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22

Toward a New Realism

Andreas Wimmer

The major lines of debate and controversy on how to understand and face ethnic conflicts, as they have developed over the past decades, also run through the chapters of this book. Some of the positions are re-formulated in new ways and with renewed precision, others are stated in ways already well known from the literature, and still other chapters open new fields of inquiry and suggest promising lines of future research. I should first like to outline, in an illustrative way and with no claim to comprehensiveness, a few such controversial issues. However, my main aim is to show that, between the lines of these debates, a new consensus has emerged. This consensus has a "thin" quality and does not manifest itself in strong, hypothesis-like propositions defended by all these authors in the different fields of controversy. Rather, it is a shared perspective, sometimes expressed in clarity, sometimes only implicitly acknowledged—a certain way of looking at ethnic conflicts and of evaluating possibilities for prevention, intervention, and institutional design. This perspective can best be described as a new realism, based on five fundamental insights: on the complexities involved in ethnic conflicts; on the individual character of each case; on the fundamental nature of these conflicts; on their self-sustaining character and longevity; and, finally, on the interests and ideas that bind outside mediators to the institutions they represent. Each of these aspects of the new realism will be discussed in a separate section.

For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that I do not see this "new realism" as opposed to the "old realism" of international relations theory (Krasner 1986), which aimed at describing foreign policy in a less distinct

and formalized way than did rational choice theories associated with the "liberal school" of international relations. Rather, the new realism sets itself apart from an overly optimistic, at times even naïve belief in the manageability of ethnic conflict that had developed at the end of the Cold War. It then seemed that the West, victoriously released from its wrestling competition with communism, would have hands free to sort out the messy constellations of conflicts that had appeared, over the past decades, in the developing world—and would have the political will to do so, since the "new world order" promised peace, democracy, stability, and rule of law to those parts of the word still plagued by wars, autocracies, and political turmoil.

The realistic perspective shared by the authors of this volume also sets them apart from the cynics, according to whom it is unrealistic to try to prevent or stop ethnic conflicts since these are driven by irreconcilable "ancient hatreds" (Staub 1989; Kaplan 1993; cf. Bowman 1994) or incompatible claims to sovereignty that cannot be resolved by negotiated give-and-take agreements. Benevolent attempts at peacemaking and mediation from the outside therefore may prolong the fighting and prevent a more secure peace following a clear-cut military victory of one of the sides. Against the pessimism of such a "hands-off" approach, the authors of this volume—along with others (Jentleson 2001; Miall et al. 2001)—continue to believe that ethnic conflicts are driven by political interests and are therefore open to negotiation and compromise. Before I outline this shared ground of a realistic optimism, I should hint toward some of the more salient points of disagreement.

CONTROVERSIES

It comes as no surprise that in a collection of chapters by such a wide range of authors with different professional backgrounds, disciplinary orientations, and regional expertise, there should be considerable disagreement on how to understand ethnic conflicts and what the appropriate strategy for intervention would look like. Walker Connor and Valery Tishkov, to mention an obvious pair of discord, sharply diverge in how they see relations between ethnic groups and the state. Valery Tishkov privileges the view from the top (the central state) and finds that ethnic minorities claim self-determination because foreign powers aiming at weakening the central state spread minority discourses and encourage ambitious local leaders to adopt them—and not because of a genuine sense of community and drive for cultural autonomy. Walker Connor, by contrast, develops a perspective from below and emphasizes the

subjective reality of feelings of ethnic (or, as he prefers, national) belonging, even if these feelings are nurtured by histories of shared origin and perceptions of cultural difference that do not stand the test of historical or anthropological scrutiny. These different points of view may be related to different terminology: What comprises an "ethnic conflict," the terminological heir of the colonial tribalism discourse, from a state-centric perspective may be described as a "national liberation struggle" (e.g., by the authors in Berberoglu 1995) or as a fight for "multicultural justice" (Stavenhager 1991) by those taking sides with ethnonational minorities.

This latter perspective implies that ethnic conflicts are about culture, identity, and deep-rooted feelings of belonging that may conflict with other groups' culture, identity, and deep-rooted feelings of belonging—a view that underlies, implicitly or explicitly, much of the mediation work of NGOs and professionals discussed by Norbert Ropers, as well as the idea of reducing conflict by introducing minority rights, as advocated by Max van der Stoel.

Other authors, most forcefully Rogers Brubaker, point out that these cultures, identities, and feelings of belonging are consequences, not causes, of a conflict. "Ethnic groups" therefore do not necessarily represent actors with a common political purpose or cultural project, but sometimes a mere category with little political content. They are transformed into groups only if political leaders are able to convince their constituencies that the ethnic is indeed the most pertinent political cleavage. They often succeed in such mobilization by using violence and terror in a strategic way, as Michael Hechter and Peter Waldmann show.

This intellectual stance is reflected in attempts to depoliticize ethnicity and de-ethnicize politics through appropriate institutions that make it more costly for political entrepreneurs to play the ethnic game,[1] such as vote-pooling electoral systems (see Donald Horowitz) or fostering trans-ethnic civil society organizations (compare Donald Rothchild or Angel Viñas). Thus, seemingly academic issues turn out to be intimately connected to major policy debates: Different definitions of what an ethnic conflict is all about can lead to contrasting political strategies of intervention, as Conrad Schetter and Ulrike Joras argue in more detail in the previous chapter.

Other such poles of opposition map the field of debate. While some authors, notably Milton Esman and Donald Horowitz, advocate institutional designs that reduce incentives for conflictual behavior, others think that only a previous change of attitude, the overcoming of entrenched concepts of friend and foe, will make such institutional change feasible (compare Norbert Ropers). Some think that massive

violence can only be stopped by the threat of massive violence (a point raised by Peter Waldmann), while others believe that violence has to be overcome by empowering the peaceful sectors of society (see again Norbert Ropers).

Most of these differences are well known in the debate about ethnic conflicts and have structured the field for some time now. This is the case for the opposition between an ethnosymbolist perspective, where the political power of ethnic identities and cultures is emphasized, and an instrumentalist, constructivist, or rational-choice perspective that sees ethnicity as only one among other bases of political loyalty. The difference between a sociopsychological approach privileging attitudinal changes and a political and legal approach advocating institutional reform is also well known from the literature—and not limited to the study of ethnic conflict, but also prominent in discussions on gender equality, the ecology, and so on.

The same holds true for the more obviously political divisions that became apparent during the conference on which this volume is based: Advocates of military interventions (usually to be found in defense ministries) oppose a peace movement largely composed of "civil society" organizations. Those believing in diplomatic tour de force enterprises, such as those leading to the Dayton or Good Friday agreement (usually well represented in foreign ministries), are known to disagree with those advocating a bottom-up community mediation approach.

It is not the intention of this volume to "solve" these issues, since much of this variance is related, I believe, to fundamentally different ways of looking at the political world—to paradigmatic differences in the sense of Thomas Kuhn—that are hardly bridgeable or negotiable. Either you believe, to give an example, that the political world is composed of rational individuals using violence for precise strategic reasons or you believe that it is made up of groups who resort to violence as an emotional valve for deep-rooted collective traumata. As in one of the famous trompe l'oeils by M. C. Escher, where you see the stairs either from above or from below, you cannot take both perspectives at the same time—and both reveal different, equally "true" views of the world.

Rather than point to possible bridges across these divides, I would like to discover the common ground on which these different opinions are based—focusing on the fact that we all see a stairway and not a ladder, to remain in the iconographic language. And, indeed, despite differing starting points and different analytical lenses, many authors share, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, certain basic insights about the character of ethnic conflicts and the lessons learned so far in

dealing with them. And this shared ground entails more, as I will now show, than a set of truisms. Rather, we can point to five points of substantive convergence, to be discussed one by one in what follows.

COMPLEXITY

Various authors emphasize the complexity of ethnic conflicts and highlight the consequences both for explaining and for preventing, negotiating, or institutionally taming them. Four related aspects are discussed: the interlocking of institutions, the number and variety of actors, their interrelatedness, and, finally, the transnational dimensions of the conflict.

Most conflicts touch a whole set of interlocking political, legal, and economic institutions, and are thus not easily restricted to one single political arena, as is the case for example in labor conflicts. The system of government, the electoral system, the separation of powers, and the power distribution among different levels of government all influence the political behavior of leaders and followers and thus have to be addressed in their totality in order to provide the necessary institutional incentives for accommodation and compromise. This point is explicitly made in the contributions of Andrew Ellis on electoral systems, Donald Horowitz on power sharing, Michael Lund on prevention, and Walter Kälin on federalism.

Second, researchers as well as policymakers realized that it is erroneous to deal with an ethnic group in the singular, as if we were dealing with "the government of Russia" or "the trade union X or Y"—a point made by Rogers Brubaker and William Zartman. Members of ethnic categories are also women or men, peasants or bankers, townspeople or rural folks, voters or nonvoters, and so on. The internal heterogeneity of interests and the existence of cross-cutting identities are often reflected in a set of competing leaders and continuous infighting over what the "true" group interests are and who more adequately represents them. For policymakers designing strategies of prevention, intervention, or institutional channeling of conflicts, this represents a considerable challenge, since it makes the identification of possible partners a delicate task. Some experiences with "representative" ethnic organizations during the past decade have been rather bitter, both for outside policymakers struggling to find negotiation partners as well as for leaders of such organizations themselves when their representativity was tested at the ballots.

A third element of complexity arises from the relatedness of different actors, as Hugh Miall explains in some detail. Entrepreneurs of

violence—warlords, gang leaders, underground organizations, and the like—are linked through networks of friendship, patronage, and political alliance with nonviolent actors and organizations. A conflict such as the one in Northern Ireland involves, in one form or another, almost the entire fabric of social relations. It is not an easily identifiable or, in surgical terms, easy-to-insulate trouble spot that can be acted upon without taking into account the encompassing political context. This makes intervention from the outside—and conscious conflict transformation from the inside—a much more difficult endeavor than what many analysts and policymakers had thought of when extrapolating from other experiences of conflict resolution.

In addition, we now pay more systematic attention to the fact that the conflicts do not end at the borders of national states.[2] The world is nowadays more interconnected than it might have appeared some decades ago. More important, the fact that almost every nation-state in the world contains ethnic minorities that also live in neighboring states, where they may form the dominant majority and control the state apparatus, gives ethnic conflicts very often a trans-border character—more so than is the case with other types of conflict.[3] Policymakers have learned that regional powers often hold the key to the solution of protracted conflicts.[4] Adding to the international dimension, international actors and institutions, each following their own policy agenda, have gained influence and importance after the end of the Cold War. Many of them are already present before the conflict turns violent, as Michael Lund emphasizes, and influence the course of events from the start, not as "outside" mediators but as actors in a complex power field. Hugh Miall's chapter elaborates how these global, regional, national, and local actors and factors are interlocking in producing a dynamic constellation of conflict that does not follow a linear progression from one clearly patterned stage to the next.

Rather, the sheer complexity resulting from the combination of various institutional logics moving different actors into different directions gives these conflicts a chaotic nature (Ricigliano 2001). René Lemarchand's chapter on the "road to hell in the Great Lakes region" unmistakably shows, on an empirical level, how the conflicts in Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, Angola, and the Sudan are historically related to each other—developments in one country spurring events and processes in other countries, which in turn feed back on the original development—a truly complex network of interlocking relationships and event flows across state boundaries. Realizing that a one-conflict/one-country/one-action approach is not adequate was a slow process, spurred by experience with the Rwandan drama, but also with other complexity interrelated conflicts.

We still lack an adequate language to describe and analyze these complexities. Most authors in this volume would perhaps agree that game theory or other prominent rational choice models—despite promising advances over the past years (Azam 2002; Fearon and Laitin 1996)—is still not adequately refined to tackle the multileveled and interrelated nature of ethnic conflict. To adequately represent the situation around the Great Lakes, for example, as the consequence of a series of prisoner-dilemma games with multiple plays and players seems an insurmountable task. Accordingly, we are still a far cry from having any true prognostic capacities—despite several serious attempts at developing such tools by researchers (Szayna 2000; Alker et al. 2001; Harff 2003) and NGOs such as International Alert or the Forum on Early Warning and Early Response. Early warning may point to a fire where it is already simmering, but no one can tell whether and when the winds that fan the flames will blow.

Acknowledging complexity leads, on the policy side, to important insights that are shared by the authors of this volume and beyond (see Sandole 1999 and the chapters in Crocker et al. 2001). Most important, a certain modesty about the possibilities of intervention is in order for several reasons. First, the sheer complexity of a political constellation makes it impossible to hold all intervening factors constant and to act on just one dimension or level. Bringing all leaders around a table and having them sign an agreement will not help in everyday politics, if among the rank and file there is no support for such an agreement. Complexity, in other words, "absorbs" the effects of an intervention, an insight that stands in opposition to the more technocratic notion, still prevalent in the early 1990s, of "managing" ethnic conflicts.[5]

Second, as Donald Horowitz shows, intervening agents as well as the actors themselves cannot possibly have an overview of the situation, let alone be knowledgeable about the consequences and side effects of their actions in a midterm perspective. Having the flexibility, both in organizational terms and in the strategic outlook chosen, to react to new developments and unforeseen changes of alliances is thus advisable, as some authors emphasized. One could add that enhancing the institutional learning capacities and skills of "knowledge management," to use a buzzword much en vogue in the consultancy community, should have a high priority in departments of foreign affairs and international organizations.

Third, the ideal conditions for a successful intervention are rarely given, because the complexity of such conflicts implies that there are too many variables in the equation that would have to be "controlled" at the same time. This conclusion is not drawn in an explicit way by the authors of this volume. However, a look at the chapters that specify the conditions for a successful implementation of one or the other conflict-reducing measure reveals that these conditions are only very rarely given

Consider the ingredients for a successful prevention of ethnic violence that Michael Lund has identified. Such prevention includes, among many other things, the consistent and timely focus on both short-term conflicts as well as structural roots (such as power imbalances); draws international and regional powers into an alliance for peace; and builds up a trans-ethnic civil society, including a network of businesspeople. Successful prevention can count on the support of moderate leaders in all communities involved and is facilitated by a recent history of peaceful relations between communities.

Walter Kälin has analyzed the conditions under which federalism reduces rather than exacerbates ethnic strife. Decentralization has to be effective and involve real autonomy and transfer of resources while at the same time establishing cooperative relationships between central and provincial elites. The entire country should be federalized in order to avoid making federalism appear to be a privilege of minorities and in order to reduce the incentive for separatism. Finally, federalism should be combined with effective democracy on the national as well as the regional level, in order to avoid ethnocratic abuse of power and human rights violations.

A third example is provided by Donald Rothchild's discussion of democracy's effects on ethnic conflict. To reduce the propensity to violence that the democratic competition for power entails, several reforms should be undertaken simultaneously: A strong civil society independent of the state should emerge; a culture of political moderation and compromise should arise; a strong state that is capable of distributing its benefits on a universalistic, nonclientelist, and noncorrupt basis is to be built; and economic growth should keep up with the expectations raised by democratization.

INDIVIDUALITY

The complexity involved in ethnic conflicts leads our authors to a second important insight, most explicitly and forcefully expressed by Milton Esman, Hurst Hannum, Michael Lund, and Angel Viñas: that no case can be analyzed or "treated" like any other. While this sounds like a truism, it is nevertheless of considerable importance for the new realism among both the academic and policy-making communities. Researchers now are skeptical about the possibility of a general theory of ethnic and nationalist conflicts. This is especially remarkable for those who, after decades of analyzing the general mechanisms driving these conflicts, now seem to confine themselves to describing patterns, the various constellations that can be understood on a case by case basis. Predicting

general developments in the social sciences, the ideal of a single master scheme not historically or contextually specified that would explain why ethnicity does not matter in Switzerland while it does in Belgium, why ethnic relations are stable and remain low profile in Cameroon while they do not in Nigeria, seems to have been lost from sight. Instead, contextual and historical factors are highlighted: the history of ethnic relations in colonial times (Chris Bakwesegha and René Lemarchand) or the uniqueness of each constellation of power that informs decisions about institutional reform (Andrew Ellis).

When it comes to policy recommendations, this means that a solution has to be carefully tailored to the characteristics of each individual conflict, as Michael Lund and Angel Viñas emphasize. More specifically, the discussion on which electoral system is most apt to reduce the propensity to violence has ended in a plead for a case-to-case approach: Donald Horowitz and Andrew Ellis both conclude that the constellations of power in a national arena and the precise ethnodemographic relations determine whether systems with incentives to catch votes across ethnic boundaries or systems in which parties compete largely within ethnic constituencies are more adequate.

A similar conclusion is reached in the debate over the optimum division of power between the national center and subnational units. Walter Kälin, Hurst Hannum, and Michael Hechter maintain that no general recommendation can be made and that federalism and autonomy can either exacerbate or reduce violent ethnic conflict, depending on the resources that the center is capable of providing to the federal units, the degree of overlap between the political interests of federal and central elites, and the political culture allowing for moderation and compromise in what Michael Hechter calls "the federal gamble."[6] This is, again, a much more differentiated view than the one that prevailed a decade ago, when federalism was considered a catchall solution for ethnic conflicts, because it allows for a compromise between demands for self-rule and fears of losing territorial integrity.[7]

A third area where a case-by-case approach is explicitly advocated is the question whether retributive or restorative justice is more helpful in overcoming the schisms created by past violence. According to Richard Goldstone, truth commissions are a useful instrument where at least a large part of the population is not aware of the injustices of the past. It does not make sense where everybody knew what was going on and where violence was announced and committed in broad daylight, such as in Rwanda. In such cases, criminal prosecution may be the more adequate strategy. In others, such as in South Africa or potentially also in the Balkans, a combination of both may help to lay the ground for a new beginning.

The tailor approach also guides us to look for solutions that run contrary to what Western academics, experts, and policymakers cherish as the best possible institutional design. Outside experts systematically prefer, to give an example, "civic" over "ethnic" models; that is, they think that ethnicity- and color-blind institutions are morally and politically superior to institutions based on the compartmentalization of society along ethnic or racial lines. But this may run against the perceptions and goals of the political class of entire regions and represent a major obstacle to finding a solution with a sustainable chance of implementation, as the difficulties of Bosnian democracy after the Dayton agreement show (Pugh and Cobble 2001). In a similar vein, Hurst Hannum maintains that, in the long run, the quasi-sacrosanct status of international boundaries may be a major obstacle to finding lasting solutions for many entrenched ethnic conflicts. He opts for including boundary corrections and secession in the policy arsenal.[8]

Following Peter Waldmann, a territorial separation of conflicting parties and their respective constituencies should not always be opposed but arranged for in a nonviolent way because, according to his analysis of the self-sustaining and self-amplifying logic of violence, this may be the only means of giving the forces of peace a chance (see also Kaufmann 1998). He does not discuss, however, the political implications, such as the incentives for ethnic cleansings, of such a return to the "population exchange" model of the League of Nations. Donald Rothchild convincingly argues that Western governments should support or even encourage institutional solutions that accommodate the specific political realities of individual African countries, even if such solutions deviate from standard models of majoritarian democracy. He mentions reserved parliament seats for minority groups, communal legislative chambers, consultative bodies, and other nonmajoritarian forms of political participation usually banned from the list of "good" democratic practices.

DEPTH

Differentiating between individual cases and tailored solutions does not mean that no generalizations about the dynamics of ethnic conflicts can be made. The general trend reflected in this volume is to see such conflicts as *deeply and closely related to the basic political institutions*. This comes as no surprise to the veterans of ethnic conflict research. It is a "new" insight, however, for those who have recently shifted their research and policy interest to the field. As Rogers Brubaker, Walker Connor, Milton Esman, and others have noted, this group of authors soon realized that ethnonational conflicts are not merely about resource distribution or the

balance of power between political parties. Conformingly, there are specific difficulties in negotiating peace that international relations specialists find surprising. William Zartman describes these specificities in his contribution: A zero-sum attitude prevails when it comes to questions of sovereignty or recognition of a group as a nationality; negotiations and calls for outside mediators are avoided because they would mean recognizing the enemy as a legitimate representative of such a group; and solidarity along ethnic or national lines perdures only as long as the conflict goes on—which again creates a vested interest in *not* arriving at a negotiated agreement.

These three difficulties in negotiating peace already hint toward the specific nature of such conflicts. Many authors note that they directly relate to the fundamental institutions of a nation-state, in other words, to the distribution of power and the structure of its political and legal systems. This position is reflected in various shadings and colorings in a number of chapters. René Lemarchand shows that it is the systematic and institutionalized discrimination against certain ethnic groups that provides the fuel for the conflicts in the Great Lakes region. More precisely, the monopolization of the modern state apparatus and the tailoring of its legal and political systems to the interests and needs of one particular group—either Hutu or Tutsi—set the spiral of mobilization and repression in motion.

For Milton Esman, the way the state elites define the relationship between themselves, as members of the core "national" group, and other ethnic groups explains much of the dynamics of accommodation and conflict. His typology of state-ethnicity relations, including assimilationism, meritocracy, and multiculturalism, makes clear that ethnic conflicts may arise in all three models, depending on how the state is perceived in ethnonational terms and how power is distributed among such groups.

Chris Bakwesegha too maintains that preferentialism, nepotism, and clientelism along ethnic lines are at the heart of ethnic conflicts. Such practices of bad governance are a legacy of colonial times, when ethnic preferentialism was part and parcel of the politics of divide and rule.[9] William Zartman elaborates the same theme in another conceptual language. He finds that discrimination along ethnic lines produces a mixture between interest-driven demands (greed) and issues of identity and dignity (grievances) that is difficult to resolve. Ethnic conflicts thus exemplify the more general point that when identities come into play and structure the perception of one's own interests, to paraphrase Max Weber's famous dictum (Weber 1920:252), the resulting amalgam may powerfully direct the choice of political strategies. It also explains why these conflicts may appear, at least on the surface, to be entirely driven

questions of identity and culture, as Walker Connor states in his caveat against overstating the economic and political side of the Weberian equation.

In summary, there seems to be agreement that (1) ethnic conflicts are directly related to fundamental structures of inclusion and exclusion of modern nation-states, or, more precisely, they are the effects of ethnic clientelism, favoritism, and corresponding forms of discrimination along ethnonational lines.[10] I am happy to note that this largely conforms to my own theoretical positions and research findings (Wimmer 2002). (2) They characteristically produce a mixture of ideas (identity) and interests (control of the state) that have to be taken seriously both analytically and in the search for adequate policy options. Finally, (3) the interlocking of identity and interests often make standard negotiating techniques fail and may put a "rational deal" out of reach of those sitting at the negotiating tables (cf. Byman 2002:chapter 8).

There are important policy implications that derive from what we may call, in experts' jargon, the deep-seated nature of the "root causes." First, only a multistranded approach will help to overcome violent ethnic conflicts. Official negotiations at roundtables—which may address major issues such as power sharing, the restructuring of security forces, and the redesign of state institutions—will have to be combined with "unofficial" efforts of negotiating around kitchen tables, mediating between leaders of civil society organizations, and reconciling victims of terror and violence. Given the deep-seated character of ethnic conflicts, it has become clear that such a combination of approaches is necessary for a durable and encompassing transformation of the conflict. The belief in "multitrack" diplomacy, as the technical jargon puts it, seems to have achieved an almost hegemonic status among both scholars and professional negotiators, notwithstanding some cautious remarks, for example, by Hugh Miall. This new orthodoxy was repeatedly evoked during the Bonn conference (see also Crocker et al. 2001). In this volume, the main arguments are summarized by Michael Lund.

Second and perhaps more important, negotiating peace more often than not touches upon the most vital interests of powerful actors and the fundamental rules of the political game. This entails two consequences. First, which agreement or institutional design has a chance of being adopted depends on the constellation of forces and the balance of power between the different players. While this, again, is certainly not an entirely new insight (see Nordlinger 1972:chapter 3), its recent spread provided an important caveat against the technocratic utopia, quite widespread in the early 1990s, that the "best solution" designed by experienced international experts will be adopted by policymakers in the national arena. Andreas Ellis shows that the

geometry of power between national parties, the army, and other important actors at specific historical junctures determined which electoral system was adopted in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Guyana. Experience taught him a sober realism with regard to the possibility of outside intervention and consulting. In the short run, he argues, outside consultants and experts may have to find "best solutions" within the rather narrow horizon of established local political traditions and existing parameters of power. In a long-term perspective, alternative institutional models can be introduced to the national debate and perhaps one day be adopted.

Other examples, such as the Guatemaltecan case that Angela Kane discussed at the conference, show that even the most carefully mediated and drafted institutional designs meant to overcome ethnic discrimination and exclusion, including a reform of the educational system and a solution to the thorny issue of recognizing official languages (Kane 2001), have no chance in a democratic process—often simultaneously promoted by the same international forces as part of a peace agreement—if they do not conform to the perceived interests of the majority of voters. The new constitution was rejected by a narrow but significant majority in a popular referendum in 1999.

Second, we arrive at a caveat against an overly enthusiastic and mechanistic promotion of minority rights regimes and power-sharing formulas by outside forces: To be adopted, such steps toward a more inclusive power balance have to appeal to the most powerful actors, including ruling state elites or, under conditions of concomitant democratization as was the case in Guatemala, of powerful voting blocs. The promotion of minority rights, power-sharing arrangements, autonomous regions or provinces, and so on may appeal to the leaders of ethnonationalist movements. Without taking into account the perceived interests of majority and state governments, support for such proposals by the international community may quickly lead to a dead end or even exacerbate the very conflicts that these proposals are meant to overcome, as Michael Lund observes.

PERSISTENCE AND DURABILITY

While the basic structures of the political system are at the heart of violent ethnic conflicts, recent scholarship has also drawn attention to the self-sustaining logic of violence, once it has been set in motion. Additional factors and dynamics, not directly related to those accounting for the emergence of a conflict in the first place, come to influence the

offers a fine-grained analysis of the power disequilibria between those actors who choose violence over those who prefer peaceful strategies of pursuing political ends. These disequilibria stem from the well-known security dilemma (counting on the enemy's worst intentions pays), the logic of revenge and the culture of violence that emerge over time, as well as the tendency for violence to draw ever more actors and resources into a conflict.[11]

William Zartman points to the importance of war economies for both understanding and intervening in ethnic conflicts—a topic that has received much attention, not so much in this volume but in the broader literature on civil wars. The debate was set in motion with Collier and Hoeffler, who argued that it is "greed" for diamonds, gold, and other lootable resources rather than "grievances" about social injustice that motivates civil wars in the developing world (Collier and Hoeffler 2000). For other researchers, claims for ethnic justice, minority rights, and power sharing are less important in explaining ethnic wars than a territory for rebels to retreat, a government too weak to repress guerrilla forces effectively, and so on (Fearon and Laitin 2003). However, this does not explain why rebels bother at all to frame their demands in the language of ethnonational justice—instead of posing simply as bandits or warlords.[12] We are perhaps well advised *not* to take such aspects of military-technical feasibility as original driving forces for ethnic conflicts, but as factors explaining their reproduction and perpetuation. After all, this important strand of research has taught us that more realism and less idealism are in place when assessing the motives of minority rebels and guerillas.

"Markets of violence" (Elwert 1999) indeed create their own dynamics, not necessarily related to the fundamental political issues that led to the politicization of ethnicity. The seizure of lootable raw materials (such as the much-discussed "blood diamonds"), the recruitment of fighters, their provision with looted property or international aid packages—none of these warlord strategies is feasible any longer if a peaceful settlement of the conflict is reached. Thus, violence creates its own environment conducive to further violence and to a political economy of looting and war, with a new structure of incentives and interests difficult to address at the negotiation table.

This adds to the points already made at the end of the preceding section: It may be good advice, as Peter Waldmann points out, to have a special eye on the entrepreneurs of violence who can sabotage a negotiated agreement.[13] As Aldo Ajello, special representative of the European Union to the Great Lakes region, made clear during his keynote speech at the conference, it is necessary to give economic incentives not only to warlords and guerrilla leaders, but also to the rank and file of armed men who have no other skills than fighting and looting. Thus, a

durable solution for a war-torn society has to address those economic motives and incentives, especially where war has led to the implosion of state institutions and to political devolution into a series of fiefdoms and small tributary states.

On a yet more general level, it has become clear by now that the deep-rooted character and the tenacity of these conflicts imply that they are phenomena of a long-term nature.[14] Such conflicts do not erupt in a single decade and most of them will not be settled in a single decade. Their life cycle often spans generations, as Walker Connor argues in his contribution. Sometimes, he says, the conflict recedes into the background—as was the case with the Basque conflict or Northern Ireland. Networks of personal relations across community divides may be mistaken as signs of a sustainable peace, as Donald Horowitz notes. As long as the state continues to exclude sections of the population along ethnonational lines, however, the potential for rekindling the fire is always there, awaiting political entrepreneurs capable of formulating a discourse of injustice and of organizing a following.

With regard to policy making, both the persistence and the durability of ethnic conflicts demand much staying power from outside mediators. This is made clear by many authors of this volume, including a good number of persons with firsthand experience in conflict prevention, intervention, and institutional design (Andrew Ellis, Hugh Miall, Norbert Ropers, Donald Rothchild, and Angel Viñas). This again may seem obvious, especially to the veterans of ethnic conflict research, but for the conflict management community it represents a considerable step forward toward a more realistic assessment of the time horizon necessary for conflict transformation. In the field of mediation, to give an example, sociopsychological concepts of small-group conflicts were transferred to the large and heavily politicized field of ethnic conflict, a move initially accompanied by an overly optimistic and entrepreneurial assessment of the potential for overcoming deeply entrenched conflicts through dialogue workshops and seminars. Now it seems to be generally recognized, as many of the above-mentioned authors make clear, that even such necessarily localized projects involving a few dozen people may often need a time span of several years to achieve results. When it comes to the more structural and institutional issues of building up a democratic culture of moderation and compromise, a civil society with trans-ethnic networks, and so on, time is counted in decades, not in years.

BOUNDED MEDIATORS

Who, then, are the mediators? Politicians in Western democracies commonly do not, although they may be well aware of the time dimensions involved in

conflict resolution. Costly and politically risky endeavors, such as organizing a new round of negotiations in a protracted conflict, let alone sending one's own troops on peace-enforcing or peacekeeping missions, have to promise an immediate payback, otherwise the incentives for intervention are too weak. This brings me to the last element of a more realistic assessment of prevention, peaceful settlement, or institutional channeling of ethnic conflict: the growing awareness that outside generals, diplomats, consultants, and peace activists are bound by their own interests and ideas. The institutional constraints that shape their action and that influence peace building and maintenance both positively and negatively are addressed by several authors of this book, focusing on various types of organizations from IGOs to NGOs.[15]

Donald Horowitz argues that due to the characteristically short time horizon of democratic politics, crisis managers are principally interested in a quick settlement and solution of crises that have gained international media attention. The optimal long-term solution to a conflict is not their business. They represent the firefighters rather than the construction engineer: They want to put out fires before running cameras, rather than construct fireproof buildings.[16]

In his contribution to the conference, Joseph Montville showed which institutional constraints effectively limit government capacities for early action and prevention: First, since they already face too many burning conflicts, the energy and time for prevention are simply in too short supply. Second, prevention is politically risky because nobody can tell whether, without prevention, a conflict would indeed have erupted. Third, early action implies recognizing the failure of earlier assessments and policy choices—and thus runs against the laws of path-dependent action typical of large bureaucracies (Montville 2001).

It may be argued that some of these difficulties can be overcome through the creation of specialized institutions with different incentive structures. The chapter by Max van der Stoel shows that an office like the OSCE high commissioner for minorities, whose mandate is entirely focused on prevention and behind-the-scenes negotiations before a conflict gains international media attention, can indeed be effective. Compromise solutions, including minority rights, ombudsmen, or consultative bodies to discuss minority grievances, may be accepted by moderate forces on both sides at an early stage of the conflict when pragmatism still prevails and compromise is still possible. Ethnic discrimination may thus gradually be reduced and the core of the state opened for minorities hitherto excluded.

Different sorts of constraints are faced by NGOs. One could argue that they are in the same way as specialized departments in governments and international organizations, subject to Parson's law of institutional

growth and therefore have an intrinsic interest in discovering "ethnic conflicts" in need of mediation and reconciliation. They may thus play an important role in framing conflicts as ethnic—in the sense of Rogers Brubaker—and therefore may have contributed to what Conrad Schetter and Ulrike Joras describe as a shift in public perceptions of older conflicts, formerly perceived along Cold War lines and then reclassified as "ethnic." Norbert Ropers shows, in a somewhat different context, how difficult it is to measure the effectiveness of NGOs' performance, since the evaluation obviously depends on the goals set and is hampered by the fact that successful prevention remains invisible.[17] He also notices that solid evaluation started only recently and has not, so far, become a routine part of NGOs' operations—which would certainly help to overcome some of the difficulties mentioned.

Another and surely more controversial point refers to the models that outside mediators recommend as solutions to ethnic conflicts. In recent years, skepticism has grown about the liberal belief, strongly reinforced after the end of the Cold War, that all good things go together in life: that the fostering of good governance, democratization, and the introduction of minority rights will automatically lead a country to follow the paths of political moderation on which established Western democracies seem to travel. Some authors in this volume even maintain that what is usually considered a cure for ethnic conflicts may well be their cause: Democratization, the introduction of the idea of minority "rights," the notion of discrimination-free good governance, and a "just" distribution of the benefits of development may destabilize established ethnoracial hierarchies and start a cycle of political mobilization, repression, and violence.

There are several variants, stronger and weaker, of this thesis.[18] Following Donald Horowitz and Walter Kälin, democracy pure and simple is not enough to avoid an escalation of ethnic tensions or the violation of the human rights of members of minority groups. The competitive politics and election campaigning of majoritarian democracy may exacerbate conflicts and lead to a radicalization of positions, as was the case for example in Sri Lanka, if no precautions are built into the democratic institutions (Donald Horowitz) Walter Kälin argues that unitarian democracy without federal provisions may lead to the violation of human and minority rights.

Michael Lund takes a slightly broader view on the issue. According to him, democratic representation, special protection and rights for minorities, and a nondiscriminatory delivery of public services may destabilize taken-for-granted ethnic hierarchies, in which a particular ethnonational group legitimately "owns" the state while deference and

minorities."[19] The liberalizing dynamics of democracy and accountable government lead, at least in the short run, to a politicization of ethnic inequalities and may lead into a spiral of escalating demands for justice and provoke counterreactions aimed at safeguarding the privileged positions of ethnocratic elites.

This is more or less in line with the position that Donald Rothchild elaborates in his chapter on Africa. According to his review of the literature, stable and established democracies tend to handle ethnic conflicts peacefully, but *democratization* in the developing world often stirs up such conflicts. A strong civil society, independent of the state and of outside donor support, and an equally strong state administration capable of resisting the gravitation of ethnic nepotism and clientelism are among the conditions that may help to avoid the destabilizing effects of democratization. These conditions, it should be recalled, were absent in much of Western Europe throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Snyder 2000). The spiral of nationalist mobilizations in an environment of rapid democratization played an important role in the events that led to World War I and to the major genocides of the twentieth century (Mann 1999). While more research is needed to fully understand the relationship between democratization and ethnic violence, this volume documents the skepticism that has arisen over the last decade against assessing democracy's potential to solve the ethnic issue in an overly optimistic way.

Several policy implications flow from this. First, fostering democratization as a foreign policy and long-term security goal in itself—a position emphatically stated by EU official Angel Viñas—may conflict with the goal of preventing ethnic conflict and violence in the short run. There is no easy solution to this dilemma. Both Michael Lund and Donald Rothchild recommend allowing democratization and political modernization to proceed at a speed geared to the effective capacities of the political system and the society at large to absorb the conflicts that a dynamized political arena produces.[20] For outside forces this implies, as both point out, more tolerance if not active support for nonmajoritarian forms of political participation and, as Donald Rothchild repeatedly emphasizes, for what he calls a minimal democracy with competitive elections but no full political rights.

Second and perhaps less controversial, democratization, the introduction of minority rights, or power-sharing arrangements have to be supported by powerful local actors if they are going to be sustainable and effectively reduce the potential for violence and conflict. As Angel Viñas—who, at the time of writing his chapter, was responsible for the European Union's 100-billion euro democratization-support program—makes clear, this was a lesson that still had to be learned in the early

1990s. Consequently, the European Union's program now focuses on bringing about the political environment for sustainable democratization through the support of civil society organizations. Such an approach, I should like to add, also changes the relationship between outside democracy support and local forces—rather than one between enforcement agency and object of action, it will be one of partners for a common goal: to help democracy work out its potential for domesticating political competition and to reduce its propensity to exacerbate tension between ethnic communities.

SUMMARY

Five elements of a new realism emerge from the pages of this book. Each includes research-based analysis and experience-based policy lessons. Acknowledging the complexity of ethnic conflicts, we are well advised to expect modest effects—and not always in the direction intended—even of forceful interventions and to advocate for more flexibility and a culture of learning within intervening organizations. Knowing about the individuality of each conflict reinforces the case-by-case approach, especially in the domain of institutional design. Ethnic conflicts are about access to and control over the nation-state and therefore involve a large section of the population and touch upon their fundamental political interests. This deep-seated nature of ethnic conflicts demands a multistranded approach for intervention and conflict transformation, one taking into account the specific constellations of power and the interests of all the major actors. The deep-seated nature of ethnic conflicts explains why they seem to be so perdurable,[21] why they often span entire generations, not years. In addition, ethnic conflicts are especially tenacious when an economy of war and a market of violence have flourished in their shadow. The policy recommendations that follow from this are to take these economic factors seriously when trying to broker a settlement and to develop a long-term framework even for shorter-term programs. The institutional and ideological constraints on intervening organizations have become clearer in the last decade, and it seems that creating the right institutional incentives and broadening the range of political options may help to overcome some of these limitations. Box 22.1 provides a more detailed summary of these five elements.

Looking back, the end of the Cold War brought not only a reshifting of the political lines of conflict, but also a heightened capacity and propensity for intervention in such conflict. In parallel, the technocratic utopia of nineteenth-century positivism and of the developmentalist

Box 22.1. Five Elements of a New Realism Facing Ethnic Conflicts

Elements of Analysis	*Policy Elements*
Complexity • Institutional interlocking • Internal heterogeneity of groups • Interrelatedness of actors • Transnational connections	Modesty about the possibilities of prevention and intervention because • complexity limits effects of prevention and intervention; • overview and knowledge of long-term consequences are lacking; and • multiple conditions for success are rarely given. Organizational response could include • enhancing flexibility and adaptability of intervening organizations; and • heightening learning capacities of intervening organizations.
Individuality	Case-by-case approach, for example with regard to • electoral systems, • autonomy and federalist arrangements, and • mixture between retributive and restorative justice.
Depth • Ethnic conflicts are about participation and exclusion from state power. • Interpenetration of political interests and cultural identities is characteristic. • Standard negotiation strategies don't work.	A multistranded approach is necessary (multitrack diplomacy; encompassing conflict-transformation approach, and the like) for prevention, intervention, and institutional channeling of ethnic conflicts. Proposals from the outside have to take into account • the constellation of power at a given historical moment; and • interests and perceptions of major actors, including voting majorities and government elites.
Durability • Ethnic conflicts are long-term phenomena.	Long-time horizon is necessary for successful intervention.
Persistence • Violence has a self-sustaining character. • War economies transform incentive structures.	Economic interests of conflict parties (including entrepreneurs of violence and rank-and-file fighters) have to be taken into account in negotiating durable peace.

Mediators are bound by institutional interests and constraints.	Modifying organizational structures and proceedings through: • creation of adequate institutions with different incentive structures; and • systematic evaluations.
Mediators are bound by their own political models and ideals, usually not taking into account that • democratization, introducing minority rights, and so on may exacerbate rather than reduce ethnic violence. • local actors may consistently aim for other models of state and democracy (e.g., a unitarian and homogenous nation state).	Broaden the approach by considering: • democratization with carefully designed incentives for moderation of ethnic claims; • allowing democratization to proceed according to local capacities of conflict absorption and management; and • new options (secession, minimal democracy, nonmajoritarian forms of democracy, ethnonational federalism).

community of the postwar era was revived. Democracy, rule of law, federalism, and minority rights seemed to be the formulas that would bring peace and stability to conflict-torn societies. Mediation, reconciliation, and dialogue would overcome community divides and enable people to discover the human other in their former enemies.

The debate has entered the stage of adulthood now, with a more realistic assessment of the possibilities of prevention, intervention, and institutional design—paralleled by a more realistic view of the potential to influence the policy agenda of the powerful through sound research. This second dimension of realism, not discussed in this volume, was greatly enhanced by the recent rise of the doctrine of preventive war in the U.S. administration and consecutively among many regional powers across the world, with at best uncertain consequences for the prospects of peaceful settlement of ethnic conflicts. A "disinterested" approach to civil wars in the developing world, one not driven primarily by perceived national security interests but by a broader concern with stability and peace, is no longer a shared vision of the majority of Western governments. The hope for a new world order, in which governments, NGOs, and researchers would jointly work toward "managing" and "solving" ethnic conflicts around the word by spreading multicultural justice and democratic participation, has evaporated. However, the lessons learnt during the past decade remain valid for the future, ...

under the modified geopolitical circumstances that the events of September 11 have brought about. Realism remains the best ally of sustainable optimism, for it saves us from false judgments and subsequent disappointments. I hope, perhaps rather unrealistically, that this volume will provide a renewed impetus to search for more adequate ways of understanding and dealing with what remains one of the most salient problems of the contemporary world.

NOTES

1. Jabri (1996) provides a general critique of traditional conflict resolution approaches. She takes them to task for merely reproducing institutionalized dividing lines and discourses of difference, instead of analyzing their origin and providing alternatives.

2. For earlier treatments of the international aspects of ethnic conflict, see Shiels (1984), Boucher et al. (1987), Heraclides (1991), Moynihan (1993), and Ryan (1990). Carment (1994) gives an overview.

3. Discussion of the possible cross-border "contagious effects" of ethnic conflicts are provided by Lake and Rothchild (1998), Saideman (2001), and Lobell and Mauceri (2004); Gurr (1993b:181) and Gleditsch (2003) find statistical evidence; and Horowitz (1985:267-270, 278f.) gives examples of secessionist chain reactions.

4. Crocker et al. (2001) notice a "return of geopolitics" in American discussions on peacemaking, contrasting with the one-country approach at the beginning of the 1990s.

5. Some empirical evidence for the limited effects of intervention is provided, with regard to UN interventions, by Carment (1998).

6. For an excellent comparative evaluation, on the basis of a large number of case studies, of the conditions for sustainable federalization, see McGarry and O'Leary (2003).

7. Some of this optimism can still be seen in Scherrer (2002) or a recent article of Gurr (2000), for whom the decline in the number of ethnic conflicts in the second half of the 1990s results from, among other things, the successful implementation of autonomy regulations.

8. See also the recent discussion in Byman (2002:chapter 7).

9. In concordance with this approach, a quantitative analysis found that French and British colonialism implied different legacies of ethnic stratification and therefore have left different propensities and frequencies of ethnic conflict, see Blanton et al. (2001).

10. See the empirical research in Horowitz (1985:194), Hyden and Williams (1994), and Grodeland et al. (2000).

11. For an earlier statement along these lines, see Kuper (1977).

12. See the critique of Collier and Hoeffler and other microeconomic approaches by Cramer (2002). His call for a "liberation struggle" against "economic imperialism" risks diverting attention from his otherwise well-taken points of criticism.

13. On the importance of neutralizing "spoilers" to a peace agreement, see the empirical evidence derived from case study comparisons by Stedman (2001).

14. In Gurr's analysis of 227 politically mobilized ethnic groups, the strongest statistical correlation shows that groups already mobilized and involved in conflict in the 1970s found themselves still in a similar situation in the 1980s (Gurr 1993b:182, 186).

15. Recently, a literature has developed around the role of development cooperation in preventing or promoting ethnic conflict. See Muscat (2002), Esman and Herring (2001), and Esman and Telhami (1995).

16. According to quantitative research, it is not the neutrality of mediators in a specific conflict but their power on a global scale that explains how often they have been intervening in ongoing conflicts (Bercovitch and Schneider 2000). International conflict management may thus be seen as part of global and regional hegemonic structures rather than as an exercise in disinterested peacemaking. Richard K. Betts has a different take on this issue and sees partiality as a *condition* for successful intervention. According to him, it is a delusion to believe that a successful intervention can be neutral and at the same time limited in its extent. When intervention is limited militarily and politically, only "taking sides" with one of the parties in conflict will end the stalemate (Betts 2001). Similarly, Stephen Stedman concludes, on the basis of studying sixteen peacemaking efforts, that success depends whether the great powers or regional hegemons support a UN intervention (Stedman 2001).

17. See the special issue of the *Journal of Peace Research*, introduced by Pearson (2001). The difficulties for measuring NGO effectiveness are also noted by Aall (2001).

18. For statistical evidence, see Gurr (1994) and Yalcin Mousseau (2001).

19. The fact that ethnic inequality does not automatically lead to political mobilization and rebellion explains why researchers find no strong correlation between inequality and ethnic conflict in cross-national research (Gurr 1993a; Majstorovic 1995; Fearon and Laitin 2003). Active political discrimination against an ethnic group is even detrimental to a rebellion, as Gurr (1993a:28) finds, probably because the costs of repression are higher in such a situation. This repeats, evidently, a point that has been made with regard to income and wealth inequalities since Alexis de Tocqueville. Cramer (2003) gives a full account, from a political economy perspective, of the complex interrelations between inequality and conflict.

20. A strong argument in favor of enhancing conflict regulation capacities *before* democratization is presented by Paris (2001). For a review of the debate in the United States, see Baker (2001).

21. For statistical evidence, see Gurr (1994) and Fearon and Laitin (2003).

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