearer understanding of underlying matters, and that: "(...) a deeper understanding can be gained in no other way, (...)." (Rawls 1971, 9). As mentioned when presenting the concept of *optimal inequality*, this is a concept which focuses on the foundation from where principles of justice originates, the idealization of the concept is created to achieve a deeper understanding of the mechanisms at play in society transferred to a political setting. So the gain from this idealization for this thesis is not to foremost provide a position of achievement for a society, but it is here more developed as a concept which can be used to explain the mechanisms at play in the IC-nexus by giving it a turning point of effect when inequality is either increasing or decreasing, in cahoots with conflict. Though it is relevant that the ideal theory also can be seen as a hindrance, if the search for the ideal just continues in an infinite loop without realizing that it is an ideal and usually cannot in practical terms be achieved. Especially if the division of labour apply between political theorist and politician the need for practical theories should be a clear, as it can probably provide more practical guidelines for of implementation of real politics (Swift and White 2008, 60). So while both non-ideal and ideal theory have their advantages, it should be acknowledge that they have certain distinction, and to a certain degree have diverging areas of implementation and use.

In the next chapter, some of the fundamental theories which have been supporting studies regarding the understanding of the IC-nexus will be looked at, and in some occasions there will be applied some critique for either the theory or the application throughout the rest of this thesis. The intention of this handling of the different theories and use of them is to be able to highlight the mechanism of the IC-nexus, and even if some areas are criticised the intention is mainly to strengthen the theory which is under consideration, if not it will be stated clearly. This is because when it comes to theories, as Daniel McDermott argues, they exist to a degree on individual judgement, and not only scientific evidence, so a continued scrutinizing should be encouraged since theories can be considered a combination of ideas which help highlight certain aspects in the field that the theory is applied, and: "Assembling of a theory can be a very messy process, (...). Good theories, (...), can include problems, even inconsistencies." (McDermott 2008, 21-22). So in the event of evaluating and criticising a theory, this doesn't necessarily mean that this theory criticized is seen as a dissatisfying theory, but rather that it may have some gaps that can, on this occasion directly related to this thesis, be a source of the fragmented empirical evidence, which again can lead to incomplete understanding of a subject studied. This is a common theme with many theories, that they include some gaps, or even inconsistencies, and that the role of scientists is to try to fill the vacant space that these gaps provides (McDermott 2008, 22), and by that to generate a more complete understanding of the matter at hand, and in this case try to highlight some of the issues that may breed inconsistent empirical results. Since, typically, science is a place where agreement on specific theme often derive from repetitive tests of a theory and a consistent result gives us reasons for a higher credibility of the theory tested (McDermott 2008, 23-24), this can also be turned on its head and to say that inconsistency in test results based on the vantage point of a specific theory possibly will reduce the credibility of that theory. I will also add that it doesn't necessarily only have to be scientist which fill these gaps, but this can also be done through other types of studies, as theoretic and philosophical studies.

This leads me to conclude this section of choices of methodological foundations and its methodical possibilities by centring the thesis in methods of political theory which emphasise reason and judgement, systematic reflections through clarification of concepts, reconstruction, disciplinary flexibility, while connecting these approaches to concepts and reality through clarifications as a ground to guide action, and trying to filling gaps in theories by theorizing. But the main issue to be taken out of this discussion of methods in political theory is the clarification of concepts. This should be an integrated part of every research enterprise, even

outside political theory, or outside theory as a whole and into science and philosophy as well. There should also be a certain degree of self-critical reflection in political theory and it should be done by the main tool of political thought which is language, which consist on political concepts, which is the container of meaning for political thoughts (Freden 2008, 198-199).

A final note to this methodological chapter is that the structure of this thesis is done on the judgement that the structure used is the most suitable structure for this project. I.e. to provide clarifications of concepts and describing features of political theory, before presenting the methods of political theory. And further that the theories provided next are presented before a selection of empirical studies to evaluate some aspects of those studies. The specific argument for selecting a sample of IC-nexus studies will be returned to when the studies are presented. The final structural feature of this thesis it that it ends in a presentation of an outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus, with a subsequent conclusion.

The specification of the use and the conscious use of concepts is the main theme for the methodical approach taken here, and this is also transferable to the next chapter of this thesis, which evaluates some of the main theoretic influences which have theorised on issues related to the IC-nexus, and which in various ways have influenced the way which the empirical testing following the theories have been conducted. Methodically how this will be done is that there will be tried to extract central elements of the theories as a foundation for theorizing. And a final note before continuing, the practical theorizing done in this thesis is continuously done during this thesis, sometimes in some clear instances as with the introduction of the concept of optimal inequality earlier, at other times it is just small instances of the evaluation done on certain aspects, usually related to empirical studies, concepts or theory.

Chapter 5: Theoretic overview

The *theoretic overview* presented here is thematically divided into two sections. The first section consist of a *theoretic framework*, where the aim is to highlight some central components connected to theories and thoughts related to the IC-nexus. The second section of the theoretic overview consist of a *theoretic foundation*, where the central theories which have influenced both theoretic understanding and empirical tests of the IC-nexus are presented, in

addition to an introductory part on some aspects of the relevant conflict theories. The two main sections are in themselves divided into four and six parts. The first section, which is the theoretic framework consist of four parts which highlights components which have been found relevant to present to provide a better basis for discussing and evaluating the actual theories. The second section, which is the theoretic foundation, consists mainly of the actual theories and writings on the mechanisms in the IC-nexus and are divided into six parts. A note I find reasonable to include at this point, is that this two part division of the theoretic overview must not be confused with the two part outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus, which will be presented as a central result in the closing chapters of this thesis, as they occupy different functions in this thesis, but utilizes some similar terminology.

The *theoretic* framework, which is utilized in this thesis for the IC- nexus (inequality-conflict) relevant theories, consist in itself as mentioned of four parts. The first part of this theoretic framework highlights a division in the school of thoughts regarding collective human interaction, where this division between the two schools of thought regarding human interaction is based on conflict or consensus, that is, if social interaction is based on competition or cooperation (Hayward 2015, 589). I will return to elaborate on each part of the theoretic framework and each part of the theoretic foundation of this theoretic overview, after the theme for each of the four parts of the theoretic framework, and the theme of the six parts of the theoretic foundation have got a short introduction. The second part of the theoretic framework shows one underlying theoretic implication with the possibility to influence the understanding of the IC-nexus which is based on the understanding for human action, where the focus is on premises for the causes of human action. Since it will in this thesis be followed the logic from the school of conflict, it will here be focused on two central ideas for the cause of human actions based on this direction of thoughts. This idea consist of a division into two types of actors which are the Deprived Actor (DA) and the Rational Actor (RA) (Lichbach 1989, 455). In the third part of the theoretic framework it will be specified a component which focus on the division of *individual* and *collective* dimensions of the IC-nexus, which is conceptualized through the concept of *vertical inequalities* (VOI) and *horizontal inequalities* (HOI) (Stewart 2002, 3). This division of *vertical inequalities* and *horizontal inequalities* is the same division which was introduced as *individual* and *collective/group* inequalities in the introduction, where *vertical* inequalities are the same as *individual* inequalities, and *horizontal* inequalities are the same as *collective/group* inequalities. The reason for not introducing the concepts of vertical and horizontal inequalities already in the introduction when the issue of

individual and group inequalities were mentioned in relation to the recent development of the empirical testing of the IC-nexus, was because it was deemed not to be practical to introduce it at that point. The fourth and final part of the theoretic framework consists of a short presentation of the lineage of the IC-nexus in political theory to demonstrate that thoughts of the IC-nexus have deep roots inside the field of political theory, and thus to show that origin of the IC-nexus is not a recent innovation in political thoughts and theory.

The second section of the theoretic overview, i.e. the theoretic foundation, starts with some aspects of conflict theories before continuing on a view on the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville by extracting some ideas of inequality and conflict based on his thoughts. Then components of central ideas inside Marxism will be highlighted. Then of a short mention of ethnical conflict theory will follow, and then a view on structural conflict theory will be presented. The relative deprivation theory is the final theory that will provide the theoretic foundation for the content of this thesis. It can be mentioned at this point that all these theories may not directly be classified as IC-theories, maybe with the exception of the relative deprivation theory which will figure as the last theory of the presentation, but they all have components which will be utilized in the subsequent discussion and evaluation of the theoretic foundation of the IC-nexus. Thus some of these theoretic directions are more concrete theories than others, and some are more writings where theoretical assumptions have been derived from the text and utilized in providing insight for the understanding of the IC-nexus.

Section I: Theoretic framework

Part I: Conflict vs. consensus

In this study, the focal point is in principle continuously on the IC-nexus, though at sometimes to highlight premises for the IC-nexus the attention will at sometimes be steered in other directions. At this point in the thesis, this undertaking will turn in the direction of conflict theories, and the presentation of the theoretic foundation will be placed in the body of conflict theories. Though as mentioned above, it is here considered practical to also provide a theoretic framework for the following theoretic foundation. In this first of four parts of the theoretic framework, it will be presented some thoughts of a division which is prevalent in how to understand collective human interaction.

A general understanding of collective human interaction in the academic community is first and foremost divided into a dichotomous division, where it emerges from a partition of how human societies are understood and if functional human social relations are in essence either are based on *conflict* or *consensus*. The traditional understanding of these concepts of how human societies function has had an approach that divided the *conflictual* and the *consensual* as two opposing entities (Hayward 2015, 589). Though more recently, the main dichotomous division has been challenged, and the understanding of these schools of thoughts has made advances in appreciate that the two lines of theory for collective cooperation is more seen as mutual elements of a working society (Hayward 2015, 589). The theoretical trail which is tracked in this thesis is that it is based in the conflictual understanding of how productive human societies works. The reason for that is that first and foremost because the IC-nexus that is explored here is based in the logic of conflictual theories, and because the understanding in this thesis is resting on the opinion that the consensual view of a society is based on the threat of a potential conflict, and such that the underlying threat of conflict is the reason for the possible consensus. This is also an understanding that has been accepted by consensual theorists, though with a minor amendment in that consensus in itself can be a product of coercion (Hayward 2015, 590), and in this thesis with the perspective of the concept of conflict used in this thesis, coercion is just a type of, or sub-dimension of conflict, which by following the former introduced conceptual division of conflict for this thesis, can be found either directly through violent actions or more indirectly through non-violent actions.

The central part of conflict theories is that these theories are based on the idea that society is organized through opposing forces vying for power. This is a prevalent idea saturating several positions of conflict theory based on ideas of divisions on like class, race and gender, where power and its distribution in a society determines social outcomes (Hayward 2015, 589). It is here considered preferable to repeat the concept of inequality used here in this thesis, since power will almost at all times be found as a component for determining outcomes of social interaction. And for this thesis, power is considered to be able to be identified in the intersection between resources and opportunities, which the division of inequality here consists of. Though it is also considered that all nuances of inequality can be found, at least in theory and especially in the context of this thesis, in either one of the dimensions which inequality has been divided into, i.e. resources and opportunity, or in the intersection between these two dimensions. This goes for power here as it did for freedom as mentioned before, and in theory should embrace all forms of inequality.

To shortly mention the opposing side to conflict theories before continuing, i.e. consensus theories, these theories provides an alternative understanding of the forces pushing for social interaction, and is based on interdependence between its partakers. In addition to this it exists a position that these opposing understandings of conflict and consensus can be combined, as is done through the idea of pluralism (Hayward 2015, 590), so in reality there exist more than two types of school of thoughts, but the conflictual and the consensual understanding of collective social interaction are the usual approaches.

The connection to this thesis for including this division of conflict versus consensus as a theoretic starting point, beside it is providing a context together with the rest of the theoretic framework for the further evaluation of the IC-theories, is that this thesis has some underlying contract-theory tendencies, as exemplified earlier where the understanding of equality is based on an Hobbesian understanding of a war of all against all.

Even though different understandings of the interactions between the individual and its society can be utilized by including the ideas from contract theories, the choice here is taken to follow the Hobbesian view. But as Rawls writes about using the ideas of contract theory, though in a context of moral theory, but I will claim that it also holds for theory in general, it is that the use of contract-theory and an initial situation implies certain levels of abstraction and forms a hypothetical situation (Rawls 1971, 16). The distancing of the state of nature and the state of society and how it should be understood, are essential components in the differences in the ideas from central social contract-philosophers also of other besides Hobbes, like Locke, Rousseau and Kant (Thommessen and Wetlesen 2002, 87-89), though the exact position of the state of nature and the social contract will not addressed here more than a presentation of the Hobbesian position as done in a former chapter, and a decision to follow that position. As it is a hypothetical situation, it is here considered appropriate to chose a position which makes sense in the context of this thesis and based on individual judgement. It is also here with the decision to follow the Hobbesian approach an approach which strengthen the decision to follow the conflictual premises for collective interaction, by highlighting the foundation for the understanding consensual and conflictual theories, and lay the foundation for the choice of the conflict theoretical approach followed here.

The main issue will be to follow the IC-nexus, as it is throughout this whole thesis, and as presented, the logical step will be to utilize conflict theory as the basis for evaluating this

nexus. Though before turning to the theories, there are still some issues that need to be highlighted, which lead me over to the second part of this theoretic framework, which focuses on the position of the social actor, and the theoretic understanding of how she acts.

Part II: Rationality vs. Deprivation

Mark Irving Lichbach claims that one of the reasons for the inconclusive results from scientific investigations of the IC-nexus is that they are lacking: "(...) the *assumption* and *reasoning* that explain *how* and *why* inequality produces conflict." (Lichbach 1989, 434). To combat this deficiency it is possible to employ the understanding of one of two different approaches which can be found in either through the understanding of the Deprived Actor (DA) theories or through the Rational Actor (RA) theories (Lichbach 1989, 455).

To start with the Deprived Actor theories, Lichbach argues that this assumption of action for an actor is based on relation to psychological mechanisms, that is that: "People's preference over rewards are (...) based on expectations about what they believe that they deserve under some ideal system of just rewards." (Lichbach 1989, 456). This implies some challenges for IC-nexus researchers, at least for empirical approaches, in how to identify people's expectations about what they *believe* they are entitled to under a just system. In addition to what an actor believe she is entitled to, the latter part of this proposition also involve some challenges of since evaluating what a just system is not just straight forward, and what justice is and the values it entails is not easily combined into agreement (Kymlicka 2002, 3). This means that the understanding of the Deprived Actor may be demanding when translating it to operational entities, but it can also be illuminating in understanding how human act and behave, at least at a theoretic level.

Another factor which comes into play when using DA theories is that they have the aspects regarding deprivations related to other actors, and the understanding of the Deprived Actor can be understood in this intersection (Lichbach 1989, 459). Lichbach writes about the EI-PC nexus, which is the Economy Inequality-Political Conflict nexus (Lichbach 1989, 431-434), and writes about the Deprived Actors that they: "(...) care about relative income and wages." (Lichbach 1989,459). To adjust this proposition to comply with the concepts and terms used in this thesis, it will here be claimed that the DA cares about relative inequality, which more specific here based on the division of the concept of inequality for this thesis consist of

relative opportunities and resources, as in opposed to absolute types of inequality regarding opportunities and recourses. Lichbach does also specify the possible restriction of focusing on the EI-PC nexus and encourage researchers to expand the to the I-PC nexus, (i.e. inequality-political conflict nexus) (Lichbach 1989, 467), though this proposition is advanced in this thesis to expand it all the way to the IC-nexus. And thus, to clarify, the EI-PC nexus above is in this thesis transformed into the IC-nexus, but shows one of the examples of diverging away from a common set of concepts to establish comparable tests of the IC-nexus. It could also be considered that in this instance, by focusing on the EI-PC nexus, the focus is in reality on sub-dimensions and categories of the IC-nexus, and not on the overreaching relation between inequality and conflict. But to continue on this point will be a bit untimely to do here, since it is something which will be returned to when some of the empirical studies which have tested the IC-nexus is evaluated in the following chapter after the theoretic overview has been completed. So the attention here rather turns over to the Rational Actor.

The other understanding of a social actor is the Rational Actor (RA). The Rational Actor theories were developed in response to the DA logic, since the DA theories did not provide sufficient empirical results (Lichbach 1989, 459). And in opposition to the DA theories, the RA theory propose that actors are more result oriented toward absolute outcome in opposition to results related to relative advantages. The Rational Actor lay more weight to what they can achieve in absolute terms, and are not concerned with these achievements related to other actors and their achievements, and a crude understanding of the Rational Actor is that she applies cost-benefit calculation (Lichbach 1989, 460). Lichbach writes about the Rational Actors that they: "(...) care about absolute income and wages." (Lichbach 1989, 461), and to convert that statement into the context of this paper, the Rational Actors care about absolute opportunities and resources.

The picture of the two underlying assumptions which can be utilized when working with conflict theories is that the differences between the models applied to the actors is mainly a division between the difference of absolute and relative. It is understandable that the Rational Actor has been utilized in empirical investigations, since she appears to be more practical to apply when evaluating and undertaking empirical research, though the Deprived Actor may be an actor which is closer to the empirical reality. For example in economical models, the actors usually is based on an understanding of a Rational Actor because of its simplicity and eschew alternative theories (Andersen 2013, 164-165), though the problem may be that trust in the

results from such simplifications may be unwarranted by placing the assumption of the actors too far away from reality.

Anyway, the two actors presented here, the DA and the RA is the two actors which is central to have available when evaluating the IC-nexus. The DA is also the model which is utilized in this thesis, and can also be found in several of the theoretic assumptions about the IC-nexus. Though this doesn't automatically exclude the RA, as it can contribute in its own way. It can even be considered that the DA is more compatible with theory by being closer to reality without the demands of empirical operationalizations, and contrary, the RA may be more compatible with empirical tests, though has to pay a price by distancing itself from reality. If one probe deeper into the division between DA and RA, it can even be considered that this is a development of the actors from DA to RA, where a Rational Actor is more developed than the Deprived Actor through a development of autonomy, and the actual actors in the society is positioned on a gradation between DA and RA. For example does Immanuel Kant write that enlightenment is the development of personal authority, from a position of not just being an actor which reacts on the directions of others, and this lack of personal authority is sometimes easier to exist in than entering into the struggle of gaining autonomy (Kant 1993, 71-72), which may function as a basis for making gradations on the understanding of the actors, but could quickly lead to complications. Though even if that may be the case, the division of the DA and the RA will here be based in the traditional separate division of the two, and not a form of development of the actors from one type to the other.

The presentation of the two types of actors, the RA and the DA seem thus mainly to consist of a division between the absolute and the relative. And the position of the Deprived Actor is the one that will function as the foundation of this thesis, and as pointed out may be the most suitable actor to use when making theoretic evaluations. This actor is also shown to be prominent in some of the available conflict theories regarding the IC-nexus. But if the actor in society acts alone or in cahoots, or rather, should be understood as an individual or a collective force is another matter, which is where the attention now turns to. And in the context of this thesis and the IC-nexus, it is how inequalities in a society is dispersed on either groups or individuals which will in the next part be at the center.

Part III: Horizontal and vertical inequalities

The concept of *horizontal inequality* (HOI) and *vertical inequality* (VOI) is relatively new, where the former of these two dimensions has been a neglected dimension when, among others, referring to and dealing with inequality. The central difference between horizontal inequalities and vertical inequalities is that horizontal inequalities entails inequality on a collective level, while vertical inequalities points to inequality on an individual level (Stewart 2002, 1-2). This relatively new dimension may provide the necessary nuance which to solve, or at least advance the understanding of the IC-nexus. Gudrun Østby identifies that this distinction between the horizontal inequalities and vertical inequalities can be, or she argues at least, that the lack of this dimension in earlier empirical research could be a contributor to the scarce results of the IC-nexus studies, though she points to the EI-PC nexus. In addition, she write that quantitative studies including this horizontal dimension of inequalities provides a positive link of the IC-nexus, which also line up with other results from case study research (Østby 2013, 206).

The reason for the inclusion of the concept of horizontal inequalities and vertical inequalities, is because it is reasonable to infer that in an event of an empirical test of either of the structuring of the concepts, *may* present different results. Or at least it should be an issue to contemplate when performing empirical investigations. Even though the focus of this paper is a theoretical one, this distinction is practical to include, because it makes the framework for eventual following empirical tests more complete. It is not here considered to be a theoretic substantial division between the two positions of HOI and VOI, but if one would have to investigate a relation between inequality and conflict, this dimension should at least be controlled for or demarcated to highlight which trajectory the empirical investigation undertakes. But it is here considered to be more an operational issue than theoretic, though it must be included into theoretic evaluations nevertheless to show that this aspect is considered, though it may also easily influence theoretic evaluations on some occasions.

The final part of this theoretic framework for the theoretic overview is a quick tour into earlier writings on the IC-nexus, to show that the logic behind the nexus has long traditions in political theory, and this part will function as the steppingstone to probe into the more recent theoretical foundations for the contemporary understanding of the IC-nexus.

Part IV: Diachronic theories

The starting point to the connection between inequality and conflict can be traced far back in time to ancient societies, where several influential figures have assumed or inferred that inequality in a society would facilitate conflict. This means that the connection between inequality and conflict is not a novelty, and the connection between the aggression which stems from these types of inequalities through types of relative comparisons are anchored in a long line of thoughts (Østby 2013, 208). It is not just the statements of certain ancient figures that connects inequality as a disruptive element in a society, but also the procedures that a society live by can show that inequality at some level is perceived as an unwelcomed force in society. In ancient Greece there were mechanisms in place that hindered concentration of power to a certain person or groups, by using lotteries for assigning offices to the citizens of the city, and in addition there were the possibility to ostracise a person into temporary exile if he grew to powerful (Vestrheim 2018, 23-24). This is an example of a manifestation of the understanding of inequality as force which society had to shield itself against.

Besides the structure of society, some philosophers directly connected the destructive force of parts of inequality for a society. Plato, even though he promotes a society that is based on a congenital differences, he is still aware of the threat of unequal power between persons or fractions in society. He identifies that unequal distribution of the resources of the society would be dangerous for the stability of the society (Skribekk and Gilje 2000, 83-84). Aristotle, even though he and Plato have differences in their opinions in how a society best should be run, they still find some common ground in which their inferences are similar. Some of the equality that Aristotle promotes is that to avoid political instability, there has to be a possibility for everybody of the society to be heard. And in addition, contrary to Plato's idealistic state, the goal should be a viable alternative that could function in praxis, and then the middle-class should be the section of society that control the balance of power (Skribekk and Gilje 2000, 112). Although regarded with its current contemporary societies these ideas can be considered novel ideas, it is important to emphasise that these ancient societies of equals excluded certain groups of society like the slaves (Skribekk and Gilje 2000, 112). But this part of this thesis is mainly included to show that the idea of inequality in a society as a disruptive force is not an novelty. The distinction between Plato and Aristotle, where Plato highlights distribution of resources and Aristotle emphasize the possibility to be heard can also be connected to the division of the concept of inequality presented earlier in this thesis, in

the division of resources and opportunities, where resources equals resources and the possibility to be heard equals a form of opportunity. The inclusion of the middle-class can be traced back to Aristotle, a logic that resonates with class theories, holding that the size and role of the middle-class and stability is closely connected to stability. This idea of the balancing middle class has had a long lasting theoretical impact as it provides an idea of a balancing force of the classes in society (Mills 1959, 259). And the middle-class can to a certain extent be seen as a product of a society which distribute its resources and opportunities in a way which lies closer to absolute equality than absolute inequality, related at this point to the scale of inequality.

Other scholars have further specified that the assumption of the connection between inequality and conflict has deep roots in political theory. Jack Nagel writes that: "At least since Aristotle, theorists have believed that political discontent and its consequents - protest, instability, violence, revolution - depend not only on the absolute level of economic well-being, but also on the distribution of wealth." (Nagel 1974, 453), and adds: "Contemporary political analysts have tried to test this ancient assumption using modern statistical methods. Their results are distressingly confusing." (Nagel 1974, 453). In these two citations, to pause on them for a moment, several of the grounds for this paper can be identified. Both that various types of conflict have been used, though far from all that are used when relating to the IC-nexus, and also the result of empirical testing of the IC-nexus assumption which leads to inconclusive findings are found in these citations. It could be claimed that protest, instability, violence and revolution are not the same as conflict, though as pointed out in the introduction of this thesis to combat an excess of concepts used, conflict will in this thesis be utilized as a container for all types of societal disruptions, which either can be put in the dimension of violent, or in the dimension of non-violent conflict.

Bruce M. Russett also signifies the historical theoretic relation between inequality and conflict, though he uses words as *diversity of wealth* and *stable government* (Russett 1964, 442), and William J. Linehan points to the same ancient connection of inequality and conflict, though he uses the words of *economic inequality* and *political instability* (Linehan 1980, 187). Here is shown both the connection to a long line of political thoughts on the IC-nexus, but also indicates the issue of excess concepts while studying the same mechanism of the IC-nexus. And since I will return to the empirical studies on the connection soon, and highlight the issue of concepts there, it is here considered enough to specify that *diversity of wealth* and

economic inequality is considered two instances of inequality, and *stable government* and *political instability* is consider two instances of conflict, though the first one in a reversed sense as it uses *stability* as the concept conflict side of the IC-nexus. Though, as specified before, that the concept of stability may easily be confused with force, but it also connotes to a certain degree a sentiment of the absence of conflict. How this is understood in this thesis, i.e. how it is understood that the capacity of the stability-instability relation at sometimes is used, is that stability shows low levels of conflict and instability shows high levels of conflict.

Thus the connection of the IC-nexus is shown to be of ancient origin, and is still an active issue of concern for political studies. And already in this presentation of the lineage of the IC-nexus, it shows that there is appearing several different concepts of this connection, which will be returned to and addressed more later, after a run-through of some of the most influential modern theoretical foundation for the understanding of the IC-nexus.

This final part with the view of the diachronic theories concludes the fourth part of the theoretic framework of the theoretic overview, which provides the introduction to the next section which is the theoretic foundation of that same overview. In this next section, the attention turns first to some aspects of conflict theories and from there run through some of the main conflict theories that have dominated the area of the IC-nexus, by providing some insights from *de Tocqueville*, and by taking a view on *Marxism*, *ethnic conflict theory*, *structural theory* and *the relative deprivation theory*.

Section II: Theoretic foundation

Part I: Aspects of conflict theories

There exist two relations which is prudent to present before continuing into the main conflict theories, which is based on a first relation between frustration and aggression, and a second relation between expectations and capabilities, as will be explained below. Østby writes that some of the theories related to the IC-nexus are Marxist theory, the relative deprivation theory and theories of ethnic conflict and structural inequality, where a common trait of these theories is that they have an: "(...) interpretation of conflict as a result of widely felt grievances among the relative disadvantaged in society." (Østby 2013, 208). There is also a link between these kinds of theories and individual psychology where Sigmund Freud pointed

out that frustration occurred whenever humans encounter obstacles in their pleasure-seeking or pain-avoiding activities, and when any such frustration is activated, the response is to react with aggression, usually at the *perceived* source of the frustration (Østby 2013, 208). It is this frustration-aggression-relation (FAR) that underlies the relative deprivation theory, which evolved in stages from a study of James C. Davies in 1962, and this theory was further developed by Ted R. Gurr in 1969-1970, where a second element of the theory is based on an expectation-capabilities-relation (ECR), where if an individual's expectations for achievements are not synchronised with his capability to reach those achievements it may foster civil conflict (Østby 2013, 209). A concrete understanding of the frustration-aggression relation is, as it was proposed by John Dollard et al., that: "(...) *aggression is always a consequence of frustration*. More specifically (...) the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression (Dollard et al. 1939, 1).

With these two central aspects of conflict theories available, i.e. *the frustration-aggression relation* (FAR) and the *expectation-capability relation* (ECR), the further advancement into writings which has provided ideas or are complete theories which have figured on occasions of theorizing and in empirical tests of the IC-nexus is from here divided into five parts. As indicated some of what will be presented are in fact only writings which have been used in the understanding of the IC-nexus, and may not be a complete theory, but they will here for the sake of this section of the theoretical foundation for this thesis usually just be referred to as theories, even though a more nuanced separation of these theories could be warranted. But for practical reasons they are here, and throughout this thesis mostly referred to as theories.

The setup for this theoretic foundation is as follows, in the remaining five of the six parts of it is first, (as the second part of the whole theoretic foundation), to present the theory of Alexis de Tocqueville, then Marxism figures as the third part. The fourth and fifth part will consist of a view on ethnical and structural theory in that order, and finally will the relative deprivation theory be presented as the sixth part, which also appears as be the most complete theory of these five theories, at least in the combination of the aspects shown above and the issues included in the theoretic framework. In addition, it is appropriate to mention that the relative deprivation theory is the theory which has figured in most of the studies related to the IC-nexus (Østby 2013, 209). But the theoretic presentation here starts with the theory of, or at least the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville.

Part II: de Tocqueville

I want to start the presentation of the main conflict theories with an inclusion of some thoughts from Alexis de Tocqueville, because he enhances and specifies the assumptions and qualities of equality, and he also identifies some aspects of conflict that is essential to how the dynamic of the IC-nexus is understood in this thesis. He includes both aspects of equality and inequality, which is to a certain degree the same, since it can be viewed as a continuous scale where absolute equality is at the one end, and absolute inequality is at the other extreme of that scale, as shown earlier in Model 1 with the scale of inequality. But in addition to this, he also provide arguments for that inequality is a foundation for the rule of aristocracy, thus a threat to democracy, and he also includes elements that makes it possible to tie his thoughts up to the reason of the relative deprivation theory, which is the endpoint of this theoretic presentation of the theoretic foundation. The prior elements of the theoretic layout, with the two schools of thought (consensual vs. conflict), the division of the two types of actors (deprived vs. rational), the two dimension of the IC-nexus (horizontal and vertical), together with the part of the diachronic theories to show that the thoughts of the IC-nexus have some pedigree, were mainly provided to give these more concrete theories some context to rely on through a theoretic framework, but it was also done to provide the ground for theorizing.

The reason for why it is found proper to start the theoretic presentation of the more specific theories of the theoretical overview with de Tocqueville's writings, which is here done by viewing his study of the American democracy, is because it both provides a better connection to the diachronic theories which would be lost if one were to jump right into the more modern theories, though Marxism has some of the same qualities regarding that issue. But in de Tocqueville's case, he is closer to the diachronic theories in that regard that his writings is based in a society where slavery still was an active institution in his study of the democracy of the USA, as it were in the example with ancient Greece shown above, where any equality which is identified is related to a specific group of society, as in a horizontal division of society but in an extreme instance, at least seen with modern eyes. In addition is the thoughts of de Tocqueville found throughout studies related to the IC-nexus, which will be shown when returning to the empirical test on the nexus, and partly in this theoretic display. In the introduction on his dissertation of the democracy in the United States of America, de Tocqueville immediately identifies equality as an apparent element of the society in which it distinguished itself from contemporary societies, and not only equality, but *the equality of*

conditions: "(...) nothing struck me more forcibly than the general equality of conditions. (...) The more I advanced in the study of American society, the more I perceived that the equality of conditions is the fundamental fact from which all others seem to be derived, (...)." (de Tocqueville 2009, 31-32). But he is not a blind follower of equality as a cure to a society's problems, he just identifies it as an influential factor to strengthen a society, but it can also be a destructive force in some circumstances. This is shown in his preface to the second part of his writings on the democracy in America, where he turns thematically from the civil society to the political community of the USA. He writes, and warns, the reader not to apply him with the notion that equality as a panacea for a society's ills, but that it can have an influence on many aspects of societies:

I must at once warn the reader against an error which would be extremely prejudicial to me. When he finds that I attribute so many different consequences to the principle of equality, he may thence infer that I consider that principle to be the sole cause of all that takes place in the present age: but this would be to impute to me a very narrow view. A multitude of opinions, feelings, and propensities are now in existence, which owe their origin to circumstances unconnected with or even contrary to the principle of equality. (...). I have not undertaken to unfold the reason of all our inclinations and all our notions: my only object is to show in what respects the principle of equality has modified both the former and the latter. (...). I was persuaded that many would take upon themselves to announce the new blessings which the principle of equality promises to mankind, but that few would dare to point out from afar the dangers with which it threatens them (de Tocqueville 2009, 792-794).

This equality peril is something that Marxism did not include, and soon will be shown makes limitations to that theoretic approach, but strengthen de Tocqueville's approach, since he is aware of this peril where he continues later on: "It must be acknowledged that equality, which brings great benefits into the world, nevertheless suggest to men (...) some very dangerous propensities." (de Tocqueville 2009, 830). The reason for this awareness of the dangers of equality, even though he is mostly, but not exclusively, its supporter, it is that it may render the individual powerless in several areas. He identifies that no one is more powerless or insignificant than the individual in a democratic community, but the state itself has enormous power in regard to its individual citizens (de Tocqueville 2009, 884). This is a point of individual powerlessness in several different aspects is something he returns to several times and which is a major threat from equality: "As in ages of equality no man is compelled to lend

his assistance to his fellow-men, (...), everyone is at once independent and powerless." (de Tocqueville 2009, 1296).

Even though de Tocqueville is aware of the dangers of equality, the attention will here mainly lie in the beneficial features of equality, for they are substantial, though it was here considered prudent to include the precaution of that the extreme equalities includes dangers as well as does substantial inequalities. It is also productive to appreciate those limitations when considering practical implementation of measures to adjust the level of inequality in a society. In addition, a society of complete equality is assumed to be unattainable anyway (de Tocqueville 2009, 1029), so it would be a hopeless undertaking to try to establish principles for a society of complete equality with the intention of implementing them, so the attention will lie where the strength of equality lies. A. de Tocqueville also sometimes refers to democracy instead of equality, but it has already been shown that he applies the equalities of conditions with democracy, so it is implied that equality is a major part of democracy. And an additional note is that equality here is understood as a low level of inequality, not absolute equality, which is shown is considered unattainable. So when it is referred to equality throughout this review on de Tocqueville's writings, it is in this thesis considered to be the same as a low level of inequality, as shown and explained during the presentation of the scale of inequality, shown above in a former chapter in this thesis, and while referring to inequality in the same manner, it is pointing to high levels of inequality, even though that will not be specified every time equality and inequality is mentioned.

One of the main strength of democracy, or in fact *the* strength of the democratic rule, which is reduced by a society of inequality, is one that A. de Tocqueville also identifies, and that is the possibility to activate all its resources (i.e. individuals and collectives in a society) with extreme low expenditures, since the will for the activity lie in the partakers of the community, not only in the government:

Democracy does not confer the most skilful kind of government upon the people, but it produces that which the most skilful governments are frequently unable to awaken, namely, an all-pervading and restless activity, a superabundant force, and an energy which is inseparable from it, and which may, under favorable circumstances, beget the most amazing benefits. These are the true advantages of democracy (de Tocqueville 2009, 466-467).

In our modern era, it seems that it is the economy that mistakenly has been credited the role as the engine of society, when it is not more than a result of a vibrant society. This advancement of possibilities to the citizens in a democracy, i.e. in a state of equality of conditions, is that all the individuals in the society are not forced to march into the field for a common purpose, but they are restless to adventure towards undertakings which promote themselves, and by that activity the state musters all her power without using a penny and which maybe in isolated cases can produce small benefits, but as a whole produces many: "The restless ambition which equality begets instantly takes this direction as it does all others. (...); and, although the results of individual effort are commonly very small, the total amount is always very large." (de Tocqueville 2009, 859-860). The strength of equality, is that it gives the members of society value, and they are not active in trying to use their faculties and energy to destroy their society: "Equality every day confers a number of small enjoyments on every man. The charms of equality are every instant felt, and are within the reach of all; (...). The passion which equality engenders must therefore be at once strong and general." (de Tocqueville 2009, 960). Here is also the basic for the proposition for the IC-nexus, where the equality of conditions may provide a general interest of conserving a stable society, where every man has something to protect, but a man without nothing has all to gain in disturbing any such condition: "Amongst civilized nations revolts are rarely excited, except by such persons as have nothing to lose by them; (...)." (de Tocqueville 2009, 460).

At one point de Tocqueville presents an example of the difference in a system between a society of industrious equals and of idle state of unequals between the north and south in the USA. Where there were a general tendency for the northern states to apply hired men where there existed opportunities for personal advantage versus the southern states that utilized slaves as their main source of labour, and a continued tendency appeared between the two sections of the Union:

(...); but in the midst of all these causes, the same result occurred at every step, and in general, the colonies in which there were no slaves became more populous and more rich than those in which slavery flourished. The more progress was made, the more was it shown that slavery, which is so cruel to the slave, is prejudicial to the master (de Tocqueville 2009, 655).

A. de Tocqueville provides a concrete and visual example of this effect in a case with the examples of the state of Ohio and the state of Kentucky where the former is a free state and the latter is a slave state. He illustrates the difference between the two banks of the river Ohio that divides the two societies which is situated on each bank of the river:

Upon the left bank of the stream [Kentucky] the population is rare; from time to time one descries a troop of slaves loitering in the half-desert fields; (...); society seems to be asleep, man to be idle, (...). From the right bank [Ohio], on the contrary, a confused hum is heard which proclaims the presence of industry; (...) (de Tocqueville 2009, 657).

This example supports the idea of that a society of equals are more industrious than a society based on forced labour, and to a certain degree shows the gain of a society of equals versus the detrimental consequence for a society to base its structure on inequality, especially if it is pitted against each other, because then also the influence of relative deprivation applies. That is related to the deprived actor (DA), which evaluates his standings in relation with the situation of others, and not evaluate his standings in an absolute manner. And just to diffuse any notion that relative deprivation won't apply to both individual and collective relative deprivation, I argue that that is not to be the case. I may be accused for drawing conclusions between levels of aggregation, but when it comes to inequality and conflict, I will argue that the same effect happens on an individual and a collective level, this is because the passion of men are similar on both levels as: "The majority (...), like individuals, it has passions, (...)." (de Tocqueville 2009, 755). This is an issue which will be returned to in the later part of this theoretic foundation for this thesis when the focus turns to the relative deprivation theory. Though this point of evaluating a situation based on relation to other factors is a point that also is found in de Tocqueville's work, and he applies this to be a mechanism that is possible to find at every strata of society: "Moreover, there exists a singular principle of relative justice which is very firmly implanted in the human heart. Men are much more forcibly struck by those inequalities which exist within the circle of the same class, than with those which may be remarked between different classes." (de Tocqueville 2009, 676).

It is also possible to enhance this notion with a similar example between the states of the north and the south, where we find an industrious democratic nation pitted against a stagnant

aristocratic nation based on inequality is something de Tocqueville identifies as a kernel of conflict between the North and South a few decades before the civil war between the parties broke out. When de Tocqueville portrayed the situation in the USA, he distinguished at several times the difference between north and south. One of these disparities which he identifies is based on a form of inequality, and he points to this as a possible cause for animosity between the two sections of the Union, or more correctly from his point of view, *the cause of hostility between the two parties*:

It is difficult to imagine a durable union of a people which is rich and strong with one which is poor and weak, even if it were proved that the strength and wealth of the one are not the causes of the weakness and poverty of the other. (...). The weak generally mistrust the justice and the reason of the strong. The States which increase less rapidly than the others look upon those which are more favored by fortune with envy and suspicion. Hence arise the deep-seated uneasiness and ill-defined agitation which are observable in the South, and which form so striking a contrast to the confidence and prosperity which are common to other parts of the Union. I am inclined to think that the hostile measures taken by the Southern provinces upon recent occasion are attributable to no other cause (de Tocqueville 2009, 727-728).

Further, de Tocqueville touches upon the relative nature of this relation. He identifies that the South is not impoverished on an absolute level, but they suddenly are compared to a prosperous neighbour, which is even worse to accept when their used to be on equal footing:

But they [the South] believe themselves to be impoverished because their wealth does not augment as rapidly as that of their neighbors; any they think that their power is lost, because they suddenly come into collision with a power greater than their own: (...) thus they are more hurt in their feelings and their passion than their interests (de Tocqueville 2009, 729-730).

Finally, in concluding this part of the theoretic applications from de Tocqueville I want to provide some of the elements that he identifies from inequality as a threat to a democratic government. There are some different elements at play here, but the main threat is the rise of a new aristocracy. But not an identical one, but in semblance to the aristocracy found in the 19th century, which in a new setting would be a new aristocracy adapted to its age. The creation of an aristocracy based on this logic is still possible in modern societies based on

inequalities in society: "I am very well aware that democratic countries contain no such persons [aristocrats] naturally; but something analogous to them may be created by artificial means." (de Tocqueville 2009, 1344-1345). The establishing of the new aristocracy will be aided by inequality of conditions:

(...) manufacturing aristocracy which is growing up under our eyes is one of the harshest which ever existed in the world; (...) the friends of democracy should keep their eyes anxiously fixed in this direction; for if ever a permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy again penetrate into the world, it may be predicted that this is the channel which they will enter (de Tocqueville 2009, 1072).

This is the warning that de Tocqueville displays, and his prediction is almost correct, but he has missed a minor distinction that he has already pointed out earlier in his dissertation, namely that commerce is one of the main interests in a democracy (de Tocqueville 2009, 1060), and more, that: "In democracies nothing is more great or more brilliant than commerce: (...)." (de Tocqueville 2009, 1062), and all men, rich and poor are willing to undertake the promise of commerce (de Tocqueville 2009, 1063). In combining that thought, it is not the manufacturing class that will create a new aristocracy, but the commercial class, which are trading the farms, manufactories and any item they can lay their wealth upon. And this will be the effect of inequality, a new aristocracy of commerce, which also sees it profitable to sell a label of democracy to its population, which the population are free to apply on their government, almost whatever that government consists of. This threat is a continuous one, since it is necessary to gradually turn a democratic mind into a mind that accepts inequality of conditions and provide the foundation of a new aristocracy of commerce: "It is evident that nothing but a long series of events, all having the same tendency, can substitute for this combination of laws, opinions, and manners, a mass of opposite opinions, manners, and laws." (de Tocqueville 2009, 759), where the object of such an aristocracy is to use, not to govern the population (de Tocqueville 2009, 1071). And development and maintenance of an aristocratic institution is based on inequality (de Tocqueville 2009, 763). To be able combat this eventual re-emergence of a new aristocracy as the chief arbiter in societal affairs, de Tocqueville also includes a specific privilege that should be distributed to its citizens, which is education, and that education is one of a few roads to travel for a democratic citizen to keep his independence: "If at all times education enables men to defend their independence, this is most especially true in democratic ages." (de Tocqueville 2009, 1304-1305), and this

education must keep pace with the gratification of resources to be able for the population to not lose sight of the bond between personal fortune and collective prosperity (de Tocqueville 2009, 1033-1034). Thus in a society of equal conditions there is a foundation of prosperity, where equal conditions consists of equal rights, education and fortune which in total consist of equality in the social condition (de Tocqueville 2009, 1235).

By this it is possible to distinguish in regard to the IC-nexus, at least for the Tocquevillian view that the opportunistic side of inequality is a major part of a functional democracy at least, but which translates over to the resource side. This in a way that if all members of society have opportunities it will translate into that all members have some resources, and in addition this will also lead to that the resources cannot be monopolized into a few hands, but will in a way automatically be distributed in a more general way throughout the society (de Tocqueville 2009, 1211).

To lead the theoretic foundation of the theoretic overview back on track to the issue which are under investigation, I will end this part with a direct relevance to my thesis with the question if inequality is a cause of conflict. Towards the end of his book, de Tocqueville writes:

Remove the secondary causes which have produced the great convulsions of the world, and you will almost always find the principle of inequality at the bottom. (...). If then a state of society can ever be founded in which every man shall have something to keep, and little to take from others, much will have been done for the peace of the world (de Tocqueville 2009, 1225).

He also later adds a condition when he says that he cannot seem to find a comparable society with which he is confronted with, but with a number of consequences of equal distribution he includes that: "(...), violence is rare, and cruelty almost unknown." (de Tocqueville 2009, 1357-1358). And as shown with the concept of conflict used in this thesis, violence is a central component there, at least in the already conducted empirical investigations of the IC-nexus.

The final condition that I extract from de Tocqueville, which is the central point which support the theoretic stance taken in this thesis towards the mechanism of the IC-nexus. He identifies that there are some that attributes the cause of events to either special- or general

conditions. And that general causes are prevalent in democratic times and special causes are more prominent in aristocratic ages: "(...) — unless indeed we consider as a general cause the fact itself of inequality of conditions, which allows some individuals to baffle the natural tendencies of all the rest." (de Tocqueville 2009, 942), which is exactly what is done here, by utilizing this loophole he provides through the use of the word *unless*, since it is the inequality (of conditions) that is seen as the general cause for the occurrence of conflict in societies. Though in the view of this theoretical evaluation it is inequalities of both opportunities and resources which takes the central position in this mechanism.

This concludes the ideas found in the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, and the attention will now turn to look at some aspects relating to Marxism when dealing with and developing a better understanding of the IC-nexus.

Part III: Marxism

As mentioned earlier, Marxism is one of the theories related to the understanding of the IC-nexus, where one central mechanism in this theory is that economic inequality is assumed to foster a violent potential (Østby 2013, 208). This is the same assumption which is promoted in this thesis, related to the IC-nexus, but with some divergences, mainly, as shown through the division of inequality, that economic inequality, i.e. the inequality side closest to the resource dimension, is not enough to explain levels of violent conflict, and in addition the focus on violence is also considered too narrow. This does not mean that economical inequalities in themselves cannot create a violent potential, but it is here expected to not be enough to isolate this effect in the IC-nexus, because, the claim in this thesis at least is that, that can disturb the understanding of other inequalities creating the same effect. And any correlation between economical inequality and violent potential would be harder to identify by this omission. In addition, the understanding of conflict as violent conflict, is also here seen as too narrow in the same manner as inequality, since conflict has to be divided in two dimensions, which is violent and non-violent conflict.

When including Marxism as a theory here, it is necessary to mention that this Marxist theory, or Marxism has had some fluctuations in its influence and standings, both inside academia but also in contact with real politics. It is nevertheless here considered pertinent to

include this theory, if only based on its influence, since it has been a present force both in academia and in politics throughout the last hundred years (Carver 2015, 643). Though, when evaluating the elements of Marxism, it is relevant to also include the theme which was pointed out in the chapter of political theory and the changing division of political theory and altering methodologies, that Marxism came into being in a milieu where the scientific domination with an empirical approach had not yet been established since it accrued in the early twentieth century and became the dominating approach for social sciences (Carver 2015, 643). This could mean that it would be meaningful to evaluate this theory with an understanding, or at least with an acknowledgement that the theory has its origin in a environment of another methodological paradigm than the one which is now currently dominating. Or maybe more accurate, has dominated the greater parts of the twentieth century, and also has been dominating in the beginning of the twenty-first century. With this in mind, the view on Marxism can proceed, though it will get a reduced presentation in comparison with its influence, as with some other theories which are included in this thesis, on the basis that they on certain aspects seems to narrow to the approach to the IC-nexus which is supported in this thesis, but at the same time includes elements which can buttress the outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus which will be presented in the latter chapters of this thesis.

The Marxist theories of class struggle may have drifted into harsh empirical waters that seems to have taken the buoyancy out of the theory as it originally was devised, and though the theory as a whole seems shipwrecked, it may be possible to salvage some of its goods. It is not hard to understand that with the collapse of the communist regimes at the end of the cold war that an expectation of Marxism would be disappearing in the whirlpool that the sunken regimes created, though it took an unexpected trajectory, and appeared rather like an phoenix from the ashes, at least on a theoretic level in the West (Kymlicka 2002, 167).

On a more concrete level of the ideas from Marxism which can be seen in the relation to the IC-nexus, is the idea of that technological progression and the capitalistic economy will foster a situation of more and more concentration of the means of production, and a ever larger set of workers, or the proletariat as some like to call it, will have to live on a minimum of existence, and the economy will be rammed by more and more serious crises (Østberg in Marx 2000, xxxi-xxxii). This situation should theoretically be substituted through a revolution

that would engulf the whole of humanity (Østberg in Marx 2000, xxxii-xxxiii), though that part of the theory haven't seemed yet to materialize, at least not on a global scale.

One of the essential thoughts of the Marxist view, is that all history about society is the history of class-struggle of oppressor and oppressors, and this class-struggle is either ended by collapse of both of the of the fighting classes, or a revolution of society (Marx 2000, 224). Marx writes that the modern bourgeoisie is itself a product of a long line of disruption in the ways of production, but also in condition of communication (Marx 2000, 225). But this is also, according to Marx, the only way in which the bourgeoisie can survive, by continually alter the ways of production and in that way have ever changing societies with the constant uncertainty that follows (Marx 2000, 226). By describing some of the mechanisms recognizable to Marxist theory, in the writings of the Communist Manifesto, it is not so anachronistic to that one cannot identify a contemporary relevance:

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. (...). All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. (...) The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all nations, (...), into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, (...). It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeoisie mode of production; (...), to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image (Marx and Engels 1989, 421).

Reading this today, feels more like reading a fulfilled prophecy than a nineteenth century political manifestation. Even so, more directly related to the IC-nexus is that this situation will foster a concentration of the means of production, concentration of property, and from this a concentration of the political system (Marx 2000, 228), which can be translated into inequality, at least in the resource dimension. The overproduction that this system brings about is a serial of crises that eventually is a situation that the bourgeoisie cannot handle, and the same forces that destroyed the feudal society because it couldn't cope with too much progression, will now again turn on its current master (Marx 2000, 229). This will be done by the side effect of this structure of society, where the worker will be multiplied as a product on a market, and where an inherent mechanism of this development is that the more obnoxious

the work is, the lower the pay (Marx 2000, 230). In addition, the product of the workers through its manifestation in capital can in principle be much the same as the social product mentioned before. It is just that under this societal organization which mainly consists of capitalist and worker, the capital can be seen as having a character connected to the capitalist, but this understanding is theoretically subjected to alterations and the capital can be seen more as a common good and lose its class related disposition (Marx 2000, 237).

Though even if there exist some proclamations in Marxism that rings true today, there are also some elements that hinder it as a complete theory in its primary form. One of these elements is that Marxism is: "(...) preoccupied with labour." (Kymlicka 2002, 199). And a development which has distanced itself from the former approach of Marxism with this preoccupation with labour is that, at least from a perspective of justice, as is shown has been the major approach in political theory, or rather normative political theory, that there exist other groups in society which struggle for emancipation from their restrictions in society based on other classifications such as for example race, gender, immigration and age (Kymlicka 2002, 200). In the context of concepts used with the IC-nexus, it could be considered that in Marxism there exist a preoccupation on one horizontal, or rather two horizontal divisions in society, in the battle of capitalist versus the proletariat. This division is based on an understanding of a development of increased polarization between the groups (Kymlicka 2002, 200). And from this, there exist two divisions central to the antagonising stance between the two original opposed groups based on Marxist theory, i.e. capitalist and worker, at least in the view of normative political theory of what constitute justice. One is based on exploitation of the worker by the capitalist (Kymlicka 2002, 177), and the other, which may be argued is closely connected, is that: "(...) workers are entitled to the product of their labour, (...)." (Kymlicka 2002, 185). How this is connected to the IC-nexus is that if the workers themselves find that they are entitled to the product of their labour, it could be argued that this provides reason for the activation of the FAR and the ECR, that is the frustration-aggressive relation to the person assumed responsible for a case of the expectation-capabilities relation deviation. Anyway, it is the exploitation which is more directly linked to the IC-nexus, because it can be seen that exploitation is just one of many forms of inequality (Kymlicka 2002, 184). By seeing this understanding of exploitation up against inequality provided in this thesis, is that exploitation can be found, on a theoretic level, together with all forms of inequality either more invested in one side of its dimensions of resources or in the other side of opportunities, or more likely in the intersection of the two dimensions.

When it comes to equality, the angle that Marx puts on equality, or equal rights, is that he dismisses it because it's mainly an ideal that is not achievable (Kymlicka 2002, 169-170). This understanding of equality is compatible with the idea of equality in this thesis, since it is here seen as equality is not compatible with society. The part of conflict in Marxist theory also resonates with the idea of social hierarchy and meaning, since the Marxist theory also acknowledge the difference in human nature, which creates different goals. This creates the conflicts that in them self may not be valued, but they are a necessary product of a meaningful life (Kymlicka 2002, 172). It seems that there is some consistency in this need for some kind of interest divergence in human societies to give value to existence in itself, and conflict is an unavoidable waste product of the process of living in a society. This is also incorporated into the new understanding of Marxist theory, where among others scarcity and conflict are permanent features of human society (Kymlicka 2002, 175).

Marxism is based on the thought that material inequality is the most significant of all power imbalances in society (Hayward 2015, 589). This is evident in the proletarian vs. capitalist conflict, but where Marxism takes its own trajectory in comparison with other conflict theories, is where it predicts a elimination of conflict through a more equal distribution of the resources when the source of conflict (i.e. capital control over the resources) is eliminated (Hayward 2015, 589). This all together is two central elements that for the purpose of this thesis eliminates Marxism as a complete theory that can sustain a viable explanation of the IC-nexus. This is mainly the unsustainable focus on workers and capitalist as the two main duelists of society, and to a certain extent the only duelists, because the evolution of the societies have dispersed the strata of societies into other components, so though even if the capitalist still composes a distinctive class which maybe has transformed into a more commercial class, the working class is not the only opponent to the elite, or not even the main opponent, at least when looking at western societies. Though since the capitalist or commercial class has globalized, if the analysis of society follow suit, and the distinctions of national border is left behind, and the workers are seen in a global perspective as well, the working class may be of a greater extent than if one just look out for the worker where the products of the worker are consumed.

The second objection from my part that eliminates Marxism as a functional theory for my concern of studying the IC-nexus, is that it solely focus on material inequality, and as is already highlighted, there is an additional inequality which is the inequality of opportunities

that needs to be resolved that must be distinct from any material inequality, even though if opportunities and resources have some correlative traits.

Even though Marxism has had some predictions, many which are still relevant today, what may be the reef that made Marxism taking in too much water is the manifestation of Marxist societies, at least the Marxist societies of the twentieth century, that often distanced themselves in a evident way far from the utopian society that theoretically should emerge. This future societies that the proletariat theoretically would create was through revolutions into a classless society (Gurr 1973, 360), though it can be mentioned in this context that Marx himself was critical to some ideas of utopian socialist societies (Kymlicka 2002, 195). This doesn't mean that everything that Marxist proclaim to be true is false, but their remedy to the challenges of the society dominated by capital may not be the best. And the famous proclamation of Marx that through the revolution the proletariat had nothing to lose but its chains (Marx 2000, 255), seems to be incorrect if one consider some of the societies which have been based on Marxism. Often they could lose their life, and if they survived they were still shackled, it was just someone else holding the leash.

Though even if Marxism have had some expectations which seems to have materialized, some expectations have not been equally prophetic, for example in that the bourgeoisie generate its own demise because of that: "(...) the bourgeoisie, (...), produces above all (...) its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable." (Marx and Engels 1989, 425), which remove some of the prophetic impression it gives on other occasions.

All in all, this gives the Marxist theory some components which are close to the IC-nexus mechanism promoted in this thesis, but the narrowness of some aspects in the theory makes it unsuitable to model a complete understanding of the IC-nexus. It is especially one feature which is seen incompatible for the understanding of the IC-nexus in this thesis, and that is the relation to absolute availability of resources instead of relative inequality. Marx is concerned with abundance, and sees that scarcity as the reason for conflict (Kymlicka 2002, 172), but the approach in this thesis is that the relativity of inequality is more significant for the possibility of conflict. In the way that if a society lives in a situation of scarcity, this doesn't necessarily lead to conflict, but if the same society with the same type of scarcity distribute the social product in a way where a smaller group of that society could live with major parts of the

distribution of the already scarce resources (and opportunities), while a larger part of society had to be content with the lesser part of the already scarce foundation, that is here considered to generate a greater potential for conflict.

Anyway, some of the aspects of Marxism has now been presented which have included enough aspects which can be relevant to have available for theorizing about the IC-nexus, either as a backdrop or included in the outline of the general framework of the IC-nexus if it is found necessary or profitable to include at a later point. This leads me to leave Marxism on this occasion, and turn over to the next part of the theoretic foundation, which is based in theory of ethnic conflict.

Part IV: Ethnic conflict

Since theory on ethnic conflict figures in the research of the IC- nexus (Østby 2013, 208), it is considered reasonable to include a mention of it in combination with the other theoretic directions which have been utilized while investigating the nexus. Though it will get a short presentation, since it is here considered that ethnic social cleavages and its connection to conflict is only indirectly related to ethnicity in that way that it is just one of many possibilities of horizontal divisions that *can* be found in a society. This means, based on the theoretic view in this thesis, that if there exist conflict in a society, and these conflicts are tied with ethnic divisions in that society, this is because the inequalities of that society is related to ethnicity as well. Thus, it is not ethnicity that causes conflict, but the underlying inequalities which is tied up to this particular social horizontal division. What causes ethnicity to be an active horizontal social division in a society is beyond this thesis to measure, more than providing an assumption that it can be found in a combination of historical trajectories, technological advancement and based in social, economical and political decisions, both inside the society where ethnicity is a major component, but also from outside. It will here nevertheless briefly be mentioned here since it is a part of the IC-nexus research.

Some of the developments in modern history including the time of major decolonization of the 1960s, have laid barren two major sources of conflict, which are class, as shown above is a major divide in Marxism, but also in addition ethnicity, which is influenced by colonial heritage (Young 1982, 71-72).

Crawford Young writes that there exist some distinctions between the concepts of class and ethnicity, but also some common ones, and he specifies one of on their commonalities: "Like ethnicity, class is, both objectively and subjectively, a relational concept." (Young 1982, 73). This coincide with the theoretic understanding of ethnicity in this thesis, where the two horizontal categories of class and ethnicity constitute two possible social cleavages. A difference between the concepts of class and ethnicity is that class is foremost an analytical construct, and in the case of Africa, as relevant in a colonial context, the existing forms of inequality did not fit the standard class terminology, where other forms of inequality laid the ground for different understanding for the existing horizontal cleavages (Young 1982, 73). There exist some divergence between what is the most salient features of either class or ethnicity, and they can take on a different role in a societal organizing and administration, but the underlying theoretic assumption which is prominent in this thesis is that it is foremost an organizational unit in some combination with others horizontal influences of society, like language, religion and regional affiliation, beside class and ethnicity which provides some common horizontal features (Young 1982, 73).

There is also a division of the state that is relevant to include when discussing ethnic conflict, or rather why ethnicity can be a salient horizontal cleavage, or that any actual horizontal cleavage can be a salient horizontal cleavage, which is that the state can be understood as: "(...) existing on two levels: concrete and theoretical." (Young 1982, 72). The concrete part of the state is easier to identify than the theoretical aspect of the state, where the theoretical aspect consist of the ideology which is persistent in the state, which can influence the more evolutionary aspects of the state of which values and code of conduct that are acceptable (Young 1982, 72-73). It would be admissible to presume that the ideology in a society will influence the concrete development of a society, and also that the ideology of a society is changeable, either by force or by natural development. Though societal changes through force may in itself be seen as a form of natural development. From this, it is clear that salient horizontal changes in society is also subject to shifting circumstances, with in combination with both the ideological and the concrete features of the state creates a dynamic where the different elements both influences and are influenced by each other, but the major point is that they are changing. This is also compatible with the wide consensus found in studies on ethnic conflict that the salience of ethnicity in a society is subject to temporal changes (Caselli and Coleman II 2013, 166).

To summarize, the understating of ethnic conflict in this thesis, which here also includes some thoughts of the dimensions of class, as they are seen as two different horizontal cleavages in this thesis, is that ethnicity, and class, have been two major ways in distinction how conflict can emerge in a society, and this is only because this is how the society is arranged and thus which collective boundaries that are contagious of conflict. The type of distinction is not here in itself seen as the cause conflict, the cause is as it is claimed in this thesis, an underlying (excessive) inequality in whatever category one would like to divide a society into. If it is class, the inequality beyond a point would lead to increased conflict, if its ethnicity, the same effect would emerge, though in another framework of central societal collective identities. So whatever collective social prevalent identities that is currently occupying the larger social dynamic, is here just seen as the coulisse for the natural human competition for resources and opportunities, which will emerge in all societies, though under different guises, and in a modern context, based on the division of the state in a concrete and theoretical dimension.

One essential underlying dynamics for these collective identities are the understanding of *we* versus *others*, or *self* versus *others*, which is the underlying mechanism which maintains the existing horizontal cleavages, which both contains objective and subjective elements for the actors in the relevant categories (Young 1982, 73-74), but since the goal for this thesis is not to search for the root of conflict based on a specific categorization of the potential collective divisions of a society, there is no reason to extrapolate on this issue more than mention it as a final contextual support for the understanding of ethnical conflict, and its relation to other horizontal cleavages, and how ethnicity and other horizontal social dimensions relate to the IC-nexus based on the theoretic understanding of this mechanism in this thesis.

Ethnicity is clearly *related* to conflict, both historically and contemporary as is seen in many instances of its appearances in the news, but it is not here seen as automatically a cause of conflict, since there exist several societies where diverse ethnical groups coexist in peaceful societal relations (Caselli and Coleman II 2013, 162). There may be reasons that makes ethnicity a salient issue in a society, which may be more or less easy to identify to other dimensions of society, like political and economical areas. Though the main understanding in this thesis is that it is a continued changing element of society, and how it occupies the social consciousness. Francesco Caselli and Wilbur John Coleman II writes that: "(...) policy that blurs sharp distinctions between groups will reduce the incidence of ethnic conflict." (Caselli and Coleman II 2013, 189). I want to extrapolate from this statement the opposite as well, that

policy that highlight distinctions between groups will increase the incidence of ethnic conflict. And not just ethnic conflict, but whatever distinction that is highlighted in society, both through its concrete and ideological dimensions, which will influence which dimension that becomes salient. From this is also where the dimensions from where the inequalities in society arise, based on whatever composition of society which is prevalent. At least that is how this mechanism is understood on a theoretic level in this thesis in the combination with the IC-nexus, and if the conflict which arise from the IC-nexus is an ethnic conflict, is mainly because ethnic horizontal elements of that society is a salient societal issue, which manifest itself through inequalities based on this societal fragmentation.

This will end the discussion of ethnic conflict in the relation to the IC-nexus on this occasion, and the attention will turn over to the theory which focuses on structural causes for conflict.

Part V: Structural theory

Structural theory has several aspects but for this thesis it will be focused on structural theory which is most connected to the conflict side of the IC-nexus. This is because it is considered here that to include elements of structural theory on this dimension of the IC-nexus can contribute to make the final outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus more complete in strengthening the understanding of the division of conflict into a violent and a non-violent dimension. The conflict dimension, as with the inequality dimension of the IC-nexus, present both challenges when climbing down the ladder of abstraction, and it is here considered that some aspects of structural theory can provide more concrete concepts of the conflict side of the IC-nexus by providing insight into the more hidden forms of conflict in society, where violence may be the more apparent type of conflict in a society. Johan Galtung writes when it comes to the concept of violence that:

(...) there are obviously many types of violence. More important is to indicate theoretically significant dimensions of violence that can lead thinking, research and, potentially, action, towards the most important problems. (...) the concept of violence must be broad enough to include the most significant varieties, yet specific enough to serve as a basis for concrete action (Galtung 1969, 168).

The central understanding of the difference between violent and non-violent conflict in this thesis is that the violence consist of a form of conflict which ends with some form of direct physical harm, foremost to human beings. The non-violent part of this understanding consists of conflicts which takes resources out of the society to handle conflict which not necessarily leads to physical harm, but may certainly create psychological harm. Of course this division of violence can be seen in many different ways, as with Galtung which divides violence into both physical and psychological (Galtung 1969, 169), which diverges a bit from what will be proposed in this thesis, but as he also include is that to define violence: "(...) is a highly unenviable task, (...)." (Galtung 1969, 168). It is not here either a goal to provide an exhaustive understanding of violence, non-violence, or structural violence which will soon be returned to how can be understood as it is an essential this part of structural theory, but the objective here is to discuss the issue of the conflict side of the IC-nexus to provide a foundation for evaluation of how the conflict side of the IC-nexus *can* be understood, which again will influence empirical investigations of the nexus. By increasing the sophistication of the concepts of the conflict side of the nexus, it is here believed that the diverging results from the empirical test may show some more consensus in their findings, even if those findings points in another direction than the one supported in this thesis.

But to understand the *structural* part of structural theory, it is possible to look at a description of how structural violence can be understood, where:

Structural violence refers to a form of violence wherein social structures or social institutions harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. (...). The harm is *structural* because it is a product of the way we have organized our social world; it is *violent* because it causes injury and death. (...) Structural violence directly illustrates a power system wherein social structures or institutions cause harm to people in a way that results in maldevelopment or deprivation (Lee 2016, 109-110).

Even if one sees violence consisting of both a psychological and a physiological dimension or not, it is the structure which creates this violence that is of interest. This can partly be seen up against the division of the state mentioned in the chapter above, with the concrete and ideological dimensions, where the structure and the concrete aspects of the state, or of a society, is reasonable to considered to be closely connected. In relation to structural violence, Galtung specify this division that there are two types of violence, where if there is an actor

involved, it will be understood as *direct* or *personal*, but if there is an absence of such a visible direct actor, but the outcome is violent anyway, the violence is considered *structural* or *indirect*. And these differences are related to the identification of the cause for violence, since the direct type of violence is easier to identify than the indirect since it is invested in the structure of society and can show itself more as instances of structural inequalities (Galtung 1969, 170-171).

From this, what is essential in relation of the IC-nexus, and the understanding and testing of it is that the structure of which actors exist influence their actions, and a too simple inclusion of violence or conflict may give imprecise results, both in theoretic evaluations and in empirical tests. It would be strange to evaluate an actor's actions without including the context which the individual exist in (Galtung 1964, 96), that is that the society in which men live in must be included in an evaluation of their actions. For the IC-nexus, to understand the nexus thoroughly, the combination of the structure and the actors inside it, are the two components that produce the outcome, which also must be included when predicting or testing an outcome of the nexus.

The aspects of structural theory will not be pursued much more than including this division of actor and structure, since the outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus in this thesis mainly lies at a higher level of abstraction, but there are some elements that can be relevant to include before continuing to the last theoretic approach, and that is that the structures of a society have some general tendencies. And that is that these structures are subject to the universal phenomena of stratification, which implies that these social structures are hierarchal, stable and divides the burden of labour, where the distances in a social system created by this stratification can be reduced, but they cannot be eliminated (Galtung 1964, 96). This culminates in a situation where some factors in a structure becomes more valuable than others, though they can differ from structure to structure, and that will eventually lead to a division between *haves* and *haves not*, which Galtung refers to as the *topdog* and *underdog* position (Galtung 1964, 96). This distinction of the structural part of society can be related to the understanding in this thesis of that society and inequality is on a level synonyms in that without inequality there is no society, though the type and degree of inequality can differ both in a temporal and a spatial manner. But since a central part of a society is the division of labour, which again is central to be able to gain a larger social product, these divisions also sink into the structure and influence the society which in it resides and create stratifications.

These stratifications can be related to the horizontal divisions mentioned earlier. Though the mechanism of the IC-nexus supported here is the simple positive one is consistent with this relation between actor and structure and society and inequality, since: "Where there is stratification, there will also be exploitation." (Galtung 1964, 97). And as shown in the chapter about Marxism, exploitation is in this thesis considered a form of conflict, the mechanism is then that humans creates societies which leads to stratification, which is a form of inequality, which creates conflict. Though, since it is mainly the structural element of structural theory which is considered to be the essential component to include in the further evaluation of the IC-nexus, the attention will now turn to the final part of this theoretic foundation of the theoretic overview, which is a more specific and complete theory that focuses on the relative aspect of human relations. This is an aspect which Galtung also mentions when he discusses the different compositions and positional relations of societal elements, of the haves and the have not's, i.e. the different compositions of topdog and underdog, where he asks: "What matters most, absolute or relative position?" (Galtung 1964, 102). This may be a confounding element when studying the IC-nexus, because when inequality is to be examined, should one focus of the relative or the absolute inequality in a society? This question is a central element of the final theory of this theoretic foundation, and this question is also related to the two different actors included in the former chapters between the division of the rational and the deprived actor, where the rational actor is closely connected to the absolute and the deprived actor to the relative. This is where the attention now turns with a view of the relative deprivation theory.

Part VI: The relative deprivation theory

The relative deprivation theory (RDT) has been developed by several researchers, though the concept of relative deprivation (RD) is a concept from Samuel Stouffer (Pettigrew 2015, 7), which he based in a logic that: "Satisfaction is *relative*, (...), to the available comparisons we have." (Pettigrew 2015, 11). A more comprehensive explanation of this concept, with a clearer inclusion of the *deprived* part of the concept is that: "If comparisons to other people, groups, or even themselves at different points in time lead people to believe that they do not have what they deserve, they will be angry and resentful. RD describes these subjective evaluations." (Smith et al. 2012, 203).

The concept of RD will in this thesis be utilized through Ted R. Gurr's *relative deprivation theory* (RDT) where he defines relative deprivation as: "(...) a perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities." (Gurr 1971, 13). I'll soon return to specify exactly what value expectations and value capabilities are. Gurr's RDT is a continuation of thoughts on a relative deprivation theory found in an article from James C. Davies, where Davies contrast elements from de Tocqueville and Marx, and propose a mechanism for revolutions where he theorize that: "Revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal." (Davies 1962, 6). It may be that it is the objective changes that creates the foundation for revolution, but as he continues: "The actual state of socio-economic development is less significant than the expectation that past progress, now blocked, can and must continue in the future." (Davies 1962, 6). He calls this development the J-curve pattern, where there is an increase in expectations which is frustrated by a following decline in circumstances which hinders the expectations being realized (Davies 1962, 8).

The relative deprivation theory is a major influence on IC-nexus studies (Østby 2013, 209), and in this thesis, the inclusion of the relative deprivation theory in this theoretic foundation of this theoretic overview will foremost be based on the Gurr's relative deprivation theory.

Gurr's relative deprivation theory takes its starting point by trying to explain why human societies in some instances experience disruption of social order by violence, which is political when the source for disruption is focused on the rule of society (Gurr 1971, 7-8), where the understanding of this mechanism includes both societal and psychological factors (Gurr 1971, 12). The main concept of the RDT, based on Gurrs version of it, is that in his theory, and to return to his definition of relative deprivation, is that he sees it as: "(...) actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities." (Gurr 1971, 24), where he continues to specify that the: "Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled." (Gurr 1971, 24), and that: "Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping." (Gurr 1971, 24). Though an important addition to this understanding is also that the judgment of these values and expectations is not subjected to an absolute standard, but the judgement is based on relations to others as a group or to another individual, through the assessment of the actor that is, or rather, feels deprived (Gurr 1971, 24). A possible amplifier of a deprived situation is that in an actor's evaluation of his position based on his value

expectations and value capabilities, is that he should at least have what he already have or be better off when contemplating alternative positions to his situation: "Men ordinarily expect to keep what they have; they also generally have a set of expectations and demands about what they should have in the future, which is usually as much or more than what they have at present." (Gurr 1971, 27).

There are many other specifications that Gurr presents in his theory in regard to the different components of the RDT, but the presentation here is a more general one, so it will here only be highlighted the most essential elements of the theory, and in doing that there is a need for including the concepts of *intensity* and *scope*. These two components are directly related to the RD of the RDT, where intensity is a concept that refer to the distance between value expectations and value capabilities, and scope is the amount of individuals that are affected of a specific deprivation (Gurr 1971, 29). This can effect what kind of deprivation that appear, which can be categorized in three different ways, which are *decremental*-, *aspirational*- or *progressive* deprivation, and which Gurr presents on a collective level (Gurr 1971, 46). The difference in these three types of deprivation is that the decremental is an idea of permanent value expectations with declining value capabilities, the aspirational deprivation is a situation where the value capabilities remains stable but the value expectations are increasing, and the final one is that there is a situation where both value capabilities and value expectations increase simultaneously, but where at one point the value capabilities decrease or stabilize without a similar limitation on the value expectation, and all these types of deprivation are expected to influence the potential for political violence (Gurr 1971, 46). But they will also be subjected to the forces of scope and intensity in how effectual these deprivations will be for the possibility for any societal disruptions. The last type of deprivation, i.e. the progressive type, is also the same function found in the works of James C. Davies, where it is labelled the J-curve (Gurr 1971, 52), as is mentioned above. Though a small note is that there exist some limitations to these effects in that they are not expected to be equally strong in every circumstance, at least if a situation of deprivation is predictable, where the theory include that a possible prediction of the deprivation can in itself subdue the forces of deprivation. But if a situation of RD occurs without it being expected, the effects of violent upheaval is likely to occur (Gurr 1971, 57-58).

There exist also variables that determines the scope and intensity of deprivation. *Salience* is one of them, and portray how important different values are, either for an individual or for a

collective (Gurr 1971, 66), and *opportunities*, which is the opportunities that are available for actors in their pursuit of their respective valuable goals (Gurr 1971, 73). This last variable, which is also important in the theoretic approach in this thesis as one of the dimensions of the concept of inequality, is also supported by evidence that reduced opportunities increase possibilities of violent action, and vice versa, increased opportunities tempers that response (Gurr 1971, 73-74). The variation of salience is also important, but is considered a too elusive an issue to evaluate wholly at this stage for the goal of contributing to make an outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus, since salience is expected to be related to a plethora of cultural variations which is beyond the scope of this thesis to evaluate. It is here considered mostly more suitable as an issue for empirical investigation, by detecting what constitute salience of values in different societies.

Since this thesis is centred in political theory, it is pertinent to include themes that points in that direction on occasions, even though the political element can at sometimes be hard to detect in this thesis. Gurr writes that: "(...), *potential for collective violence* is a function of the extent and intensity of shared discontent among members of a society; (...)." (Gurr 1971, 8). And as pointed out above, when collective violence is directed at the rule of society, which it in theory is when the source of the discontent is by the deprived actors believed to be found in the administration of a society through whatever regime that may reside in that position. And as also mentioned above, scope is the amount of peoples that feel deprived, which can quickly become political if they simultaneously sees the rule of society as the source of their deprivation.

For the sake of this thesis, it is necessary to make some reformulation of this proposition to synchronize it with the concepts used in this thesis, this is since for this thesis, the primary interested is not in *collective violence*, but the more general, or more abstract concept of *conflict*. This is done by the use of the method of reconstruction, mentioned in the chapter for political theory methods, where the original statement, provided in the citation above, is below adapted to work within the conceptual framework of this thesis. This means that parts of the proposition is slightly reformulated to remove the focus that only apply to the collective and violent perspective in this proposition, and by reformulating, or reconstructing it, the altered proposition that is supported in this thesis is that *the potential for conflict is a function of extent and intensity of discontent among members of society*, and to connect this to the *inequality* side in the IC-nexus, it is supposed for this thesis, that inequality in a society is the

cause for this potential conflict by influencing the grade of discontent between the members of a society. The reason for making this alteration is because what makes a conflict collective or individual is not an evaluation which is done in this study. Whatever be the exact major, or maybe minor, causes that turns a conflict into collective or individual action is also beyond the scope of this study to include, since it is here tried to keep the issues of this study on the more general levels of the IC-nexus, both based on scope of this thesis, and to try to keep a higher level of clarity in the evaluation of the nexus. The *violence* part of collective violence is also amended to *conflict*, in compliance with the rest of the setup for this thesis.

This taken together, what's actually is reconstructed from the original citation provided above, is just that the specification of *collective* in collective violence is taken out, and *violence* is amended to conflict. The reason for doing this is to make the concepts comply with the outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus which is tried created here, and with only using conflict, the proposition can include both violent and non-violent forms of conflict, both in an individual and a collective way. This distances the theory a bit away from political conflict, which is a central issue here, as it is political theory which is utilized. But as shown above, the political factor is relevant when the rule of society is to blame for the deprivation of the relevant deprived actors, or rather gets the blame from the relevant deprived actors. But it is in this thesis assumed that by zooming too close up to political conflict, at least all the way in to political violence, one misses aspects that influence these instances of conflict, and a more general framework will offer greater understanding of the more concrete occurrences of examples of political violence. This is based on that it is here assumed that political violence is a post-inequality phenomena, where there are many factors that can turn any aggression towards political disruption, which may be the potential for collective or individual action, like recourses, communication, leaders, common goals etc., and the main foundations of the outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus tried developed here is that inequality may foster political violence, but if the channels for political violence aren't available *or* is not seen as an available option for redressing grievances, it just will show its consequence as social instances of conflict, both individual and collective and violent and-non violent.

An additional note to these amendments, it can be mentioned since it is here taken some of the propositions out of the RDT and changed for the need of compliance with the concepts used in this thesis that Gurr encourages amendments of his understanding of the RDT as it can increase knowledge on the issue. Gurr writes in relation to his development of the RDT that:

"The concepts, hypotheses, and models of causes and processes developed in the following chapters are not intended as ends in themselves. (...). Systematic knowledge requires us to propose and test and reformulate and retest statements about how and why things happen." (Gurr 1971, 15). As is done here to amend the propositions into the framework of this thesis.

To include some individual elements of the RDT, it is pertinent to specify that Gurr also includes that there are individual differences in how individuals perceive deprivation (Gurr 1971, 9), and I want to extend that understanding with an inclusion that it is also individual differences in how conflicts are resolved, which for this thesis is divided into the two now hopefully soon familiar dimensions of violent and non-violent means for conflict. This understanding is such that if a person is in a condition of deprivation to the level where he takes actions to relieve his deprivation, this level of deprivation that facilitates action against it will vary based on each individual. In addition, the same will be assumed to happen between individuals that reach this limit, in how they confront the problem at hand, i.e. with violent or non-violent means.

The amendments of the concepts done here is to be able to provide the basis for the outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus. And there are some restrictions which must be considered when doing this. These amendments can maybe be considered as an instance of conceptual stretching caught in the act, or maybe it is only plain conceptual substitution, but the important element to consider when adjusting concepts, as also mentioned before, is that that there has to exist universals which lay the foundation of other concepts that can be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Sartori 1970, 1035). These are regulations that are considered to be upheld with the amendments done to the concepts here. It is considered here that both inequality and conflict are concepts that can be submitted to empirical inspection without presenting insurmountable obstacles, especially when they both already, during this thesis, has been subjected to a dichotomous division that removes some of their abstractness. Gurr does also include the challenge of a theory and its need for subjugation to empiric results. He applies four concrete factors between theoretic assumptions and empirical evidence that needs to be achieved to strengthen a theory which are: "(...) falsifiability, definitional clarity, identification of relevant variables at various levels of analysis, and applicability to a large universe of events for analysis." (Gurr 1971, 17). All this is here considered achievable with the modified elements of the theory, and especially is the objective of definitional clarity an

goal that is tried achieved here through the presentation of the alternative concepts promoted and supported in this thesis.

The elements that Gurr bases his RDT on is that it is psychological and societal variables that leads to political violence, and that it is the relative deprivation that leads men to assess whether they achieve their expectations or not (Gurr 1971, 12-13). Gurr writes that it is also this discrepancy between the two positions that leads to the increased probability of political violence (i.e. for this thesis conflict), and addition to this the aim for eventual action on this discrepancy is: "(...) determined by men's beliefs about the sources of deprivation, and about the normative and utilitarian justifiability of violent action directed at the agents responsible for it." (Gurr 1971, 13). This citations opens up a Pandora's box of possibilities for concrete actions a deprived actor will take. This is also the reason for that in this thesis it is promoted that the concepts used of the IC-nexus should not be subjected to reduced abstractness without having its origin in the overreaching concepts of inequality and conflict, since who knows what men *believe* are the sources of their frustration, especially when it is confused by a combination with the set of values they have as a foundation for their evaluations. And the reason for this thesis in not isolating the focus on politics is that if this mixture of frustrating variables don't emerge as political conflict, it is hard to imagine that the deprivation in itself is relieved. It is more likely that it increases, as the deprivation can be assumed not to be relieved, and if the *actual* responsible agents for the deprivation are not available, it is not impossible to imagine that a substitute *created* responsible agent can take its place as a suitable *prygelknabe*. There is no obvious reason that the believed responsible agent has to be the actual responsible agent, it can just as well be the created agent. An additional amplifier of this function is also, as Gurr writes, that in the modern world the discontent are more politicized than the being political, because of the: "(...) ambiguity of origin of many deprivations in increasingly complex societies, (...)." (Gurr 1971, 179). And in juxtaposing this notion against the development of complex societies and manifestations of new societal values and the increase in communicative capabilities, at least the last thirty years with the increased use and reach of the internet, it is hardly a controversial statement to claim that the complexity of the global societies are increasing, and to indentify an actual agent of a cause of deprivation is a daunting task, and maybe it is easier to give that role to someone which is available to be addressed, either through violent or non-violent types of conflicts. In addition, the introduction to the relatives which one identifies oneself with, may also take on new forms if one finds oneself at the lower level of a societal hierarchy, but for example compares

oneself with the televised upper parts of the same society, the intensity of the deprivation can quickly become immense as: "Exposure to more attractive modes of life and the consequent intensification of value expectations is facilitated by system-wide communication networks (...)." (Gurr 1971, 223), which can hardly be said to be decreasing.

A final inclusion of this logic of making the RDT political relevant at the end of this presentation and discussion of the RDT, supported both by psychological and group conflict theory, is also that the greater the intensity of the supposed deprivation, the greater is the potential for violence (Gurr 1971, 13). But I find it relevant to include one minor but possible influential element which I find not always is addressed in a satisfactory manner, and that is that: "A common proposition in theoretical writing on political violence is that its magnitude varies inversely with the coercive capabilities of a regime." (Gurr 1971, 233). It is not that it *varies inversely* which is reacted to here, but that the *coercive capabilities* of a regime here seems to not be categorized or recognized as political violence. As it is only the oppositional forces to the regime which are political. Since it in this thesis is considered that the understanding of conflict should be regarded as both violent and non-violent, it is understood that some of the coercive forces of a regime are non-violent, but it also includes violent approaches, as for example the some obvious instances as capital punishment and torture. It is at least in this thesis found unsatisfactory to not include the coercive forces of the sitting regime as political, especially if one were to test the level of political conflict empirically. This may be particularly relevant with the point specified before that stability can be confused with force, and that may dictate the results of empirical investigations, *if* some understand stability only as the absence of violence and continued constant social routines. And as shown in the next chapter when looking on some empirical tests of the IC-nexus, where some of them evaluate stability, or use the concept of stability, it is found here that to include the regimental source of conflict in an evaluation of levels of conflict is essential, and not including the force needed to keep a society stable as the same as the absence of conflict.

Though in total, the RDT provides some helpful assumptions in the understanding of the minds of men and how they react to unwelcomed situations, even if de Tocqueville has a comment for those who dear to try to disclose those effects as well, especially when inequality is considered, here exemplified through equality: "But men will never establish any equality with which they can be contended. (...), the inequality of minds would still remain, which, (...), will forever escape the laws of man." (de Tocqueville 2009, 1029). This makes it

hard to test the functions of the actor in his societal relations through the limitations of laws, be they legal or scientific. But at least this understanding support the notion of that society *must* include inequalities, as is also supported by Gurr, that: "Social conflict is ubiquitous and inevitable in social life." (Gurr 1971, 301), which all points in the direction which is supported in this thesis that society is inequality.

Theoretical summation

The theoretic overview have been divided into two sections, which consists of a four part theoretic framework and a six part theoretic foundation. The four parts of the theoretic framework have included support for the school of conflict, (over the school of consensus). Then the inclusions of the conflict actors were mentioned through the DA and the RA, i.e. the deprived and the rational actor. The division of society in vertical (individual) and horizontal (collective) dimensions was investigated and a presentation of some indicators that the ideas of the IC-nexus is not of recent origin were included. The six parts theoretic foundation consisted first of two aspects of conflict theories were included in the first part, which were the FAR and the ECR, i.e. the frustration-aggression relation and the expectation-capabilities relation. Then the five theoretical lines were presented. First by introducing Alexis de Tocqueville with different elements extracted from his writings with an emphasis on *the equality of conditions*. In Marxism elements of *scarcity* and *resources* in an absolute form were prominent, with a clear dichotomous horizontal division of society between the bourgeois and the proletariat, or the capitalist and the worker, to use terms closer to contemporary usage. In ethnic theory the understanding of the divide of the state as *concrete* and *ideological* dimension was included, though with an specification that ethnicity is just one of several ways horizontal divisions in a society that can appear. In structural theory the division of *direct* (personal) and *indirect* (structural) violence was included, though amended to direct and indirect *conflict* for this thesis. And finally the RDT embraced several elements, where the main elements were *value capabilities* and *value expectations*, *scope* and *intensity*, *saliency* and *opportunity*, where a mixture of these elements can lead to a variation of consequences, and where there was emphasised that the relative nature of our societies is paramount to its understanding, i.e. to the understanding of our nature, and thus the understanding of our societies.

Chapter 6: Empirical research and the IC-nexus

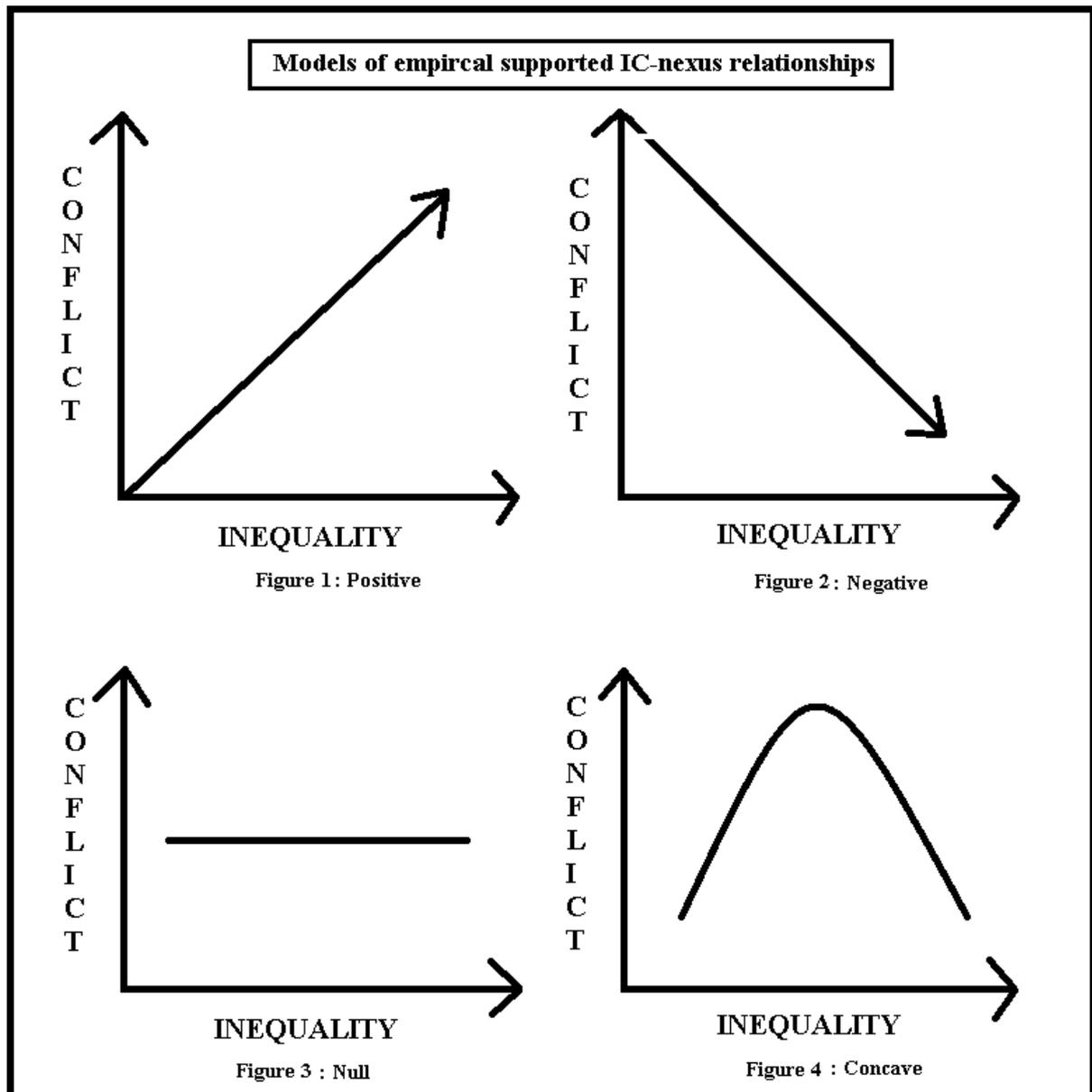
The empirical inclusion in this thesis will focus on the conceptual dimension of the IC-nexus, as it has been specified before that the mixtures of concept used when testing the IC-nexus has not been unison. The empirical evidence, which here is mainly centred in the quantitative empirical work, and that are included in this thesis is not an exhaustive list, but is a selection of cases of empirical research which have tried to test the IC-nexus, though under other names than calling it the IC-nexus, as it exists a plethora of concepts for these types of investigations. This selection of empirical studies which is included here is influenced by the choice of centring the thesis in political theory, and means that empirical support which have been included in this theoretic evaluation of the IC-nexus, is not as comprehensive as a systematic scientific scrutiny of all empirical IC-nexus relate studies. But it is here considered that the chosen selection of empirical cases suffice to provide the relevant information needed to continue into a discussion of the result from the whole thesis. This statement needs a bit of extra specification, since it is related to the methods and methodologies which have been utilized in his thesis. As mentioned before, concepts are a central component of political theory, and this thesis is based in political theory, and when analysing conceptual evolution, or conceptual history, the approach of taking all available empirical text may be ideal but it is not practical, but a selection of relevant empirical results must be chosen in an conscious manner (Blau 2017, 249), which is done here. In addition there exist a challenge of deciding which empirical tests can be defined as an IC-nexus relevant test when the concepts in this area of research is diverging, which would most likely lead to differences in evaluating what a complete of IC-nexus empirical studies would consist of. And some studies may exclude themselves, since as Lichbach indicates, there exist some qualitative divergence in the quantitative research on the IC-nexus, where some of the research: "(...) are perhaps best forgotten." (Lichbach 1989, 436-437). As the conceptual use and evolution of the IC-nexus is a central interest here, it could be added that for the concepts of inequality and conflict, to take a complete evaluation of those concepts based on all scientific, theoretic and philosophical writings would be beyond anyone, so the pragmatic choice here have been to include enough of the empirical evidence to highlight a point about the use of these concepts in the IC-investigations. A more scientific scrutiny of the same type of investigation is also warranted, but not seen possible or desired to do simultaneously as this theoretic approach. In addition, a caveat to the comprehensive approach is that even *if* all empirical investigations

are included in a study, and the evaluation of the result can differ anyway, since: "(...): no empirical claims can be known for certain, and the same evidence can always be read differently." (Blau 2017, 261). And in an instance of uncertainty, which is clinging on to the IC-nexus, the production of facts does not need to be in the centre of every investigation, even if the study is based on it. From this, the approach follow here is close to the approach recommended by Adrian Blau where he writes: "Do not see yourself as reporting facts, but as reporting your confidence in your inferences." (Blau 2017, 262), which is an approach followed here.

Though before presenting the chosen empirical evidence, it is reasonable to include evidence that the results from the empirical research is leading into several different directions in regard to extract a clear function of the IC-nexus. But since there exist a clear understanding in the literature that the research of the IC-nexus is providing a mixture of results, it is deemed reasonable to include some documentation for this before continuing on to the conceptual issues of the IC-nexus research. That is, there exist inconclusiveness when it comes to the results of the research of the IC-nexus, and the objective here for this thesis is to highlight the collective inconclusiveness in the concepts behind the inconclusive results, where the inconclusiveness in the results of the empirical research has been reported by several researchers of the IC-nexus (Nagel 1974,1; Weede 1981, 640; Lichbach 1989, 440; Cramer 2003, 400; Østby 2013, 206; Bartusevicius 2014, 36).

To show some of the effects found in this field of research, it is possible to go back to Mark Irving Lichbach's study from 1989 where he identifies five different theoretical assumptions of the IC-nexus, though he uses the EI-PC (economic inequality - political violence) division rather than the IC-division, and where four of those assumptions have been confirmed to exist based on empirical evidence, even though they assume different effects of the IC-nexus. Lichbach identifies that from a hypothesis that political conflict is a function of economical inequality, that there exist a positive, a negative, a concave (inverted U-shaped) and a non-effectual relationship of the IC-nexus which all these four effects have been confirmed empirically (Lichbach 1989, 436-440). In addition there is a fifth assumption of a convex relationship (U-shaped), which had not been tested empirically (Lichbach 1989, 438-439). The different shapes of these four empirical tested and partly confirmed effects are presented in Model 3 found below.

Model 3:



Source: Landman 2008, 140¹; Lichbach 1989, 436-440.

¹ These figures are based on similar figures found in Landman (2008, 140). Some alterations have been made of the figures to synchronize it with the theme of this thesis. The main alteration is that a figure of a null-effect is included, and a convex figure is excluded, since the goal here is to show functions of the IC-nexus that have empirical support, not only the ones that have theoretical support. Another alteration which has been made is the use of the concepts of *conflict* and *inequality* in the figures depicted here instead of *political dissent* and *economic inequality* in the original setup.

Before continuing to investigate some of the empirical studies of the IC-nexus, with a focus on the use of concepts in these studies, it can be practical to include some of the remarks that Lichbach wrote in his evaluation in his study of the IC-nexus studies. He writes that: "Anomalous, inconsistent, and inconclusive findings provide grist for theoretical and empirical reformulations of the basic EI-PC idea." (Lichbach 1989, 432), while later specifying that: "In sum, the EI-PC puzzle raises the general issue of Inequality-Political Conflict (I-PC)." (Lichbach 1989, 433). On this modification from the EI-PC to the I-PC nexus, in his conclusion he writes that: "DA theories suggest that economic inequality is not the only type of inequality that influences conflict." (Lichbach 1989, 467), and further that: "Propositions should (...) not be limited to the EI-PC nexus but rather expanded to the whole I-PC question." (Lichbach 1989, 467). These are issues that are incorporated in this thesis, in that theoretic reformulations in the concepts used to a more abstract level of inequality, but in addition it is considered that the conflict side of the I-PC-nexus should be amended to only *conflict*, and thus Lichbach's suggestion of taking the EI-PC nexus and expand it up to the I-PC nexus is here taken one step further by expanding it all the way to the IC-nexus. This is since as mentioned earlier to focus too early on political conflict, even if political conflict is the object of interest, is in this thesis assumed to obscure the understanding of this effect, by not acknowledging that conflict from inequality can take other forms than political, and if the conflict becomes political is based in a plethora of obscure reasons, which here is argued cannot be understood without taking a broader approach to the subject.

To start at the beginning, the empirical study which Russett undertook in 1964 took its starting point in inequality and instability. He writes that there exist some conceptual challenges where in how to understand the dependent variable (Russett 1964, 443), though his hypotheses are intended to test: "(...) the relation between economic inequality and politics." (Russett 1964, 444), which is based in degree of concentrations of agricultural lands (Russett 1964, 444). Russett indicates that instability is a concept which is difficult to transform into a operational definition, where he uses instability of personnel, internal group violence and internal wars as some measures of instability (Russett 1964, 447-448). The assessment of this use of concept is that it is in this thesis that inequality obviously is a satisfactorily concept for the inequality side of the IC-nexus, but not when it is reduces to economic inequality. But that is not the major challenge here. It is more of a problem that instability is used on the conflict side, since it is in this thesis understood that this concept is considered too vague to reach the aforementioned, in the earlier chapters, empirical universals, because it can take too many

directions when climbing down the ladder of abstraction. Here instability is just seen as a vaguer expression of conflict, which don't uphold the demands of empirical universals. I do not criticize this choice of concept, rather I approve of the effort to instigate an empirical strain of testing of the IC-nexus, and assert that just by bringing about these types of studies, contribute hugely to the field of conflict studies. And it would be surprising if the most suitable concepts were identified immediately. The results from Russett's study nevertheless concludes that the usually accepted theoretical connection of the IC-nexus must not be taken for granted, though he also assert that the expectations from de Tocqueville of surviving democratic regimes and equality seems accurate (Russett 1964, 453). This indicates a slight support for Figure 1 in Model 3, shown above.

The next empirical study included here is a study of Manoucher Parvin in 1973 on economic determinants of political unrest, where he studies: "(...) economic explanation of political unrest, (...)." (Parvin 1973, 273). He continues to write that he is aware of other types not all types of demands is found in economic causes, but propose a hypothesis of that: "Economic well-being (or deprivation) is a fundamental motive of political action in general and manifest political unrest in particular." (Parvin 1973, 276). The conclusion of Parvin's study indicate several types of influences and bases them most on absolute and not relative influence of economical standards, but he also points to that increases in income growth rates which should fulfil some demands of both collective and individual level, that from a certain threshold: "(...), a higher income growth rate would increase violence rather than decrease it." (Parvin 1973, 292). This effect is more consistent to Figure 2 in Model 3, with the plain negative effect, but including that this effect takes place from a certain threshold. Parvin continues to write that there is some consistency with other studies in that economic inequality shows sign to relate to political unrest, but it is more the absolute economical situation which is the major influential factor, when it comes to relative or absolute divisions of economic distribution (Parvin 1973, 292). A factor that Parvin includes that is consistent with the framework supported in this thesis is that he includes the *opportunity* side of the IC-nexus, as shown earlier is a subcategory of inequality. Parvin includes this as socioeconomic mobility operationalized through education, where the effect of this factor reduces the influence of deprivation through the possibilities it provides to envision an improved situation in a temporal manner (Parvin 1973, 293). Though fairly consistent with the setup of concepts that is supported in this thesis, it diverges to a certain degree from Russett's study. But Parvins study does not exclude relative deprivation as a factor that can cause conflict, but income

growth rate and socioeconomic mobility are stronger forces as the cause for conflict (Parvin 1973, 293). So the concepts in this study lies to a certain degree close to a more general approach in that he mention other forms of inequality than economic inequality and includes opportunity through education, but is still, as in opposition to Russett's study, an example of diverging result of empirical tests of the IC-nexus.

The third empirical investigation that is include here is the study of inequality and discontent by Jack Nagel in 1974, where he starts his study with an inclusion of that he argues that the IC-nexus effect is curvilinear, i.e. that discontent is at the lower levels when inequality is either high or low (Nagel 1974, 453), which is the effect shown in Figure 4 in Model 3 above. When it comes to inequality, he does at least use the term inequality, but it is hard to identify a thorough discussion of the concept, but it seems to include a general relation to when: "(...) important values are distributed most equally or most unequally." (Nagel 1974, 453). Though he uses the concept of discontent, or political discontent where the consequences of this concepts includes: "(...) protest, instability, violence, revolution (...)." (Nagel 1974, 453). Though is it necessary to include that the support for Nagel's hypothesis is not conclusive, but neither inconclusive in a way that it is discarded. The evidence is more ambiguous (Nagel 1974, 469). But the interest of this thesis is more to the use of the concept of *discontent*, which is supposed to lead to other forms of conflict. On this occasion, it appears that this study does not provide a concept that is an empirical universal, in the same manner as with Russetts study where instability was the concept used. The substitution to conflict would provide a more concrete, but still general concept which has the ability to both include a range of instances of conflicts, but also is more suited to reduced abstractness than both *discontent* and *instability* seem to have the capacity of. As shown above, Nagel includes both the concepts of instability and violence into discontent, but Russett goes straight to instability. This makes it hard to make immediately reasonable comparisons, since it is difficult enough to grasp what people intend to lay of meaning in a concept, even if they use the same term, let alone if someone use interchangeable terms on the same concepts.

Erich Weede reports in his study that: "(...) no significant relationship between inequality and violence could be detected." (Weede 1981, 639). When Weede continues, he takes a position for finding data in average income, income inequality and collective violence, where collective violence is linked up with: "(...): armed attacks and deaths from political violence (...)." (Weede 1981, 642-643). On this instance it can be reasonable to include the concepts of

structural theory in where the issue of violence can be both structural and personal, where the instances which Weede uses indicates strong tendencies of clearly observable instances of violence, which is reasonable since it is a empirical investigation, though it can conceal some societal mechanisms which are more hidden functions of harmful actions. Nevertheless, this study shows support for a mechanism of the IC-nexus which can be found in Figure 3 in Model 3 of no relation, shown above. Weede also include some adjustment to his findings, in that he cannot falsify relative deprivations effect on conflict, and in addition that he did not include measures of power, opportunity and collective resource possibilities in his evaluation of level of violence, even though they are suspected to correlate (Weede 1981, 652). Here the use of terms are closer to the IC-nexus concepts used in this thesis, by using the concepts of inequality and violence.

Christopher Cramer writes about inequality and conflict and highlight some dimensions that needs to be included when studying this relation. He writes that one must be aware of the different kinds of inequalities that exist, but also includes a caveat for empirical research in that poor quality if data on inequality also must be taken into consideration when trying to study the IC-nexus. In addition that the diverging definition of inequality could cause problems for measuring its effect (Cramer 2003, 397). Though for the type of concepts used, even though he has a clear starting point of inequality and conflict, it seems that at least for the conflict side that it is divided into civil conflict and violent conflict without clarifying the differences (Cramer 2003, 397). And even though he acknowledge that there exist several forms of inequalities he concludes with some preconditions that: "(...) economic inequality *is* hugely important to explaining civil conflict." (Cramer 2003, 409). In addition in his article, there is an example that the division of horizontal and vertical dimensions of inequality is seeping into the IC-nexus research when Cramer includes this dimension with a reference to the work of Frances Stewart (Cramer 2003, 409), where the suggestion from the work of Stewart is that horizontal inequalities leads to conflict between groups (Stewart 2000, 245). The conceptual implications from Cramer's use of them is that even if the concept of inequality is developing in a more sophisticating direction by also including elements of horizontal and vertical inequalities, it is still economical inequalities that are mainly the subject of investigation. And also there is no clear division between concepts of civil and violent conflict.

On the fringes of the IC-nexus there have been two studies that in the early 2000 that tried to research causes for civil wars. The reason for positioning them at the outer edge of the IC-nexus is because these studies have a specific focus of civil war as the type of conflict of interest. The first study is a study of Fearon and Laitin which points to that what explain occurrences of civil war is not where: "(...) ethnic or other broad political grievances are strongest." (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 75). From this is here deducted that there is an indication of an underlying idea of inequality, as they later on includes inequality in one of their hypothesis that includes economical inequality (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 79), where this hypothesis again later is seen in contrast to the occurrences of civil war on grievances (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 81). Even if this is an instance not in the centre of the IC-nexus studies, they include inequality, which is translated into economical inequality and where they include, as did Cramer above, that the data on inequality may not be satisfactory (Fearon and Laitin 2003, 85). The conceptual connection here then, related to the IC-nexus, seems to go directly from economical inequality to civil war. That is not a problem in itself, but it may be a challenge when comparing this study to other IC-nexus studies.

The second study of the early 2000s on civil war from Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler also includes grievances. Though in their inclusion of inequality, this concept is separated from gradation of political rights and other divisions of society (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 563). Inequality is later also shown by measuring economic inequality that inequality is in fact economic inequality (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 570). In the same study, opportunities are also included, but not as a part of inequality, but rather as opportunities for rebels to be able to rebel (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 563). The conclusion from this study is also that the opportunities for rebelling has influence on possibilities for conflict, but economic performance, which includes distribution of income, i.e. economic inequality, does not increase the risk of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 587-588). This civil war study as with the former, they are a bit challenging in comparing them up against other more clearly centred IC-nexus studies. On the positive side, they demarcate a clear type of conflict, but as has been argued in this thesis, this zooming in to a specific type of conflict, as in political conflict or civil conflict, can at sometimes obscure the causes or mechanisms one tries to detect, at least if this zooming in is not taken from a position of a set of concepts which have some strong universal commonalities.

In a combination of some of the themes above, in 2011 Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch wrote an article on horizontal inequalities and civil wars that had ethno nationalistic traits, though they seem to use the concepts of civil war and conflict interchangeably (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 478). In their results, what they find through the use of some new methods is that: "(...), in highly unequal societies, both rich and poor groups fight more often than those groups whose wealth lies closer to the country average." (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 478). They specify that they are following the trend of shifting over to horizontal from vertical instances of inequality, and claim that the issue of the conflict and inequality is not over, even if the aforementioned studies on civil war above did conclude that the inequality cause of conflict did not exist (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 478). What the trio find in their study is that they divide inequality up in a political and an economical dimension, where these dimensions of horizontal inequality contribute to the occurrences of civil war, and in addition they argue that they find: "(...) the civil war literature's tendency to downplay the importance of grievances as a source of internal conflict is both premature and misguided." (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 479). When the study turns to empirical testing of the theoretical setup, they specify as has others done when it comes to inequality-conflict studies, that the data availability can be unsatisfactory, and almost all statistical tests of the horizontal inequality dimension have used surveys on economical welfare as their data foundation (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 483). In this instance they clearly connect their civil war research up to the IC-nexus by using inequality and conflict as the field of study. Even so, they conclude their study with that ethnic groups distanced from the average per capita income are more involved in civil conflicts (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 429). And a final note that they include before closing the study is related to the challenges of which indicators that should be used to test the IC-nexus: "Rejecting "messy" factors, such as grievances and inequalities, may lead to more elegant models that can more easily be tested, but the fact remains that some of the most intractable and damaging conflict processes in the contemporary world, (...), are to a large extent about political and economic injustice." (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 492). From this statement, though including conflict not civil war, and substituting inequalities and injustice, a substantial point is made, that even, at least in scientific approaches, some simplifications of the world needs to be made when studying it, especially when the social component is involved, but there has to be limitations to this simplification as well. So that the object is not to just provide results that are in compliance with the contemporary scientific guidelines, but also reflects the realities of the world to a certain

degree. In the IC-nexus studies this also applies, where Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch continue to claim in their study that: "It is very unlikely that such conflicts can ever be understood, let alone durably solved, without taking seriously the claims of marginalized populations." (Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011, 492). In this study, the concepts used are related to the IC-nexus, but not exclusively tied to inequality and conflict. It is as with the above mentioned studies related to a specific type of conflict, i.e. civil war, but do substitute civil war and conflict at will it seems, though the part of inequality has a more sophisticated use with focus of horizontal inequalities and a division of political and economical inequalities. This last part of division of inequalities can to a certain degree comply with the division of opportunities and resources supported in this thesis.

The final empirical studies of the IC-nexus is a group of three recent investigations, mainly to see what kind concepts is in use here. The results of the test are of less interest, since it has already been shown by empirical investigations that the effect of the IC-nexus can be documented to go in almost any direction possible, but the results will be included anyway, since it is of interest to see what some of the most recent studies on the IC-nexus shows. The first of three recent studies is from Henrikas Bartusevicius which takes its position clearly in the IC-nexus, where he uses the term inequality-conflict nexus, though also uses civil conflict and civil war conflict, but specifies that these two concepts will be contained in the concept of conflict (Bartusevicius 2019, 339). When it comes to inequality, he uses the dimensions of horizontal and vertical inequality, but specifies that he is going to focus on economical inequality (Bartusevicius 2019, 339-340), though instead of dividing inequalities into resources and opportunities, he divide them into a combination of *economical* goods and *economical* opportunities (Bartusevicius 2019, 342). So he uses the conceptual division also supported here, by dividing inequalities into goods (resources) and opportunities, though both inside the dominion of economical inequalities. The result from his study shows that there exist some clear links between types of inequalities, sometimes formulated as advantages or deprivations, i.e. here understood as the consequences of inequalities, with the inclusion that the type of inequality also can influence the type of conflict (Bartusevicius 2019, 340). This leads Bartusevicius to encourage that it is important to find out *how* the mechanism in the IC-nexus works, which in turn can help policymakers to make decisions that can reduce conflict if that is their intention, and to be able to do this, that is: "To avoid conflicts, we first need to know how they start." (Bartusevicius 2019, 352), and I want to add to this that to avoid conflicts, we first need to know what it is. And not just as a concept used in discussions,

where it may function even if it contain some flexibility of meaning, but as a subject of textual investigation. This is because there are different restrictions on our use of concepts in written and conversational usage (Blau 2017, 252). These investigations can both be scientific and philosophical investigations, but also theoretical, as is attempted in this thesis, where the demands for these types of investigations could clearly profit on a clear framework to advance from, at least at the most abstract levels, where maybe the opportunity for consensus is more easily found.

The second of the three recent IC-nexus studies included here is a study from Christian Houle where he focuses on social mobility and political instability, where social mobility here is seen as distinct from inequality, and he argues that social immobility leads to political instability (Houle 2019, 85). What he finds is that: "(...) countries with low social mobility levels are more likely to experience riots, general strikes, antigovernment demonstrations, political assassinations, guerillas, revolutions, and civil wars." (Houle 2019, 85). Here the concept of political instability seems to contain all these instances of conflict, in contrast to some of the above studies which had a concrete focus on civil war, which here is just part of the concept of political instability. Even though the conflict side of the IC-nexus here, i.e. the concept of political instability has some differences, (but also some similarities as instability is the same concept that Russett used in 1964 as shown above), from other concepts used on the conflict side in the mentioned IC-nexus studies, it is the inequality side which is of most interest here, because of some novel treatment. In relation with the setup of concepts for this thesis, it is found motivating to see the use of the opportunity side of inequality included in a study on the IC-nexus, though Houle does make a distinction of inequality and social mobility which may not be necessary. Houle writes that: "(...), inequality and social mobility, although related, are fundamentally distinct." (Houle 2019, 85). Though later on, he makes a transformation from inequality to economic inequality without mentioning this sudden reduction of abstractness: "Although related, the concepts of social mobility and inequality are fundamentally distinct. Economic inequality refers to the degree to which people within the same society have different income/wealth levels. In principle, a society could be highly unequal, for example, without social mobility being low." (Houle 2019, 88). As is the approach in this thesis to support a more refined concept of inequality than not just automatically understand inequality as economical inequality, but also to include the opportunity side of inequality, it is here found that this mention of social mobility have the prospect of maybe filling this position through a dichotomous understanding of inequality.

This can be found in Houles study as well, by scrutinizing some of his formulations. He writes that: "Even when inequality is high, individuals may be able to move up in the social hierarchy through "regular", non-violent, means. Social immobility, however, (...), indicates that the poor lack such opportunities." (Houle 2019, 90). From this it is possible to extract that it is only the poor who lacks this opportunity when social immobility exist, i.e. the rich are not under the same restrictions, and thus manifests inequalities in opportunities. So through this argumentation, the approach of Houle in including social mobility as a factor in studying the IC-nexus is here highly supported, but for the object of finding a common conceptual framework for these kinds of studies, it is in this thesis considered that social mobility should occupy one of the dimensions of inequality, and not be seen as distinct different from inequality, which usually only supposes economical inequality anyway. The results from Houles study, besides the understanding of social mobility should be seen as a possible dimension of inequality or not, is that it points in the direction that increased levels of social mobility is consistent with reduced level of political stability (Houle 2019, 100-103).

The last of the empirical studies included in this thesis, which is also the last of the three recent IC-nexus studies included here is a study from Karin Dyrstad and Solveig Hillesund, where they through survey based data try to explain peoples support for political violence (Dyrstad and Hillesund 2020, 1724). They include in their study the concept of political efficacy, where they refer to the work of George I. Balch for the term of political efficacy and to Richard D. Shingles for its definition (Dyrstad and Hillesund 2020, 1730). Balch mentions that political efficacy has two aspects which is one that points to the trust to the political system, in which how the response from the political structure is perceived, and a second aspect points to how individuals evaluates how their own capacity in the political system will be effectual (Balch 1974, 31). Which is translated into the definition that is found in Shingles that these two components are combined in expectation for effectual, or successful type of political activity (Shingles 1981, 80). This concept of political efficacy is related to the political opportunity structure and influences both horizontal and vertical support for political violence (Dyrstad and Hillesund 2020, 1724). The inequality side in the study of Dyrstad and Hillesund is connected to grievances, though not directly, since they seem to separate grievances and perceptions of grievances (Dyrstad and Hillesund 2020, 1727), though to transform that understanding in compliance with the setup of this thesis, this is here understood as just the different consequence of relative or absolute inequalities. Grievances are grievances whatever the source is, either real or imaginary. Either way, the relation to the

IC-nexus, one of the interesting point to this study for the setup of concepts for this thesis is that it includes political efficacy as a way to diffuse conflicts into solutions through non-violent means. This is included in the conclusion of the study where it is supposed that: "If people believe they can have their grievances addressed through regular political channels, their anger can be funnelled into peaceful opposition, which helps undermine the ability of violent insurgency to take root." (Dyrstad and Hillesund 2020, 1745). This suggest that there exist a dimension of conflicts that can be resolved peacefully, and which also legitimatize that conceptualization around the IC-nexus on the conflict side also should include a non-violent dimension. This is to enhance the understanding of the IC-nexus. Because if inequality increases conflict, and in a study of a society with high levels of inequality shows low levels of violent conflicts, that doesn't necessarily mean that conflict doesn't follow inequality. An alternative explanation for the low levels of violent conflict can be that the society, most likely through its state, have the capacity through its structure to diffuse the conflicts by non-violent means, though the empirical scientist is left perplexed since he cannot observe any coup d'états, and conclude that there is no relation between inequality and conflict. Anyway, I have to make a small comment to what Dyrestad and Hillesund write of non-violent modes of conflict solutions, and that is that the proposition is that political avenues are not the only way of peacefully, or at least whiteout violence, to resolve conflicts. The juridical apparatus is clearly a candidate to both transform conflicts into the non-violent dimension in practical forms, but also is a very prone candidate to assist empirical scientist to measure the non-violent side of conflicts.

To close of the empirical chapter here, it will, as with the theoretic overview, get its own short summary. This is that by the evolution of these, mostly quantitative, empirical studies included here, a picture of the concepts in the IC-nexus seem to have evolved from forms of economical inequality to a more broader understanding of inequality, with the turn to the division of horizontal and vertical inequalities, but also into inequality diverging away from synonymous applying inequality with economical inequality as seems to be an common approach, where inequality if opportunity seems to emerge as a dimension in recent IC-nexus studies. On the conflict side, it seems that many forms of violent conflicts have dominated these studies, under different names of instability, unrest, violence, civil war, political conflict and other subcategories of these concepts again. Though an encouraging detection in the latest empirical study included in this thesis was the incorporation of non-violent means of the conflict side, which can make the setup of the concepts of the IC-nexus used in this thesis

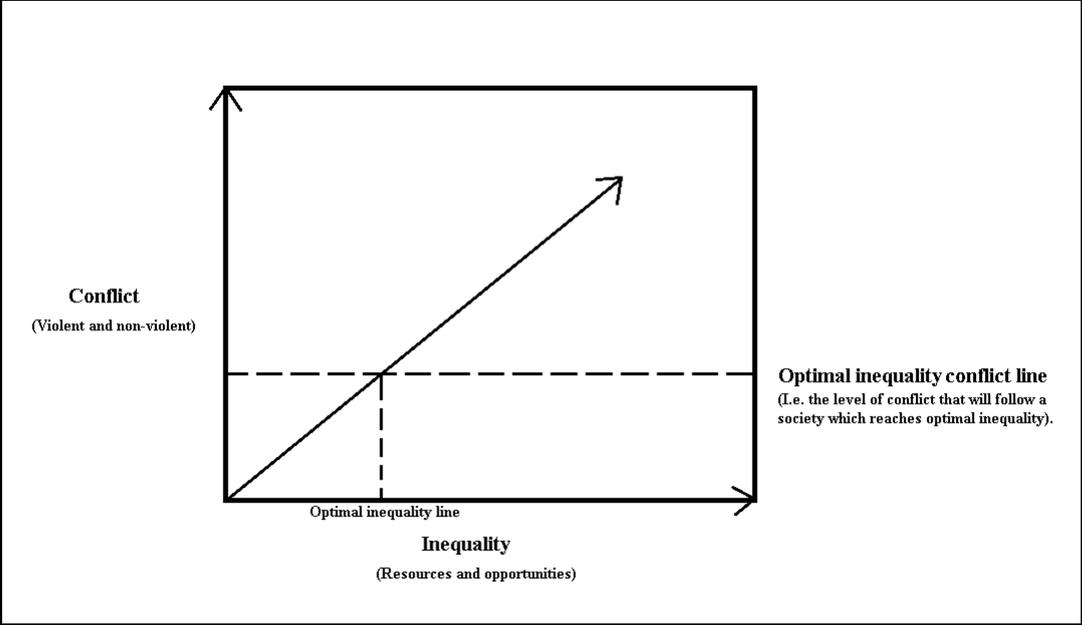
seem to have the capacity to constitute the conceptual framework of the two part outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus, in a way that includes the high and middle levels of abstractions for the concepts in the IC-nexus. This is where the last part of this discussion now will turn, with a short setup of the outline of general framework for the IC-nexus.

Chapter 7: Discussion and results

The theme for this thesis has been the IC-nexus with a main focus on the theory and concepts used when studying this nexus through the approach of political theory. For the approach chosen, it has been shown that political theory has had some fluctuations in its academic positioning and understanding the last hundred years, though the approach used here is a broad form of political theory. To some degree it could be argued that in this thesis the part of political theory have occupied more space than necessary, though this is a conscious choice, since there are currently several ways to understand political theory, and it was here judged that to elaborate on political theory and what it is was warranted for providing a better understanding of the IC-nexus.

An objective of this thesis was to be able to present an outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus. This outline will be presented here and consist of two parts, which is first a theoretic position for the mechanism of the IC-nexus supported in this thesis, and second is the conceptual framework for the same nexus, which has been developed in this thesis. The theoretic position supported is a simple proposition, and not a novel one. It is the same as Figure 1 in Model 3, which is a simple linear positive relation between inequality and conflict. The presentation of the support of this theoretical position is mainly done to clarify which of the many theoretical availabilities which exist of the IC-nexus that the conceptual framework rests on, and to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding the theoretical position supported in this thesis. It also provides a context for evaluating other elements which have been revealed in this thesis. The theoretical position supported in this thesis is also shown below, in Model 4, where also the concept of optimal inequality is included. The same model also includes a line for expected conflict level when optimal inequality is reached.

Model 4: Position of theoretic support for the IC-nexus (positive).



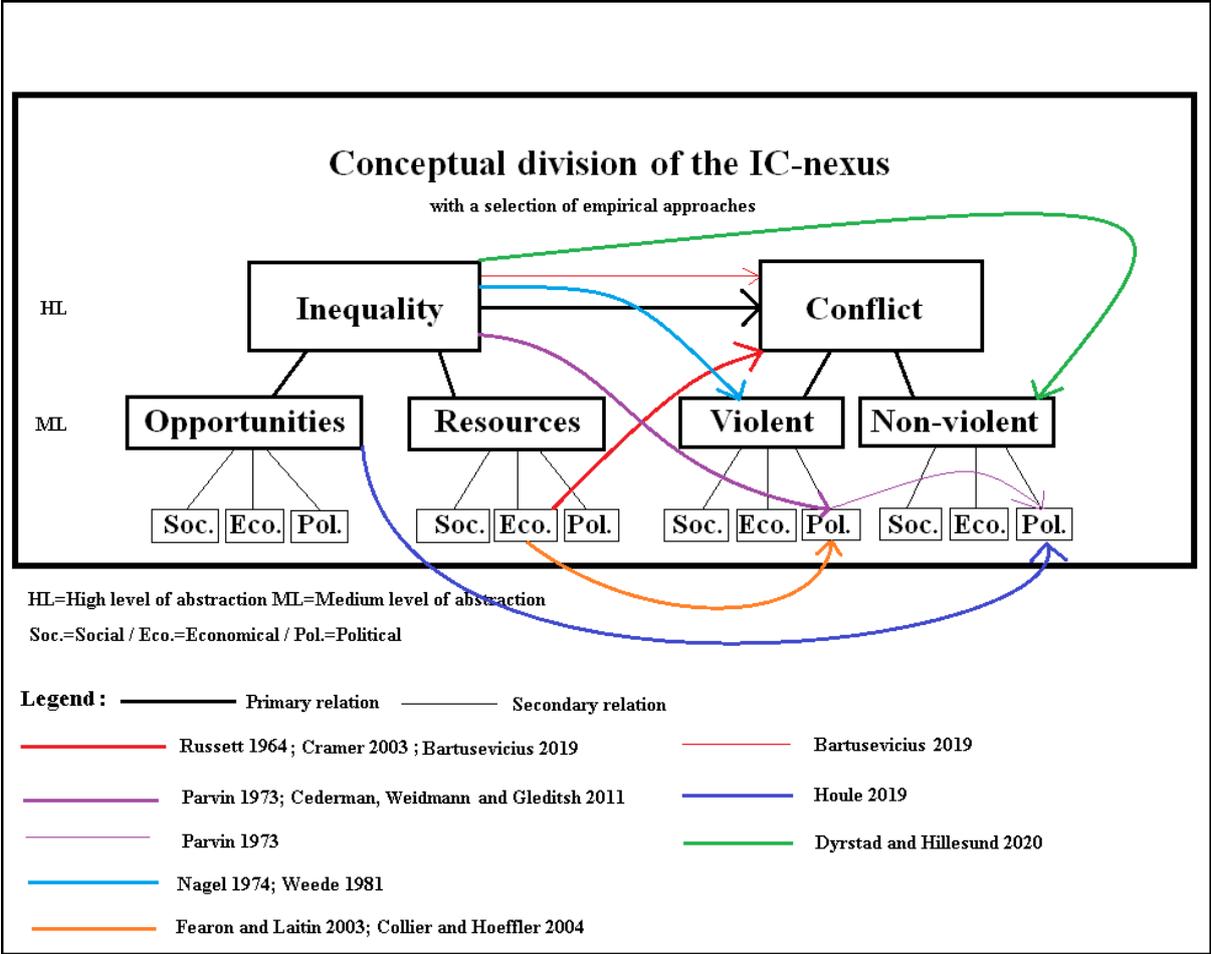
The brief way of explaining the support of the theoretic position shown here, based on the concepts introduced earlier, the theoretic overview, and the empirical results included in this thesis is that the support of the mechanism shown in Model 4 is that inequality increases the probability of conflict in a society. The reason it is here judged to function through probability is as earlier specified that there is assumed to be an abundance of causes that can influence the direct cause between inequality and conflict. The support for the IC-nexus mechanism in this thesis is based on that it is based in a position from the conflict school of thoughts that human society is based on conflictual relations. The understanding is also based on that DA theory provides a more sophisticated explanation of the connection of how inequality is perceived by the social actors, which makes the mechanism supposedly harder to detect, but RA theories can provide a simpler tool for empirical investigations, but through its simplification it also risks to miss the target. The division between horizontal and vertical inequalities is not included in the model above, since the effect above is considered to apply on both aspects of inequality, even though the empirical evidence indicates a difference. This is because, as will be shown below, that there exist some conceptual inaccuracies when it comes to the empirical testing of the IC-nexus, and thus the results from the empirical tests lose a bit of their credibility when any comparisons is done *between*, in opposition to *inside*, the tests. This

means that the division of HOI and VOI is here seen as mostly a decision that confronts an empirical scientist when trying to test the IC relation. I.e. if he wants to investigate inequalities based on individual or collective characteristics, or maybe even find some avenues for combining both aspects of this division. The other division of inequality into the two here supported dimensions of *resources* and *opportunities* is extracted from both de Tocqueville with the focus on the *equality of conditions*, which I judge to partly cover both aspects of inequality. And also the propositions taken from Gurr with the mechanism from the *value capabilities* and *value expectations*, which through the conductor of *scope* and *intensity* can manifest itself through societal conflicts, both *violent* and *non-violent*. The modifier that Gurr includes with *salience* is a central issue which can function as a large confounder, and is needed to be investigated closer for societies which will be the subject of an IC-nexus study, as the *inequality of what* question from Sen reappears, in that one would have to know which types of inequalities that is salient in the societies one wants to investigate, and also what that constitutes opportunities and resources in a society. *Opportunity* from Gurr is directly incorporated in the conceptual structure for this thesis, as it is one of the dimensions of inequality supported here. These mechanisms are also related to the FAR and the ECR, which is found in and in between the theoretical understanding here, in that the frustration-aggression relation is connected to the idea of the DA, and expectation capabilities relation is related to the scope and intensity of the theory that Gurr provides, as is one of the central foundations for his theory. The idea of optimal inequality is related to that all societies have inequality as part of its DNA to be able to provide a *social product*, though when the primary yield of the societal hierarchal organization is harvested, an increase in inequality does not provide a greater *available* social product, since it has to be used in defusing rising conflicts, both violent and non-violent, which when passing the level of optimal inequality takes more of the social product than it creates. And in trying to detect this mechanism in the IC-nexus, there has to be appreciated that there are different types of inequalities and different types of conflicts that can explain this effect, and if they are not controlled for, the result can be misleading. The focus on, or rather, the lack of inclusion of the different types of inequality and conflicts is an issue found in the selection of empirical tests included in this theoretic evaluation of the IC-nexus, as will be shown below, and is here supposed to be a source of the inconsistent empirical results.

The selected empirical results included in this thesis have been shown through its presentation in the text and visualization through Model 3 (positive, negative, null and concave), to point

in several different directions for the mechanism of the IC-nexus. The different ways of testing the IC-nexus from the selected empirical tests, which support the different ways of how the function of the IC-nexus is understood, is shown in Model 5 below. This model is based on Model 2b, introduced in the earlier chapters of this thesis. What is shown in Model 5 is how the different empirical investigations seems to have been weighted in relation to the conceptual setup provided in Model 2b. There are two types of relations, a primary and a secondary, where these two relations are taken here by how these empirical tests in this thesis have been evaluated to apply to the conceptual setup. The positioning of the relations in the model have been made on an evaluation of both use of concepts and the underlying operationalizations of the concepts found in the empirical tests included.

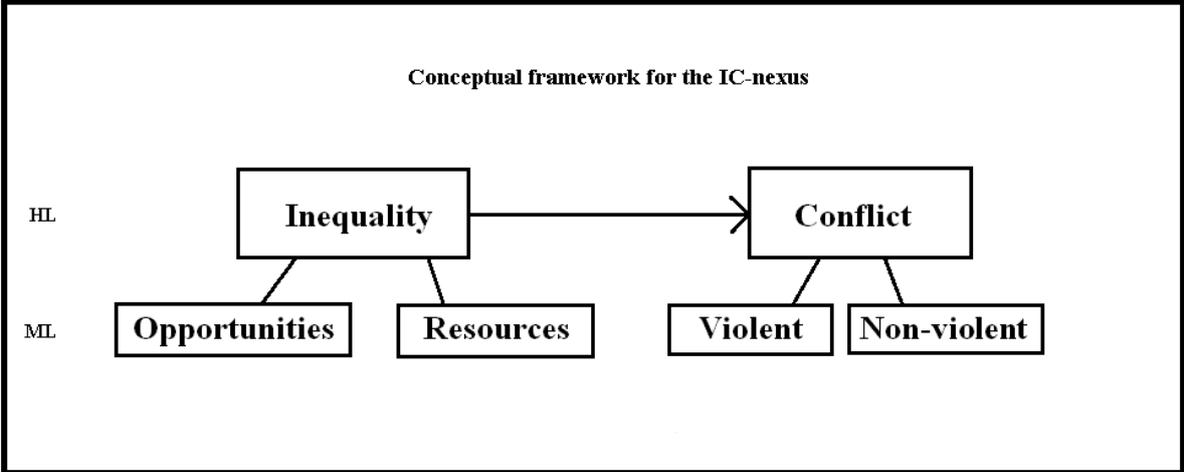
Model 5:



As shown above in Model 5 there are several different ways in which the IC-nexus have been investigated. The main line seems to originate in economical inequality and either go to a broader understanding of conflict or directly to violent political conflict. But there are also other avenues taken. But maybe the most interesting picture here is that almost all

subcategories of inequality and conflict have been used, though resources seems mainly to be directly understood as economical resources, as is understandable, (though not satisfactory), with its capacity to measure resources in a standardized way, and can be collected as data fairly easy as well. This makes the Model 2a, already presented earlier in this thesis, seem as a suitable model to use as it already was setup as the conceptual framework, since it is clear and simple, which seems to be a necessary attribute for the development of a conceptual framework which can provide a foundation for increased clarity when investigating the IC-nexus. And a more sophisticated, or more complex conceptual framework seems to be more suitable for future evaluations, if tests based on the conceptual framework presented here can provide satisfactory results. The conceptual framework in this thesis, as shown below in Model 6, has a general starting point with the division of inequality and conflict, but also provides a structure for reduced abstractness with four possible dimensions available which can easier be connected to empirical scrutiny, without making quantum leaps from high levels of abstraction to low level concrete operationalized concepts. This makes me take a decision for this thesis, in accordance with the current *zeitgeist* of reuse, at least on an idealistic level, (obviously not at a practical level), in just recycling Model 2a, as the model used as the conceptual framework of the outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus, applicable to use when studying the IC-nexus. Though it is here rebranded from Model 2a to Model 6, among others since it has been made a small modification on the model in its title.

Model 6: Conceptual framework for the IC-nexus



HL=High level of abstraction ML=Medium level of abstraction

The reason for choosing this model as the conceptual framework is that it seems that only by providing this small setup of clear connections it can provide a tool to organize IC-nexus research on several different levels, which seems to have been missing all along, and is in this thesis perceived as a possible cause for the inconclusiveness in the results from IC-nexus studies. It is shown that it has some connections to both empirical and theoretical dimensions, and it is also a clear enough setup that maybe philosophic approaches can utilize the same setup, besides theoretical and scientific approaches, to scrutinize the concepts further. This provides a foundation for interaction between the three types of studies, scientifically, theoretical and philosophical. And for the empirical scientist, there seems to be clear, though broad, avenues for possible operationalization from the mid-levels of abstraction, with education and possibilities for political involvement for opportunities, monetary measures for resources, judiciary structures for non-violent conflict, and violent conflict at least as instances of physical harm. Though the psychological harm may still be more difficult to detect. This is maybe where the issues of *personal* and *structural* violence, (though it may be amended to personal and structural *conflict*), can provide some answers, but has in this thesis not been found applicable to include on the level of abstractions that has been included in the conceptual framework above, though it can be found possible to combine this type of thought with the understanding of violent and non-violent conflict, or as reduced abstractions of these dimensions. But based on this conceptual framework, that dimension is judged to lie beyond the scope of this thesis, as the model of the conceptual framework is proposed as an effort to contribute to create a common ground for studies trying to detect the function of the IC-nexus. There is still a long way to go, and finding myself returning to the original conceptual setup as the most satisfactorily conceptual framework at this point, feels to a certain degree more like a step back than forward, but that may sometimes be the best way to advance. It is at least where the path of the research done in this thesis has led.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The main elements emphasised in this thesis has throughout been on the IC-nexus. This relation, i.e. the relation between inequality and conflict in society, is still not clearly understood, though recent developments in empirical studies have shown some advances in the direction of connecting inequalities to conflict through the division of horizontal and

vertical inequalities, and some have included non-violent means of solving conflicts, as well as including opportunities as a dimension of inequality. This has been introduced in this thesis into a final two-part outline of a general framework for the IC-nexus where the use of political theory has been the main avenue of research, and where support for a specific theoretical position of the nexus have been provided together with a conceptual framework of the IC-nexus. Both parts of the general framework have been presented as models, and it was found necessary to make the models clear and simple, especially for the conceptual one, since the results of the IC-tests were not. An additional point which is here found significant to emphasise, even though it seem to be partly a marginal component of this thesis is that it is found here that it would be of great value if political theory could continued to be developed into a broader unified form in political studies, where it is able to enhance understandings of the results of academic studies, but also of real politics. This is because, as pointed out earlier, political theory may be a source of conceptual clarity, which appears to be a major challenge, at least for scientific approaches which mainly seems to be concerned with producing results, and maybe less concerned with understanding them. That is why it is here considered productive to use a broad understanding of political theory and favours political theory to occupy its natural space of evaluating results from the scientific production facilities, in cooperation with philosophical approaches, foremost through the use of practical theorizing.

Finally, I return to the more concrete product of this thesis, which is the outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus which consists of the support of a specific theoretical mechanism of the IC-nexus (i.e. positive), and in addition the conceptual framework developed here. And I want to close this conclusion and this thesis with some avenues for further research based on this outline of the general framework for the IC-nexus. The outline is hopefully general enough to reach over to different fields in political studies. Continued scrutiny of the concepts would be welcome, either by philosophical advancement for the understanding of the content of the concepts, or alternatively a more thorough scientific investigation of a broader set of empirical studies, to see if the findings in this thesis can be generalized beyond what is shown here. For political theorist, the support for further research is an advancement from a broader form of political theory, where a position between philosophy and science seems productive, where one can utilize perspectives, methods and methodologies from a wider range of political studies, including its own field of political theory, and in that way be able to enhance the understanding of politics and our societies.

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