

Europe with the Bosnian war? Or the generalization of the Hutu-Tutsi tribal conflicts into a methodic massacre of civilians across several countries in Africa? How do these brutal mass murders relate to military spending as much as they do to super-powers' political manipulations or ignorance of (or unwillingness to seek non-violent solutions to) untenable ethnical tensions? Given the difficulties in comparing different countries' situations, it is extremely difficult (and dangerous for its social consequences) to propose generalizations such as "adequate" limits of military spending or "proper" correlations between military outlays and social expenditures, as much as we ethically want those to be as negligible as possible.

A conclusion is that the generalization of a policy of "automatic release" of development funds as military spending goes down might be too simplistic, and the main victim of it, ignored by national governments in many cases, might be the targeted beneficiaries-- the people this policy honestly wants to help.

Precarious democratic situations make it quite difficult for civil societies to propose and enforce civilian control of government spending priorities (military or not). Let us recall that working democracies in most countries are quite limited-- witness Chile, in which the democratic government cannot dismiss its former ferocious military dictator from his top position in the Armed Forces until practically next century (unless nature takes him away earlier); in such a situation, how can Chile freely establish a firm policy of diminishing military outlays? Should then the people of Chile wait until next century for ODA?

Brazil is certainly an interesting case, full of impressive contrasts. As a society, it is one of the most unjust in the world, as studies from UNDP and the World Bank show. As an economy, it is among the first ten industrial countries, but a fifth of its population (more than 30 million people) go hungry. As an agricultural producer, its gigantic proportions and huge available productive land extensions notwithstanding, it harvests only about 4% of the world's total grain production (about 70 million metric tons per year), but is a leading exporter of soya beans, orange juice and several other agricultural and livestock products. Despite its recent history of a lengthy military dictatorship (1964-1984) during which it became a leading producer