Conceptualizing "Ethnicity" and "Ethnic Conflict": A Controversy Revisited

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The literature on "ethnicity" and "ethnic conflict" still fails to yield either definitional precision or usable empirical referents for the study of either phenomenon. This article offers a critique of the key literature on these subjects and a propositional inventory summarizing points of scholarly agreement, a discussion of the empirical problems that face scholars in this field, and, finally, a general model for the analysis of particular ethnic conflicts, including consideration of the correlative tangents of resolution intervention.

The Salience of Definitions

Long before the early 1990s, when ethnicity and ethnic conflict resurfaced to become "hot" topics of political comment and analysis, the origins, component elements, and consequences of group identity were debated by scholars trying to explain phenomena clearly related to communal behavior, phenomena that today would be labeled "ethnic," be these varieties of peaceful or violent interaction, shared socio-cultural orientations, or group structures, rules, and norms. Sociologists and political scientists studying the American scene acted as if they both knew and understood what "ethnicity" was all about;[1] those looking at it in other or

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broader settings were not so sure. In the introduction to his anthology on *Ethnicity in Modern Africa*, Brian du Toit examined the range of meanings assigned to the term "ethnic" and its application as "ethnic group," and found five general definitional sets:

> In the first sense, the term was equated with race. This is present in its early use by Huxley and Haddon [1939] as well as in point six of the statement by United Nations experts on race [E. Beaglehole et al. 1950]. The term is also used to refer to specific major races, as was done in point seven of the United Nations statement. The third reference is to a sociocultural group such as the French, either in France or in another country. But some writers have narrowed this down and set as prerequisite that ethnic really refers to a subgroup living among others in a foreign country. The fifth meaning uses ethnic group when a group of people contrast themselves or are contrasted by others, on the basis primarily of sharing certain cultural criteria such as language, beliefs and values, religion, or history. Such an ethnic group may have geographical contiguity and may include "racial characteristics," though neither of these is required. (du Toit 1978, 4)

Certainly there is little definitional or conceptual clarity here, the less so in light of the great lexicological distance the term *ethnic* had already traveled from its derivation in the Greek εθνοΣ, meaning "heathen," which was translated early on as *nation* and originally applied in particular to the "non-Israelitish nations or Gentiles," that is, heathens and pagans *(The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1936 edition).[2] Recently, Walker Connor (1994, esp. 90–117) appears to have partially—and probably unintentionally—reconnected ethnicity to its etymological roots by arguing that at base ethnic conflict is a form of *ethnonationalism.* (Connor used *nationalism* in its modern political sense of self-defined communities seeking their own political space, and that more often than not expressed in terms of juridical statehood.)[3] Also, among similar periodicals, *Nationalities Papers,* devoted mainly to the study of minority groups in East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union and now in its twenty-third year of publication, resolutely continues to use the term "nationalities"—long the conventional usage in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union—as a surrogate for ethnic groups. (Common European usage apparently still dictates "national minority" as the default term used to identify "a group of persons in a State who: are citizens . . . [and who] display distinctive ethnic, etc. characteristics . . . and are motivated by a concern to preserve their common identity," or, in effect, ethnic group. The term is at the ambiguous core of the Council of Europe's search for viable additional protocols to the European Convention of Human Rights [Thornberry and Estebanez 1994: 29].)

At all events, at least up to the 1970s, ethnicity remained something both vaguely defined and conceptually indistinct. The single-element definitions, operating as independent variables in these analyses, are most suspect. Consider du Toit's list: *Race,* now largely abandoned in scientific discourse, is applied only, if at all, to such phenotypically distinctive populations like the Hairy Ainu of Japan and the San (the so-called Bushmen) of the Kalahari and no longer serves any useful purpose as a larger referent of group identity—though the term remains relevant for political analysis both because of its historical role in structuring power relations

and its widespread use in affective discourse.[4] (Color is perhaps another matter, though on closer inspection, as Horowitz [1985, 42–45] indicates, it turns out to be no more analytically reliable than race.) *Culture*—or "socioculture"—also fails as an independent variable simply because the inclusive elements of a unique culture—here logically necessary for the definition of any *particular* ethnicity—are rarely, if ever, found as stable clusters over time. Diamond and Plattner (1994, xvii–xviii) summarize the complexities of the problem: "Although ascriptive in nature, ethnicity is not entirely immutable (although it may appear so in conflictual situations): group boundaries may shift as groups divide, merge, erode, aggregate, or redefine themselves over time . . . ." For example, when social nexuses change, the norms of "ethnic" identity can change as well: so it is that minority groups not infrequently take on the cultural traits of their more powerful or higher status neighbors, or intermarry with them, and thus literally assume new ethnic identities (e.g., the Zarma of Niger, described by Ibrahim [1994, 20], or more generally, the phenomena of assimilation and fusion described by Horowitz [1985, 55–92]).[5] Or dominant cultural traits can become so generalized that only a single attributive element—like religion—comes to distinguish one group from another; thus, the "Arab Jews" of north Africa (Memmi 1975). Nor will *minority status,* or position as a subculture do, and that because such definitions tend to deny "ethnicity" to the majority or to majority groups. Moreover, by focusing on what is/are demographic ratios, "minority status" can blur all other meaningful differentia between "majority" and "minority" groups. The fifth set of meanings cited by du Toit—contrast by shared cultural criteria—is closer to recent, clearer attempts at definition because it identifies several key elements in any ethnic mix, but still remains too imprecise to be empirically useful.

Further attempts at clarification by derivation failed to shed more light, nor did the introduction of terminological surrogates—such as *nationality, tribe, ethnie, primal group, nuclear community, "autochthony,"* or *"indigeneity"*—do much except muddy the conceptual waters even further. For example, the derivative *ethnocentrism,* introduced by William Graham Sumner in 1906—from which came *Eurocentrism* and two of its currently fashionable polemical appositions, *Afrocentrism* and *Afrocentricity* (Asante 1989)—says little more than that members of an ethnic group sometimes use their group identity, usually in defensive ways, as the primary social referent in most or all their relations with others. In one of these recent extensions, *Afrocentrism,* developed in the writings of Sheikh Anta Diop, Ron Karenga, and Molefi Asante, the idea was transformed into an ideology of ethno-racial pride, self-assertion, and socio-political separatism. All the proponents of the various *centrisms,* however, not only fail to provide credible accounts of just what it is (other than an attenuated sense of collective solidarity) that defines such self-referential groups, but resort to qualitative and normative language when they try to explain their terms. (This is also the problem, incidentally, with most attempts to define the basis of Arab identity. *Inter alia,* see Raphael Patai 1976; Halim Barakat 1993, 12–48; Gerald Butt 1987, 9–21. It also recalls the once-popular, but now discredited, pseudo-scientific game of trying to identify what used to be called

"national character," traits by which it was thought possible to distinguish between Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, Spaniards, Italians, Russians, and so on.)

Among the conceptual surrogates of ethnicity, *tribe* and *tribalism* gained considerable currency among scholars of Africa during the 1950s and early 1960s. This is not the place to rehearse the debate between the champions of "ethnic group" and those favoring "tribe" as the preferred locution for group identity ("ethnic group" won out as the academically politically correct term). Suffice it to say that the dispute was without intellectual issue, having become largely polemical, and foundering, as it did, on the rocks of purely anthropological definitions of tribe, those developed from the discourses of sociology and political science, and the verbal gymnastics of scholars trying to distance their analyses from current political fashions.

"Nationality" as a surrogate—and its derivative *ethnonationalism*—presents its own special analytic problems. Granted that "ethnonationalism" is one of the ways by which ethnicity becomes politically salient, it remains that nationalism is only one of many kinds of political assertion, and that not all "ethnic" groups seek a "national" or "nationalist" solution to their existential problems. They may mobilize on the basis of nationalist appeals, but if they are located within larger political units, such groups may be content with measures of autonomy less than separation, or with guaranteed access to state resources and/or such institutionalized measures of deference/respect/tolerance as bilingual education, linguistic recognition, special legal treatment, privileged representation in rule- or policy-making bodies, electoral access, etc. Some may even seek, and then seize, opportunities for assimilation with the dominant ethno-cultural group. And it is difficult to forget that the preferred locution for "ethnic group" of the former Soviet state was in fact "nationality" (*natsionalnost*), one of the verbal conventions of a policy that affirmed that the so-called "national question" (*natsionalnii vopros*) could be "solved" (as Stalin proposed, for example, in 1913 and 1929) by measures of socio-political engineering, some of which later turned out to border on genocide, including mass deportations and other kinds of brutal repression (for an extended discussion, see Conquest 1960 and *Problems of Communism* 1967).

More recent forays onto the definitional field are much more promising, but still offer few insights to the problem of empirical verification. Young's (1994) broadened perspective is one such welcome, and clarifying contribution (also Young 1993, 21–25):

> Recent debate about ethnicity suggests that it involves three interactive dimensions: primordial, instrumental and socially constructed. Ethnic identity often involves deep emotional attachments to the group, supplies an internal gyroscope and cognitive map through which the social world is perceived, and historicizes selfhood in a web of primordial cultural meanings. In everyday political and social interaction, ethnicity often appears in an instrumental guise, as a group weapon in the pursuit of material advantage; thus its activation is contingent, situational and circumstantial. Ultimately, all identities are socially constructed, a collective product of the human imagination . . . Social identities are invoked, used, and rewoven in the myriad encounters of everyday life at both the individual and group level.

> Combining these three perspectives, we may conclude that ethnicity rests upon a singularly potent set of symbolic resources and affective ties, but operates in a fluid and changing way in the political arena. The units of identity are not themselves timeless, but evolve in social praxis. (Young 1994)

Young's contribution, aside from his recognition of the complexities attending the operation of ethnic identity, lies in his identification of the three main, and interactive, nexuses of relevant ethnic expression: in the sphere of collective "primordial cultural meanings" (per Connor 1994; Geertz 1963; Joseph Rothschild 1981; Smith 1986; 1993; et al.), in its uses in the politics of resource allocation, and in the socio-political construction—the making—of collective meaning and identities. David Horowitz adds yet another useful set of theoretic clarifications: unraveling the confusion over the relationship between class and ethnicity, he argues

> . . . a simple distinction between ranked and unranked ethnic groups . . . [resting] upon the coincidence or noncoincidence of social class with ethnic origins. Where the two groups coincide, it is possible to speak of ranked ethnic groups; where the groups are cross-class, it is possible to speak of unranked ethnic groups . . . If ethnic groups are ordered in a hierarchy, with one superordinate and another subordinate, ethnic conflict moves in one direction, but if groups are parallel, neither subordinate to the other, conflict takes a different course. (Horowitz 1985, 21–22)

The point, of course, is that ethnic conflict between (or among) ranked groups will involve issues such as status differentials, inequities in resource allocation, caste relations, and distinctions based on race; whereas in unranked systems conflict may involve such matters as territorial disputes, boundary maintenance, competition for resources, and attempts to convert an unranked system into a ranked one (Horowitz 1985, 22–54).[6] Again, however, Horowitz offers few clues on how these distinctions can be measured.

Finally, mention must be made of Fred Riggs's ambitious (1985) attempt to create a glossary of concepts and terms used in ethnicity research. The glossary works much like a conventional thesaurus: it lists concepts, and then provides cognates, extensions, clarifications, and illustrations, all cross-referenced to an extensive bibliography. The problem with the glossary is that, while it offers a useful overview of the field, there is little that gives the key terms cited definitional substance, much less clues about their empirical validation.

In all, the persistent definitional fog surrounding ethnicity and, by extension, ethnic conflict, suggests the continuing timeliness of Harold R. Isaacs's apt metaphor of the snowman, coined some twenty years ago during a similar quest for conceptual precision:

> In recent seasons especially, there have been dozens of academic safaris in the field, especially American safaris, trying to track the snowman of "ethnicity," everyone sure now that it exists and is important, more important than people thought, but no one sure what it looks like, much less whether it is abominable or not. (Isaacs 1975: 27)

Isaacs cited Isijiw's review (1974) of some sixty-five sociological and anthropologi-

cal studies dealing with one or another aspect of ethnicity, as well as twenty-seven definitions of ethnicity, and reported that Isijiw concluded that all lacked precision and, hence, had been found wanting (Isaacs 1975, 221). One way of dealing with the problem is simply to give up the search and assume that all the common terms for the phenomenon refer to the same thing, and are thus interchangeable (Ra'anan 1980:28). It is also possible that the best that can be done with "ethnicity" and "ethnic conflict" is to concede that they are snowmen, and thus do not lend themselves to precise definitional focus. This is Horowitz's (1985) approach, and, even given this constraint, he convincingly develops an excellent comparative study of these phenomena. However, we continue to think (as did Isaacs) that we are not dealing with snowmen, and that some further definitional refinement is possible. We see the basic problem as that of providing useful operational parameters for the concept, and where it is possible to do so, identifying empirical referents that permit more precise comparative analysis. Our question, then, is this: From the vast array of so-called "ethnic" configurations, what are the salient aspects of "ethnicity" that could allow us to make reasonably valid empirical comparisons about the phenomenon, and, thereby, about "ethnic conflict"?

Ethnicity: A Propositional Inventory

Arguably, the first step in any definitional exercise is to specify any agreement that exists about the nature of the subject. In light of the literature already surveyed, it is fair to say that, insofar as there is scholarly consensus about ethnicity, it can be summarized by the following propositional inventory, linked here to such particular and general suggestions, advice, and questions about empirical validation as seem germane to the discussion:

1. It is generally agreed that *ethnicity is largely a cognitive phenomenon* shaped reciprocally in the perceptions of both the members of the group and those of nonmembers—others including members of neighboring and proximate groups and communities, and members of more distant communities and groups. The cognitive dimensions of ethnicity include not only ideas, perceptions, and attitudes about the self, the group, and others, but also about the ascriptive boundaries that serve to distinguish one group from another (on the question of boundaries, see Barth 1969; Armstrong 1982). The empirical problem is not only to find and then describe the ascribed and perceptual sign-posts that demarcate those boundaries, but also to find evidence of the effect the boundaries themselves have on the members of ethnic groups. Physical boundaries (including real walls and gates and the ethnic markers described in #2) are easy enough to perceive; cognitively-defined ones are usually accessible only through the testimony of those for whom they have meaning, and, in either case, their impact as boundaries may be measurable—and with highly variable precision at that—only in the circumstantial evidence of behavior observed or reported, (as Young [1993] put it) "in social praxis." The larger theoretic point is that ethnic groups, like "nations," are what Benedict Anderson (1983) called "imagined communities," whose reality is generated by the shared ideas people form

about themselves, their kinfolk, neighbors, and other proximate groups, and manifest in the enduring relationships they develop.

2. We know that *the ostensible markers of ethnic identity are many and varied,* including such things as language, names, color, physical appearance, dress, body decoration, gestures, nonverbal signaling, particular social behaviors (including religious orientations and observances and even cuisine), and that members of ethnic groups may use or emphasize one or more such markers, or clusters of markers, in their internal and external relations. Of such markers, language is universally acknowledged to be the most important. (For extended discussions of names, the body, and language as markers of ethnicity, see Isaacs 1975, 46 114; Morris et al. 1979, offer a revealing analysis of gestures.) Within groups, marking explanations are normally not needed for ordinary intercourse; in external relations, however, which marker or markers is/are used or emphasized—both by group members and outsiders—will depend on the extent to which ethnic identity is salient to a given situation. (There are other, though less reliable, ostensible markers such as residential or even occupational clustering, but these tend to come into play more as contextual than directly interactive variables.)[7]

3. *Ethnicity is a group phenomenon.* Individuals identify themselves (or are so identified) as members of a reference group which, collectively, imagines/characterizes itself (or is characterized) as distinct in some particular way or ways from other groups. (This also describes "community," whose principal structural characteristic is the maintenance of a volume of social transactions sufficient to maintain and reinforce the elements of individual and collective identity; it is, thus, that the most visible ethnic groups are usually also communal groups.) On both the individual and collective levels, that differentiation is both conscious and consequential. A paradigmatic example of communal ethnic group self-differentiation may well be the Gypsies, whom Susan Gmelch (1986) calls a people "who don't want in." (On identity and ethnicity, see also Hall 1989.)

4. *Ethnicity can be evoked or arise endogenously* as shared behaviors and/or modes of consciousness within the group, or more commonly, in the interplay between exogenous (stemming from the perceptions and actions of others) and endogenous (self-generated) referents. The endogenous elements of ethnicity can include the cosmologies and myths[8] of origin and history that groups generate; the exogenous ones tend to be those developed as a result of interaction with others, including much of the range of social behaviors. The whole question of what some social scientists call "ethnogenesis"—the origins of ethnicity—lies largely beyond the scope of this analysis; suffice it for our purposes to note two points relevant to our discussion: first, that ethnic consciousness often arises (and is transformed) in the context of power relationships, like that of the "colonial ethnographic project" mentioned below, as well as in other situations of rapid social change (see, inter alia, Solway 1994); and second (as Gurr 1993, 89 reminds us), that "ethnogenesis" can take place during protracted conflict. Gurr cites the case of Eritrean identity, forged by thirty years of rebellion against the Ethiopian state. Another example may well be that of the Palestinians, whose collective identity emerged during the nearly

forty years of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A third, perhaps even more striking example is that of the Zulus. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, before the advent of their eighth chief Shaka, the Zulus of southern Africa were a relatively insignificant clan among the northern Nguni-speaking peoples dispersed along the Indian Ocean coast. Today the Zulu are an "ethnic group" several million strong, comprising numerous clans, clearly distinct from their linguistic cousins, the Xhosa, Tswana, and Sotho. The critical intervening variables were clearly Shaka's and his immediate successors' wars of conquest and domination (1815–1838), during which not only a Zulu nation and a Zulu ethnicity were created, but also those of derivative groups like the Ndebele (for details, see Omer-Cooper 1966).

5. *Ethnicity varies as to scope, intensity, and salience.* Scope is the extent of self-conscious membership in the group. Intensity is degree to which ethnic identity is invested with consequential emotional content. Salience is the heuristic significance of ethnic identity in situations of interaction with others/other groups.

6. *Ethnicity also varies in both textual and operational complexity.* At one end of the spectrum of complexity, there may be groups whose members use only one or two main ethnic referents or identifiers (such as religion or color) or for whom only one or two suffice for the definition, and at the other end, groups whose members employ a cluster of identifiers or referents (such as language, religion, myths of origin, history, color, customs, and so on). Then, where color or other indelible identifiers, like facial scarification, are largely absent, the identifiers or referents may range in articulation from the overt and explicit (e.g., names, religious badges, "native" costumes, hair styles, and other expressive public behaviors), to the subtle and unobtrusive (e.g., language and body signals). The expression of identifiers along this latter range will vary with the intensity and/or salience of ethnicity. For example, aggressive ethnonationalism will often be accompanied by conspicuous (and sometimes defiant) displays of the symbols or rituals of collective identity. The Annual Orange Day parades in Northern Ireland have long been the occasion for precisely this kind of display, as have Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations among francophone Quebeçois, and in some Muslim countries where Shi'ites are subordinate or in the minority, the Shi'a passion-play processions of Ashura.[9] (This is not to slight other, related dimensions of importance, such as the spatial distribution of members of ethnic groups within multiethnic states and their social location—according to status, economic, or occupational differentials, per Horowitz's distinctions—both of which have consequences for the scope, intensity, and salience of ethnicity. Spatial distribution and social location, however, are not defining characteristics of ethnicity, but again, contextual variables that affect it.)

7. *Ethnicity's operative content locates it at the larger end of relevant self- and group-referents,* that is, beyond the more limited scope of such social formations as family, clan, age or gender cohorts and associations, and face-to-face groups such as neighborhoods, though members of ethnic groups will often share identity elements with their neighbors or other proximate social aggregates including relationships of real or fictive consanguinity, as well as metaphors of membership encompassed in shared names, language conventions, common appearance and behavior, and group-specific values and norms.

8. *At one of its core configurations, ethnicity involves kinship, real, fictive, or (more likely) imagined, and primordiality (the claim to ahistorical traditions, to a genealogical existence ab initio, outside of history), again, real, fictive, or imagined.*[10] The discourses of ethnicity trade in the language, symbols, and rituals of kinship, whether such kinship is real or fictive, and even the members of the most "recent" ethnic groups (those formed consequent to a status shift, or as a result of their own or others' integrative efforts, or those 'created' as part of the 'colonial ethnographic project')[11] will construct stories about their groups' primordial roots. It may well be that the real age of an ethnic group—how long it has been around as a self-conscious social entity—may be largely irrelevant to (or empirically independent of) considerations of kinship or primordiality. Longevity is also likely to be related to questions about the scope, intensity, salience, and complexity of ethnicity, as well as to institutions of power in (for example) colonial contexts—what Anderson (1991, 163–85) calls "census, map, and museum"—whose activities fixed, and sometimes generated, ethnic identities and boundaries as well as nationalisms (see also Wallerstein 1960, 129–139). It remains an empirical question whether claims to primordial ethnic roots are real or fictive, and if so, the assertion by some "primordialists" that ethnic conflict, being *sui generis,* inevitably follows from ethnicity (as by Smith 1993, 40) cannot be sustained.

9. Finally, a summary proposition. that *ethnic identities represent variables* in that the contents, expressions, and boundaries of ethnicity can change, and are not immutably fixed as ideas or configurations of primordial norms or referents. This is why Hutu and Tutsi identities have been hard to pin down in Rwanda and Burundi, why ethnic identities appear to be up for grabs in various parts of the former Soviet Union, and why a process of ethnic redifferentiation-based on linguistic criteria appears to be taking place in the former Yugoslavia.[12] It is the very elasticity of ethnic identity, which itself varies with the strength, durability, and longevity of the perceptions and behaviors involved, as it does with significant contextual social change, that has often made ethnicity so difficult to define, and contributed to the continued and heated academic debate among those Young (1993, 21–25) identified as holding the "primordialist," "instrumentalist," and "constructivist" perspectives on the problem. His solution, with which I agree, was to meld all three, extracting from each what seemed relevant to his analyses.

The empirical problem, of course, is whether these propositions, taken separately or together, offer sufficiently reliable criteria for (a) identifying both "ethnicity" and "ethnic group" in most contexts, and (b) using these concepts as analytic variables. To say the least, such effort is not without its potential pitfalls.

The parameters of ethnic identity are easily visible when group members display the ostensible referents that mark them as such. In such cases there is little difficulty in taking their assertion at face value, though where there is ongoing conflict and ethnic identity should be its clearest, consequent perceptual distortions (such as "mirror-image" phenomena) can affect empirical observation. It is also the fact that crisis situations, or situations of violent conflict, sometimes prompt changes in individual and group ethnic identity, as in the former Yugoslavia and parts of the

old Soviet Union. Here, one approaches ethnic identity with more than the usual scientific caution. (See note 11 for references.) Moreover, empirical problems can also arise where ethnic identity is masked or concealed, or where group members are themselves ambiguous about their identity, or where ethnicity makes little or no difference in the ordinary run of social interactions. One would expect the latter situation to prevail in monoethnic societies, but the fact that almost everyone belongs to the same ethnic group is no guarantee of social peace, as the case of Somalia—where *intra*-ethnic (here, clan) warfare ravaged the country—vividly illustrates (Lewis 1994). The ethnic components of conflict may be even more difficult to disengage where, as in Rwanda and Burundi elements of *both* inter- and intra-ethnic identity are involved.

Generally accepted norms of tolerance can make ethnic conflict less likely, as will situations of ethnic pluralism where no group or groups have achieved dominance over the others. Also, Rabushka (1974) has argued that race and ethnicity become largely irrelevant in the operation of a free market. Where or when ethnicity is either dormant, or submerged, or in transition, the absence or relative absence of ostensible "ethnic" behavior can easily lead to false or flawed analysis.

Another set of analytical problems arise when class becomes the basis of analysis. How do we know that what we label as ethnic conflict is not class conflict, or vice-versa? 1) If the analysis assumes that class is the basis of *all* social conflict, then *a priori* ethnicity cannot play any determining role, and can only operate as a contributory element, if at all. 2) However, if the analysis of a particular conflict identifies class as the basis of that conflict, the door remains open for empirical verification of that assertion. Part of the problem, of course, is that 3) class, as an analytical variable, can be defined according to synthetic criteria (occupation, "eliteness," income, life-style, etc.) and self-ascription (self-identification), or employed as an operative theoretic premise (in Marxian analysis, ownership of the means of production). If so, then only the second definitional mode gives ethnicity much purchase as a variable; the other two seem to minimize, if not preclude, it in the first place. The problem becomes less difficult if the question is asked first of ethnic conflict: here, class can be given its empirical due if it can be reasonably demonstrated that it does play a role in a given conflict. It is one thing, however, to use class as the key variable in an argument, but another (and more helpful) to use it as a descriptor, as does Gurr (1993, 18) when he specifies what he calls "ethnoclasses" as a category of politically active communal groups: "Ethnically or culturally distinct [minority] peoples, usually descended from slaves or immigrants, with special economic roles, usually of low status."[13]

Then there is the empirical problem posed by variations in the intensity of ethnic identity. Any investigation of ethnicity reveals a unique condition of identity: identities are usually multiple and layered; ethnicity is not the only attribute of social identity and in fact may not always be predominant or significant. The strength (intensity) of ethnic identities may also vary over time and between societies. Therefore, a difficult but necessary task will be to recognize this condition in any valid definition of ethnicity. One way to catch some of the variance we are likely to

encounter in primary identity attributes may be to conceptualize ethnic identity as existing on a continuum with (at one end) those individuals for whom ethnicity is the primary identifier, and at the other, those who emphasize other bases of identity (such as organizational affiliation, ideology, occupation/profession, nationality, etc.).

Finally, a word about the semantic, and empirical, difficulties in distinguishing between *ethnic group* and the referents of such closely related terms as *people, nation,* and *state. People* is the easiest to dispose of because it is the most semantically general of the four terms: the referent can be all or part of humanity (*people*); and with grammatical articles, any social aggregation, however defined (*a people*), or generically, any *specific* human aggregate (*the people*), or, in the plural, the collectivity of any or all human aggregates (*the peoples*). *State* has no consequential semantic or necessary empirical relationship to *ethnic group*, since "Any definition of the concept *state* must refer to the institutional [and juridical[14]] sphere and, in principle, need not allude at all to the feelings and beliefs of its members" (Tamir 1995, 427). Most problematic is *nation,* not only because of its older and ambiguous usages in relation to ethnicity, discussed earlier, but because those echoes persist in the most recent literature on nationalism and national identity. Tamir (1995, 420), reviewing three books on these subjects, including a second edition of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities,* cites " . . . the nationalist image of nations as homogeneous, natural, and continuous communities of common fate and descent," a formula seemingly applicable, with little modification, to some of the propositions in my "inventory." That that consonance is more than superficial is evident in the widespread use of Anderson's ideas in the literature of ethnicity; yet Anderson's book addresses *nationalism,* not ethnicity. Without wandering further into this conceptual thicket (which Tamir does exceptionally well), suffice it for our purposes to make the point that there is at least one salient difference between *ethnic group* and *nation:* and that is that *nation* (in its modern sense) invariably refers to *political* community, whatever the nature of the communal bonds involved, while *ethnic group* needs no political badge to validate itself. Obviously ethnic groups may seek national status, or couch political demands in nationalist terms, but neither *nation* nor *nationalism* are necessary or sufficient to define *ethnicity* or *ethnic group.* It should be added that ethnicity can also be engendered by nationalist activity, which may well be the case in Quebec, where separatist agitation appears to have stimulated the growth of a French-Canadian ethnonationalism out of the older francophone cultural matrix, and in Eritrea, where thirty years of guerrilla war against the Ethiopian state engendered a similar set of ethnonational referents (see, for example, Iyob 1995).

It is worth repeating that the above does not do justice to all the definitional and empirical complexities that attend the task of coming to grips with so elusive a subject: I had intended, however, to cover only what I deemed its salient aspects, and to do so with as much parsimony and clarity as possible. The logic of the argument should now bring ethnic conflict into focus, and it is to that we turn next.

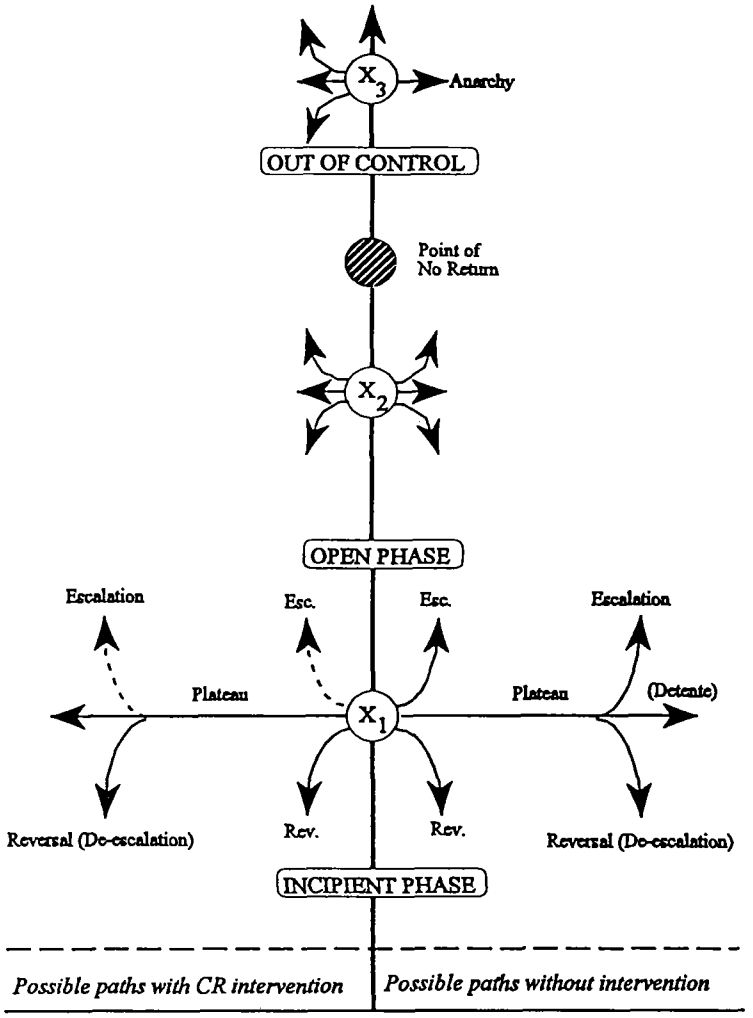
Stages and Paths of Ethnic Conflict

Of the various conceptual puzzles that attend the discussion of ethnic conflict, perhaps the most troubling and least soluble, is that of its roots or origins. Broad generalizations, more often than not, are too diffuse to be useful (e.g., resource scarcity or maldistribution, social and/or political disintegration), or they confuse effects or consequences with causes (hatred, violence, rebellion, etc.). Sometimes, such generalizations become interchangeable with propositions that derive from general theories of social conflict, though this is not to say that such theories do not apply. Some certainly do, whole or in part (e.g., Rapoport 1989, 53–72). The question is whether it is possible to analyze ethnic conflict so as to distinguish it from other forms of social confrontation, that is, to find the hallmark of its uniqueness as a class of conflict. (We think that here, at least, some simple, at least preliminary, groundwork does exist: first examine the contenders, and if they exhibit some of the attributes of ethnicity, and if the conflict visibly involves ethnicity as a dominant or major determinant, then there is at least prima facie evidence of ethnic conflict.) Then there are those propositions that posit the uniqueness of each case of ethnic conflict, and argue that causes are singular and not general and that any attempt to derive generalizations, beyond a fairly primitive level, is a waste of time. Overall, the empirical problem here is that the causes of ethnic conflict can usually be discovered—if they can be discovered at all—only *after* the fact, a circumstance which in turn tends to generate historicist solutions. Again, this is not to deny that there are conflicts for which historicist explanations may be most appropriate: undeniably, the distant roots of the current ethnic violence in the former Yugoslavia lie in part in the area's long history of almost continuous ethnic fragmentation and reconfiguration, in part in the tangled history of the Ottoman conquests and the ebb of Turkish power in the region, in part in the divisions within Balkan Christianity, and in part in the area's more proximate nineteenth and twentieth century local and regional power struggles. And add to this a facet of almost all long-lasting ethnic conflicts, that they tend to feed upon themselves, become self-reinforcing as violence and the memories of violence, and create self-fulfilling prophecies of further violence. Jean-Pierre Chrétien offers a chilling epitome of this effect, as he saw it in Burundi in 1989:

> Fear . . . lies not in the decor of the drama, but becomes the principal actor. What does it mean to be Hutu or Tutsi? It doesn't mean being Bantu or Hamite, nor serf or lord. It means remembering who killed those closest to you fifteen years ago, and asking yourself who will kill your child ten years from now, and each time getting a different answer. (Chrétien 1989, in Conac 1993: 142)[15]

At the end of the day, the causes of most ethnic conflicts remain obscure at best, and offer but barren grounds for generalization. We are left in the main with circumstantial evidence, often enough to permit lessons to be drawn, but very little on which to make predictions. (For an excellent summary of the arguments about the causes of ethnic conflict, see Lake and Rothchild 1996, 8–21.)

FIGURE 1
A Modal Ontogeny of Ethnic Conflict



Notes: 1. The typical ethnic conflict goes through an incipient, then an open phase. If it continues to escalate both in intensity and scope, it may reach a point of no return beyond which it goes out of control. 2. At any point X_1, X_2, X_n, the conflict may change its path, whether subject to resolution intervention or not. 3. Three possible path changes are (a) a plateau, during which the conflict remains in the same phase, or the parties are in detente, (b) escalation, which if it occurs during active intervention, may mark the failure of such efforts, (c) reversal or de-escalation, which, if it occurs during active intervention, may mark the success of such efforts.

One suspects that the best we can do with the problem of causality in most ethnic conflicts is to identify retrospectively what appear to be contributory factors, and then try to assess their relative impact on the development of specific conflict

situations. This much is certain: almost invariably, though ethnic conflicts usually do not have singular causes, ethnic violence can be triggered by singular events, such as April 6, 1994, in Rwanda, when the presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi were killed in a plane crash over Kigali; or in December 1992, upon the destruction of the mosque in Ayodha, India at a site Hindus claimed was the birthplace of Lord Rama. It hardly needs emphasizing that these events were not the causes of the conflict and that the violence that attended or followed them were, in each case, epiphenomena of the longer history of sporadic, bloody confrontation between the groups involved.

If the roots or causes of ethnic conflict are difficult to trace, most actual ethnic conflicts are visible and can be described with some accuracy, given precision and awareness of the empirical traps described above that may lie waiting on the analytic path. The vast case-study literature on ethnic conflict is certainly ample testimony of the attempts at description and analysis, if not always evidence of success in the attempt. A full accounting of these studies is beyond the scope of this discussion. Two things stand out in the case-study literature: First, the fullest and most extensive descriptions are of what can only be called mature conflicts, that is, where the conflict itself has taken some time to evolve, and where the parties, the modalities of conflict, and, usually, the stakes stand out in bold relief. In this connection, it hardly surprises that ethnic conflict in which violence is a major ingredient receives the most attention. See, for example, the list of fifty-seven "serious and emerging ethnopolitical conflicts" in Gurr and Harff 1994 (160–166), of which Afghanistan, northern Ireland, ex-Yugoslavia and ex-USSR, central Africa (notably Rwanda and Burundi), India, and Palestine are all highlighted in that and other recent volumes. Second, the conflicts themselves are usually treated as the units of analysis, evidence of the premise that, as such, they are descriptively parametrical: bounded, finite, and substantive. If that is the case, it may well be that a term borrowed from biology, *ontogeny*[16]—the life history of an individual—can usefully help describe the developmental path, content, and permutations of most ethnic conflicts. As a map of ethnic conflict, a detailed ontogeny model should also permit us to capture not only the essentials of mature ethnic conflicts—as does much of the literature — but also to trace those conflicts both to their earlier manifestations and their later actual and possible development. Figure 1 offers a schematic representation of the ontogeny of a typical "mature" ethnic conflict.

The model also suggests that most ethnic conflicts go through stages or phases in their development. In simplest terms, there is first an incipient stage, when the parties begin to come forward onto the political arena and define the stakes involved and their respective positions in relation to each other and the stakes, and when the modalities of conflict—including the use of violence—are still at manageable levels. At this stage the parties may avail themselves of such institutional mechanisms for resolution (in figure 1, "CR"—conflict resolution) as the arena offers. At all events, we think there are sufficiently visible empirical markers (Appendix 1 lists some of the possibilities) to permit us to attach the label "incipient" to this stage.

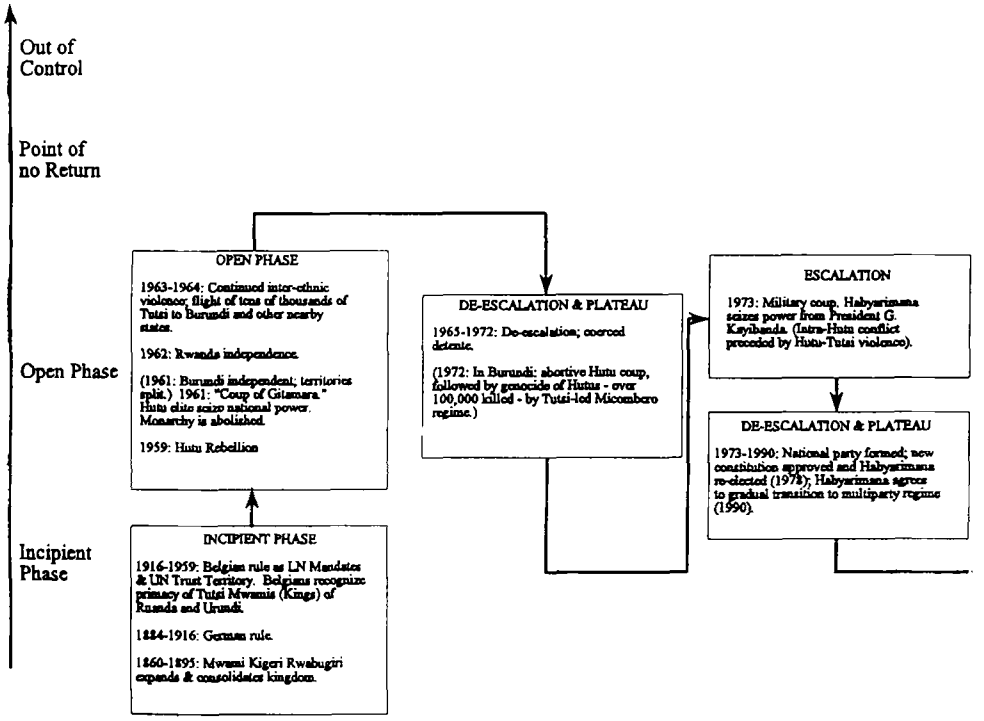
A second stage is the open phase, when the parties are in active, visible contention

both in the institutional part of the arena, and if matters have escalated beyond those precincts, in its noninstitutional or informal sectors. During this phase the resort to violence may increase, and ethnic identities, if not already intensified during the incipient phases, often become aggressively assertive, and the conflict and its stakes are increasingly cast in the stark primary colors of hostile confrontation. However, despite all the tensions generated during this phase, resolution still remains possible, be it within the institutional sector, or through intervention by capable domestic or external actors. Appendix 1 also suggests some of the empirical markers of this phase.

A third stage, by no means a necessary sequel of the second, I have labeled "out of control," that is, occurring after a hypothetical "point of no return" in the conflict is reached. This is the point at which violence may have escalated beyond the ability of the domestic agents of resolution to affect the outcome, and/or the conflict has begun to threaten the peace, security, or vital interests of proximate and more distant neighbors. It is here that resolution intervention by outside actors, agencies, and institutions becomes increasingly attractive. It should be added that "point of no return" is not intended to represent inevitable defeat for one or another side in contention, which can certainly happen during the "open" phase, but the point at which further escalation threatens to engender or lead to widespread social disintegration, or system-wide institutional meltdown, or the unrestrainable development of the conflict beyond its earlier vectors, or all three. The most recent Rwandan conflict reached the third stage after April 6, 1994, clearly the point of no return, and that in Burundi, threatens to do so again. Arguably, elements of the wider conflict in ex-Yugoslavia entered the third stage in 1993, and though the Liberian conflict was originally only partially driven by ethnic factors, after 1990 the principal rebel groups operated mainly on the basis of their ethnic constituencies, and the conflict had certainly reached the third phase early in 1991.

An integral part of the ontogeny model is path change. First, there is nothing preordained about a transition from the "incipient" to the "open" phase, or from the "open" to the "out of control" phase. Just as an open ethnic conflict need never get out of control, so too an incipient one, given successful resolution efforts, need not transit to an open stage. Second, an ethnic conflict, at any time during any phase and as a result of internal or external catalytic or transformative factors, can change its vector(s). Three such possible path changes are suggested in figure 1: (a) a plateau, during which the conflict remains in the same phase, the consequence of détente (or armistice) between/among the parties, or deadlock, or a truce, or some event that forces the parties to maintain the status quo or temporarily suspend contestation; (b) escalation; and (c) de-escalation or reversal. Can a conflict change path during the "out of control" stage? On its face, the proposition might seem contradictory. An "out of control" conflict may be difficult, if not almost impossible, to control by intervention, but both endogenous and exogenous factors may certainly affect it: for example, it can become worse (the scale of violence, or the casualties, or both, may rise), or one side can "win" (e.g., by physically eliminating or chasing out its "enemies," a goal of "ethnic cleansing" operations), or the parties

FIGURE 2
An Ontogeny of the Rwandan Ethnic Conflict

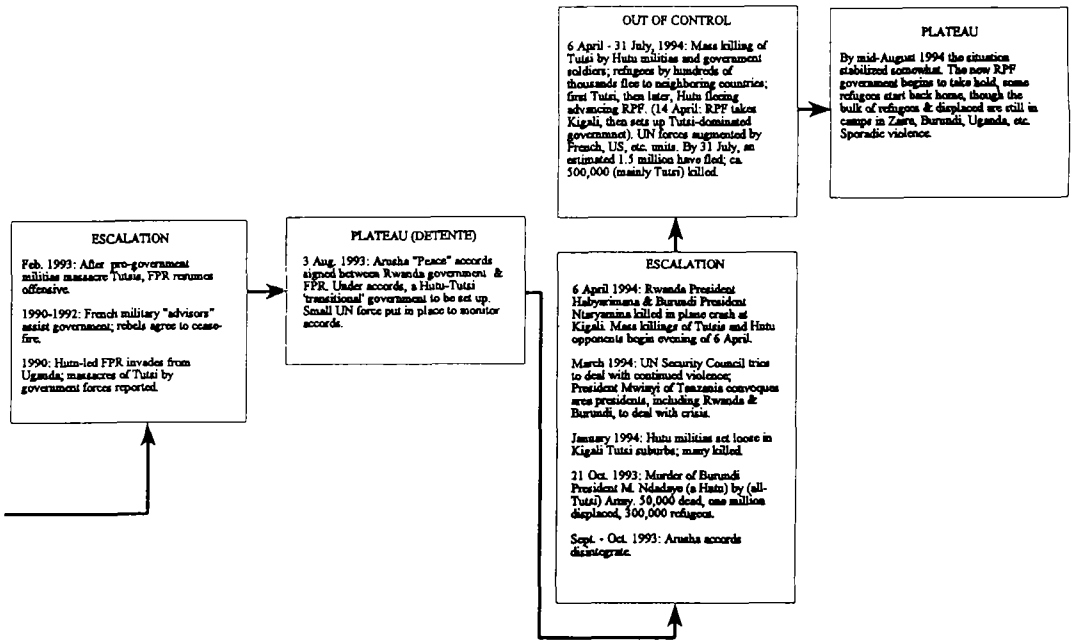


can suspend hostilities (be it voluntarily, or out of mutual exhaustion, or because of the efforts of external intervenors, or for some other reasons). For example, figure 2, a constructed ontogeny of the Rwandan conflict, maps out some of the major changes in trajectory taken by that conflict during and through each of its phases.

If the ontogeny model works, then it should be applicable to most ethnic conflicts at the open stage, though somewhat less so to ethnic conflicts at what is here called the "incipient" stage, simply because the less visible the indices of conflict (as they are likely to be at the incipient stage), the greater the empirical problem of casuality. Consequently, there appears to be no substitute for explorations in depth into particular conflicts and then retelling their stories to highlight what appear to be the indices themselves. I have retold the story of the Rwandan conflict in that perspective.

There is little difficulty in identifying the proximate events that brought the Hutu-Tutsi conflict into the open: the 1959–1962 Hutu rebellions and their immediate antecedents, themselves a product of a radical restructuring of Hutu-Tutsi relationships in the context of Belgian decolonization efforts that, in turn, eventually resulted in the split of the Rwanda-Burundi trusteeship, the independence of the two territories, and the regionalization of the conflict. But what were the markers of "incipiency" prior to, say, 1955 or 1950? A search of the authoritative sources,

Figure 2 (Continued)



notably Lemarchand (1970, 13–288) and Newbury (1993), suggests that they could be found in the effects of Belgian policies (e.g., the 1954 decision to give ownership of cattle to Hutu) leading to the gradual suppression of the *buhake*,[17] the key traditional patron-client "cattle" contract between the Tutsi and Hutu, by whose complex ramification the Tutsi became overlords and the Hutu their subjects; in the emergence of Hutu protest movements (as early as several eighteenth and nineteenth-century peasant revolts) and, later, political organizations (manifest in the *Bahutu Manifesto* of 1957); and in the various countermoves by the Tutsi establishment to preserve as much of its dominance as possible. At all events, once in the open in 1959, as figure 2 suggests, the conflict traced an erratic path until it reached its point of no return on April 6, 1994. It should also be noted that figure 2 only glosses over other aspects of the conflict which, in part, help explain why that path was so erratic: the role of the Tutsi diaspora, and in particular that of the *inyenzi*;[18] the relationship with Burundi, still under Tutsi rule after 1961; the depredations of Rwanda's military regime, 1973–1994; the impact the various *intra*-Hutu and intra-Tutsi power struggles on domestic politics; and the relatively early presence of external intervenors—originally the Belgians, then the UN, and later the Ugandans, the French, and the Zairois—in the conflict. Because of the catalytic role played by external actors in this conflict, a summary word about these matters is germane here.

From 1961 onward, the Hutu regimes had to face recurrent attacks from armed Tutsi bands, the *inyenzi*, based among the Tutsi refugee populations in Burundi, Zaire, but mainly Uganda—in fact, it was at Uganda bases that the Tutsi-led forces

that invaded Rwanda in 1990 and drove out the last Hutu government on April 14, 1994, were trained, equipped, and organized.[19] The Rwandan government's relationship with Burundi was at best correct, but never friendly, given Burundi's role in encouraging the *inyenzi* and promoting continued ethnic tensions among Rwandan Tutsi still in place. Hutu rage was also fanned by the 1972 genocide of Hutu in Burundi following an abortive Hutu coup against the (Tutsi-dominated) military regime of Colonel Michel Micombero (Lemarchand 1975, Melady 1974). Further, the military regime of General Habyarimana created its own internal stresses by brutally suppressing Hutu opposition, granting extraordinary (and corrupt) privileges to the families of his ruling Hutu elite known collectively as the *akazu*, and periodically engaging in deadly, small-scale attacks on its Tutsi citizens. It should be recalled that the slaughter that began on April 6, 1994, was aimed not only at all Tutsis, but at all Hutu opponents of the regime. It is hardly surprising, then, that the Tutsi-led forces that overran Kigali in April 1994 included some Hutu elements, and that the new Tutsi-dominated government set up shortly thereafter would recruit several members of the decimated Hutu opposition to serve in its ranks. (Lemarchand [1994, 596] reported that the RPF also recruited a growing number of young Tutsi into its ranks. From the approximately 4,000 men in the RPF at the time of the October 1, 1990, invasion, it claimed some 20,000 combatants when it took Kigali in July 1994.) Finally, it should be noted that between 1990 and 1992 the Habyarimana regime called on the Belgians and Zairois and another external friend, France, to use its military "advisors" in Rwanda to help the Rwandan army repulse the invading (Hutu-led) Rwandan Popular Front forces and create conditions first for a cease-fire, then, on August 3, 1993, for a "peace treaty" with the RPF negotiated in Arusha, Tanzania. The Rwandan government then asked for, and got, a UN force that eventually grew to 2,400 to monitor the accords. (In July 1994, the French again deployed in force, this time to secure a temporary "safehaven" area in southwest Rwanda.) One normally looks for external intervention when or after a conflict gets out of hand (e.g., Liberia, ex-Yugoslavia), but it has not been uncommon in recent years for parties in conflict to seek outside help to escape defeat or prevent a situation from escalating out of control.[20] This had already happened before in Rwanda, in August 1961, when the new Hutu government installed in January of that year—with Belgian blessings—got the reinforced 1,500-man Belgian garrison in Kigali to help re-establish order prior to that year's September elections.

Resolution Intervention and Ethnic Conflict

The approach taken here to identifying and specifying the empirical problems posed by ethnic conflict has been, thus far, largely inductive, that is, in linking that exercise to attributes of the conflicts themselves. I submit, however, that even clearer definitional insight can be gained deductively by relating ethnic conflicts to attempts to control, mitigate, or resolve them. For example, it appears that certain aspects of some of the more recent ethnic conflicts, such as the seemingly stochastic paths they follow, can best be explained in connection with resolution intervention.

This is not to suggest, of course, that such analysis applies or can be applied to all contemporary ethnic conflicts. Some simply may not now be amenable to resolution intervention, having escaped control measures or (as in Lebanon)[21] defied institutional solutions; or as is the case with many low-level conflicts, are sustained indefinitely by the parties or play themselves out, one way or another, without the involvement of outsiders. However, and generally, when an ethnic conflict comes to impact the larger public domain, or the vital interests of third parties, or (possibly at a later stage) the "peace and security" of the international or regional order, then resolution intervention is undertaken. It is that latter class of ethnic conflict we address now.[22]

The proposition needs no further demonstration that serious attempts at conflict resolution, be they initiated by the parties in conflict, by involved national governments, by impacted extra-national bodies, by elements of the international community, or by other interested parties, will affect the course of ethnic conflicts. Some aspects of that relationship, for being obvious, are often overlooked, and thus warrant summarizing.

First, the success or failure of such initiatives will depend, critically, upon such things as the capacity (the ability to bring to bear or mobilize resources appropriate to the effort) of the intervenor(s), the willingness and ability of the affected parties to respond, the timing of the attempt(s), and (in the context of the ontogeny model) the phase or stage at which the conflict is located when the intervention is attempted. It also depends, critically, on who intervenes or tries to do so. There are obvious differences in standing and capacity between third-party intervenors (neutral or not, invited or not) and governments and international institutions. And if a government is itself a party to the conflict, be it as the representative or champion of an ethnic group, or stands as a third party vis-à-vis the contenders, then its options for resolving the conflict will undoubtedly revolve around the larger imperatives of regime and state survival. In any case, an intervenor, however well-intentioned, without the physical and moral resources, or simply the power, to persuade (or coerce) the parties to stop fighting and/or negotiate their differences, cannot hope to succeed. If the parties can find no profit in mitigating, abating, or resolving their conflict at that juncture, or even in talking to one another or the intervenor(s), or if the intervenor(s) cannot find useful interlocutors with whom to deal, the intervention must fail.

Timing can also be critical to success: for example, if the intervention is attempted at a point in the conflict when any party has gained the advantage (and can thus hope to impose a solution), or sees itself close to a strategically significant gain, or if the intervention occurs when any of the parties is preparing a major escalation, the intervention will likely go nowhere.

Finally, it also follows that the manner of the intervention, the nature of the proposed resolution(s) as well as its/their chances for success, must also vary with the stage during which the intervention is attempted. Figure 3 schematizes this hypothesis and its principal propositions.

The point of resolution intervention, as Jean-Paul Lederach (1995) convincingly

argues, is almost always conflict *transformation*, that is, not only changing a conflict's vectors—its trajectory—but its qualitative aspects, such as its intensity (which affects its capacity to enlarge in scope), all to make it more manageable and in the end, if possible, to resolve it. Yet it is clear, and almost commonsensical, that as an ethnic conflict intensifies over time, the options available to mitigate or resolve the conflict diminish accordingly, and that, put simply, because the more intense and wider a conflict, the higher the costs of intervention both in terms of the resources needed for successful intervention and those incurred in damage to the society involved. What this means is that the scope of possible domestic resolution intervention is widest, and intervention probably most cost-effective, during the incipient phase of the conflict; that scope narrows, and the costs escalate, as the conflict transits to an open phase. It is also the case that intervention during the incipient stage is less likely because of the diffuse, and often ambiguous, nature of the indicators of conflict. Thus, intervention is generally attempted first during the open phase, when the conflict is much more visible and begins to exact measurable societal tolls. At all events, the Point of No Return signals both the juncture at which domestic intervention has become futile, and the conflict's societal costs, unmanageable. Thereafter, as the recent calamities in ex-Yugoslavia, Liberia, Rwanda, and Burundi amply demonstrate, the same sad dynamic of diminishing returns can occur, even with international intervention, if the conflict continues to move further and further out of control.[23]

Obviously, all this is conditional; it spells out the logic of the model, and leaves out the unexpected twists or turns in the trajectory of a conflict, the unforeseen events or developments, which can effect de-escalation, or temporary detente, or even mitigation and reversal. (As the first draft of this article was written—early in October 1995—while the end of the Bosnian/Serbian/ex-Yugoslavian drama was not yet in sight, the Liberian anarchy had produced a surprising, though temporary, detente among principal armed groups. The horrors of Rwanda and Burundi had not yet run their course, though the Tutsi victory in Rwanda made life less perilous for the country's Tutsis, a little less so for its resident Hutu citizens, and not at all for the hundreds of thousands of Rwandan and Burundian refugees still outside their respective countries.) Then, too, given propitious timing or opportunity, one or more intervention strategies can work. I have added a list of intervention strategies and "solutions" to figure 3, all drawn from the literature on ethnic conflict, including—for the sake of completeness—McGarry and O'Leary's chilling shortlist of "methods for eliminating differences." Most of the strategies listed in Appendix 2, it should be added, apply implicitly or explicitly to the open phase of a conflict.

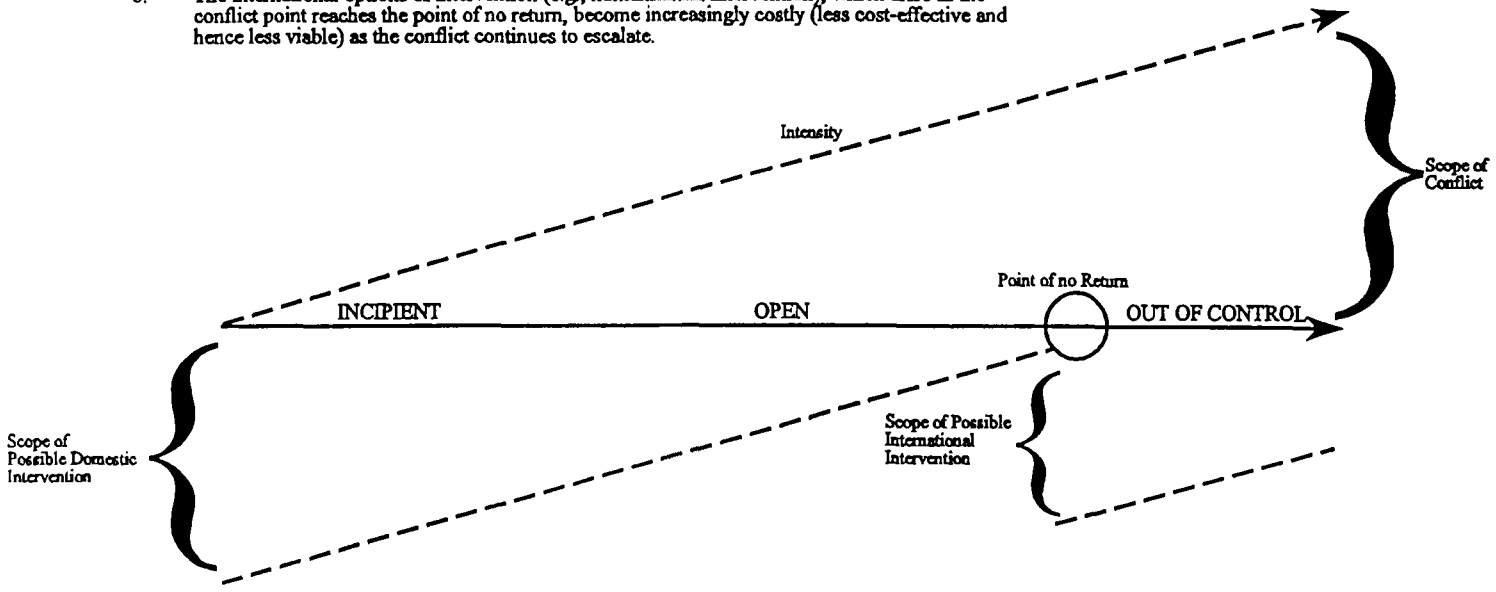
One last point. It is not accidental that most intervention strategies and "solutions" tend to be institutional in character. This is because institutional intervenors—governments, official agencies, international organizations—are disposed to deal in structured responses to problems and must, therefore, invariably measure cost factors—e.g., the most efficient and/or effective allocation of finite resources—to their actions. Non-institutional solutions more often than not present incalculable costs, and thus tend, at least initially, to be strategies of last rather than first resort.

FIGURE 3
Contemporary Ethnic Conflict and the Possibilities of Resolution Intervention

Hypothesis: As the intensity (including the scope) of ethnic conflict increases, the options available to mitigate or resolve the conflict diminish.

a. Domestic (endogenously-generated) options of intervention become increasingly costly (less cost-effective and hence less viable) as a point of no return is reached.

b. The international options of intervention (e.g., humanitarian intervention), which arise as the conflict point reaches the point of no return, become increasingly costly (less cost-effective and hence less viable) as the conflict continues to escalate.



Postscript

This exercise grew out of dissatisfaction with the existing literature on ethnicity, not so much because it failed to raise the salient questions about its role in the vast variety of conflict situations, or about the relationship of ethnic conflict to micro- and macro-political contexts (the best of the more recent work, such as that by Horowitz and Young, satisfies on both counts), but because the elusive nature of "ethnic" phenomena continues, apparently, to cloud attempts at definitional precision and thereby, to avoid the hard questions of empirical warrant. My venture is an attempt to extend the discussion on the issue of the empirical basis of ethnic analysis and, in the process, to offer a more usable map to finding and describing both "ethnicity" and "ethnic conflict." This is, moreover, only a contribution to the work in progress; I make no claim to a "last word" on the subject, nor to a fully-fledged descriptive theory, much less to a causal theory—a theory of ethnogenesis. Therefore, I have not offered detailed, extended guidelines on empirical proofs for the several propositions listed in my Inventory, nor anything more than an outline of the phases model of ethnic conflict.

Finally, the linkage of the phases model to conflict resolution intervention reflects a contemporary reality: that open ethnic conflict, particularly that which expresses itself in deadly violence, is no longer simply a matter of parochial, domestic concern, but affects the larger interests of an international community seeking to give substance to an emerging body of norms about the human rights of individuals and communties. The new field of conflict resolution theory and practice has ethnic conflict on its agenda, and it is now difficult to talk about ethnic conflict without also taking into consideration how such conflicts respond to attempts to mitigate or resolve them.

Notes

This article grew in part out of a 1994 graduate seminar on ethnic conflict, and in part out of a workshop on "Responding to Ethnic Conflict" held in New York City, September 15–16, 1994, and co-sponsored by the Centre for International Understanding (CIU) and the Initiative on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity (INCORE). I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of seminar participants Nicole Collins and Lynn Corbin, both Ph.D. candidates in the Department of Political Science at Washington University, some of whose excellent ideas and formulations have been incorporated into this discussion. For a report on the workshop (which I facilitated), see *Centre Newsletter*, 1995 (St. Louis, MO), pp. 3–5. A draft of this article was read by Professor Crawford Young, whose work is frequently cited in these pages, and I am particularly grateful for his insightful comments and suggestions. Professor John Darby of INCORE and the University of Ulster also read the manuscript and I acknowledge his helpful advice and criticism. I am similarly indebted to Priscilla Stone, Washington University, who also read the article and alerted me to a number of useful works on Rwanda and Burundi.

1. That self-confidence was in part generated by a sociology that equated ethnicity with national identity—one was Italian, German, Polish, French, Russian, or whatever—and (at least until 1963 and Glazer and Moynihan) one assumed that while the "melting pot" provided the basics of a new American identity, enough significant elements of the old national identity remained to make a political difference. This view found itself "confirmed" in political science studies of "ethnic" voting and "ethnic politics" which assumed that people of like national origin had enough in common to belong to the same political parties, share the same interests, and vote alike (for representative samples of that literature, see edited

work such as Fuchs 1968, Hawkins and Lorinskas 1970, and Bailey and Katz 1969). Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (1994) agrees, arguing that it was the so-called "Chicago School" of sociology (Ernest Burgess, Louis Wirth, et al.) "who taught us that ethnicity did not give rise to culture, but the other way around." (My translation.)

2. The reference to the Greek meaning is not gratuitous; the search for ethnic identity preoccupied (for example) such ancient Greek travellers and historians as Herodotus, Agatharchides of Cnidus, Strabo, Diodorus of Siciliy, and the anonymous author of the celeberated *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea.* (See Fr. Englebert Mveng, 1969, "L'Afrique, Emergence d'un Continent. Peuples et Civilisations de l'Afrique Antique," in *La Culture Africaine - Symposium d 'Alger* [Algiers: Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion]).
3. This raises the issue of distinguishing the term *nation* from such closely related terms like *state, people,* and *ethnic group,* a matter discussed later in this article. On these questions, see the recent, excellent review essay by Yael Tamir (1995).
4. Part of the problem is also ambiguity in translation; French usage at the turn of the century, highly influential on contemporary ethnologists in America and Europe, had the French word *race* refering to "tribal/ethnic group," as well as "race" in its larger biologic sense. The more precise *ethnic* came into general use much later, though it did not altogether drive out the former locution. For example, in 1909 Governor-General William Ponty (of French West Africa) articulated a *politique des races* (racial-tribal policy) for the Black indigenous, nonassimilated, population of the region. The larger dimensions of the problem of using race as a marker of group identity is discussed by D. John Grove (1974).
5. Whether this is simply protective coloration or full conversion, is another, and obviously empirical, question. That such questions worry elements in the dominant groups is more than evident in the case of the *conversos,* fifteenth and sixteenth century Spanish Jews who had accepted baptism: not only did they become particular targets of the Inquisition, but were labelled "New" Christians and generally held at social arm's-length by most other (Christian) Spaniards. (Some ostensible *conversos* in fact secretly remained Jews, and their families maintained the deception over the centuries. These were the *Marranos;* for the story of one such family, see Perera 1995.)
6. Joseph Rothschild (1981:80–81) made a similar set of distinctions with respect to the social position and status of ethnic groups. For example, he suggested the model of parallel ethnic segmentation, which (he claimed) approximated the old Ottoman *millet* system, by which certain ethno-religious communities (Christians, Jews, etc.) were permitted certain measures of autonomy vis-à-vis each other and the Ottoman authorities. The other side of that coin is Rothschild's vertical-hierarchical model, by which ethnic groups were ranked according to indices of wealth, status, prestige, and power.
7. For example, the phenomenon of the ghetto (in its broader sense of relegated residential clustering) appears more to have the effect of intensifying the ethnic identity of those affected than of creating new ethnic markers for them. Such residential segregation could itself, of course, also function as an ethnic marker. The *sabon garis* ("newcomers' towns") of northern Nigerian cities like Kano and Zaria, in effect ethnic ghettos for non-Hausa-speaking southern Nigerians, certainly made it easier to identify Ibos and Yorubas living in the north, and as it turned out, easier to victimize them when national politics in 1969 made them enemies. On the other hand, in ethnically heterogeneous situations, where members of several ethnic groups live interspersed with one another, rather than in clusters, separate identities are more often maintained than not unless the circumstances encourage assimilation or integration. In a particularly useful paper, Scott Bollens (1996) explores the spatial dimensions of inter- and intra-communal violence in Jerusalem, Belfast, and Johannesburg.
8. We use the term "myth" in the sense of "fundamental assumptions," (and in politics) "the political perspectives most firmly accepted," whether or not those are false, fictional, or irrational (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950, 116–117). This corresponds to its use by Armstrong (1982: 3,93,129–167) in his extended discussion of the *mythomoteur,* that is, the body of stories and symbols that help give an ethnic group primordial identity. A *New York Times* story by John Kifner (4/10/94) highlighting two iconic Serbian paintings—"The Maid Of Kosovo" and "The Moving of the Serbs"—provides vivid evidence of the way Serbs have reconstructed their history by creating archetypal folk heroes and reinterpreting key events to center on their Serbian content. Lemarchand (e.g., 1996, Woodrow Wilson Center Report 1995) convincingly argues that the Burundian version of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict was the result of myth-making, mainly by Hutu intellectuals and activists, who imported the Rwandan model of the conflict to Burundi by insisting on portraying the Hutu as paradigmatic victims and conflict with the Tutsi as inevitable and zero-sum in nature—neither of which characterizations are borne out in the real history of Hutu-Tutsi relations.

9. Orange Day, July 12, which celebrates the defeat of the Catholic forces by the Protestant William of Orange at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, is the occasion for parades in which the mainly Protestant Unionists (pro-British) of Ulster taunt the Catholics and noisily proclaim their attachment to Britain. Jean-Baptiste day (the Feast of St. John the Baptist), June 24, is the official "national" holiday of francophone Quebec. It is marked by parades, fireworks, and speeches throughout the province; in Quebec City thousands gather in the evening on the Plains of Abraham for revelry, anti-federal sloganeering and songs, and huge public bonfires in which, sometimes, the Canadian Prime Minister is burned in effigy. Ashura (on the tenth day of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar) commemorates, exclusively for Shi'a Muslims, the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet and son and heir of the founder of the Shi'a line, the Caliph Ali, at Karbala (October 10, C.E. 680 - 10 Muharram A.H. 61). Often, Ashura processions include re-enactments of the death of Hussein and ritually violent expressions of grief including self-flagellation. In Iraq, before 1991, the processions often took on a marked antiregime tone, asserting Shi'a resistance to "this evil Caliph," that is, Saddam Hussein. In Iran, they presaged the fall of the Shah in 1979. The special Ashura re-enactment of the key Shi'a narrative should not be thought of as a unique expression of ethnoreligious or ethnopolitical sentiment; the 1995 St. John the Baptist celebrations included an elaborate staged pageant, "The Fabulous Story of a Kingdom," which glorified the French experience in North America (Farnsworth in the *New York Times*, 6/24/95). "The Fabulous Story," according to the *Times*, was staged in the town of La Baie, Quebec, every summer for seven years, and by June 24, 1995, had already been seen (that year) by over 350,000 people.
10. Crawford Young (personal letter 1120/95), suggests that the notion of "primordialism" has three faces: "At one level, it captures the deepest elements of cultural attachments, whatever they may be for a particular group: the mystic attachment to land, spiritual dimensions, genealogical beliefs. At another level, the primordial demiurge has to do with the affective dimension of identity: symbols through which it is recognized, emotional dimensions (fears, anxieties, insecurities, animosities towards an 'other' and in conflict settings the capacity to demonize such groups as in Rwanda and Bosnia). Finally, for some analysts, there is a biological basis for identity, implanted in our genetic code." Young's points are well taken; what is important, I think, is that primordialism has real-life consequences for those embracing it as an aspect of their sense of identity. Those consequences may include various xenophobic behaviors, notions about "racial" purity and superiority up to and including espousal of "ethnic cleansing" and where such attitudes affect social relations, strict rules governing exogamy and sexual ethics.
11. The term is Chauveau and Dozon's (1987), and refers to the practice of European colonial administrations of "identifying" and mapping tribes and ethnic groups, with the result that, often, group identities were not only fixed (for both the colonial administrations and group members), but "created," that is, artificially imposed. The irony of the situation is that, over time, such identities were, more often than not, accepted as real by those affected. See also Worby (1994) for the case of northwestern Zimbabwe, and in particular, Leroy Vail (ed., 1989) *The Creation of Tribalism in South Africa*, cited by Lemarchand (1994, 589) as "a persuasive refutation of the essentialist [i.e., primordialist] view of ethnicity."
12. Here are Catherine Newbury and David Newbury (1995: 3), for example, discussing the ambiguities of Tutsi and Hutu identity: "Numerically, Hutu are said to constitute about 85 percent of Rwanda's population, Tutsi about 14 percent, and Twa less than 1 percent. These are not racial groups, nor are they really ethnic groups in the conventional sense. In the past the terms denoted occupational differences to a certain extent, in that Tutsi tended to be primarily pastoralists, Hutu more commonly agriculturalists, and Twa hunter/gatherers or potters. But even these distinctions varied considerably. Many Tutsi engaged in agriculture, and many Hutu kept cattle; not all Twa were hunter/gatherers or potters. Indeed the meaning of the terms and categories they describe have changed over time; shaped in important ways by changing contexts of power, and particularly by the role of the state." Nor, it should be added, is it true that Tutsi are necessarily tall and Hutu necessarily short; generations of intermarriage and biological cooptation have almost wiped out that old distinction. The changing post-Soviet ethnic scene is described by Valery Tishkov (1994), and the ethnic reconfigurations in the former Yugoslavia have been noted anecdotally by the media (*New York Times* 2/7/96, *Christian Science Monitor* 8/13/96). For the ethnic picture in Burundi, see Lemarchand 1996 and Woodrow Wilson Center *Report* 1995.
13. Gurr's term, like Horowitz's distinction between ranked and unranked groups, appears to fit the ongoing conflict between the Ranvir Sena (an armed group that defends the interests of the uppercaste Hindu landowners in the Indian state of Bihar) and local supporters of the Communist Party of India, lower-caste peasants who formed their own militias to defend themselves. Some two hundred people have died in clashes between the Ranvir Sena and the CPI during 1995 and 1996, one of the most recent of which (on/about July 12, 1996) was the slaughter—by the Ranvir Sena—of twelve farm workers and eight children

in the Bihari area of Batani. (Press Trust of India, through the Associated Press, 7/12/96) Here it is the Hindu caste system, plus socio-economic status, that define the "ethnoclasses" in contention.

14. My parenthetical insertion.
15. My translation.
16. Its best-known application has been in Haeckel's Biogenetic Law, which asserts that "Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny," that is, that "the development of the animal embryo traces the evolutionary development of the species" *(Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1996).
17. Called *bugabire* in Burundi, it involved vassalage relationships centered mainly on the use of cattle and cattle-pasturages, though in parts of the country, it involved agricultural leaseholds. The system ramified through a hierachy of chiefs, titled patrons, and nobles, up to the *mwami* (king), the titular owner of all land and cattle. (See Lemarchand 1970, 36–41; Maquet 1961.)
18. Literally, cockroaches, the Kinyarwandan name given in and out of Rwanda to the armed bands, intially numbering from three to eight men, that spread terror and raided Hutu villages and towns.
19. There are no reliable figures on the number of Tutsi from Rwanda that took refugee in neighboring countries after 1959. By March 1962, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated there were ca. 300,000. The UNHCR estimates for 1991–92, that is, before the most recent violence, were as follows: 245,600 in Burundi 85,800 in Uganda, 50,900 in Zaire, and 50,000 in Tanzania, for a total of ca. 432,300 (UNHCR 1993, 149–150). Needless to say, these were nearly 100 percent Tutsi; there are other figures, almost equally as high, for Hutu refugees from Burundi. It should also be noted that the 1990 RPF invaders from Uganda were mainly the sons of the earlier Tutsi refugees; Paul Kagame, the RPFs military leader (and now Defence Minister in the new Tutsi regime), spent almost all of his youth in Uganda, prefers English to French, which he speaks poorly.
20. In a very real sense, in both Rwanda and Burundi external actors simply became features of the conflict itself. An analogous, though more recent, situation is the Tamil-Sinhala conflict in Sri Lanka. Since 1983 the central government of India under Indira Ghandi and her successors, be it because of pressure from the Tamils' co-ethnics in south India (in the state of Tamil Nadu in particular), or for other domestic political reasons, has variously supported the Sri Lankan Tamil secessionists, sponsored "peace" talks between the Tamil leaders and the Sri Lankan government, sent in troops to help the Sri Lankan government pacify the Tamil areas, and sent in "humanitarian aid" to the inhabitants of the (mainly Tamil) Jafna Peninsula. The government of Tamil Nadu, where 50–60 million Tamils reside, has also been extremely active in support of the Sri Lankan Tamil rebels. For details, see K.M. De Silva (1995). Since the post-World War I redrawing of the political map of the Middle East, the Kurds' ongoing conflicts with their ethnic neighbors has involved the governments of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran in various roles supporting or fighting Kurdish rebels next door or at home. It is fair to say that the modern history of the Kurds has been to a large extent the story of the Kurds' relationships—cooperative or conflictual—with their own and neighboring governments.
21. The institutional solution in Lebanon, brokered by the British in 1943, to which the country's ethno-confessional groups agreed, was the so-called (unwritten) National Pact under which the top positions in the Republic were allocated to leaders of the groups on the basis of their relative strength under the 1932 census, and the cabinet posts divided between Christians and Muslims (including, for this purpose, the Druze) in a ratio of 6:5. The "solution" lasted only until 1974, by which time the ethno-confessional clans had created their own armies, the demographic balance had clearly switched to the Muslims, and the Pact itself had only Christian support. In 1975 civil war broke out, and the Pact, while still valid "on paper," ceased to have any real meaning for the parties. The story is told well in Hudson (1985), and Khalaf (1987). The record for institutional solutions is mixed; more often than not they do not work, or, being jerry-rigged, do not last very long. For example, the 1960 Nigerian federation was supposed to recognize the claims of the country's main ethnic groups—the Yoruba, Ibo, and Hausa-Fulani—but failed to prevent the 1970 "Biafran" secession by the Ibo-dominated Eastern Region. India has tried various formulae designed to meet local and regional ethnic political demands, including a language policy that recognizes three official "national" languages and almost a score of local ones, and the periodic creation of new "ethnic" states and provinces. Nevertheless, ethnic violence persists throughout the country and secessionist movements crop up with regularity. One interesting, though hardly new, formula, a guarantee of the right of secession for named ethnic groups, was incorporated in the 1994 Ethiopian constitution; it has yet to be tested. (The Stalin constitution of the USSR had similar provisions for the country's component Republics, but no one had any illusions about invoking them.)
22. Some of what follows owes much to I. William Zartman's recent work on conflict resolution, in particular, that dealing with internal conflict and intervention in Africa: *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and*

Intervention in Africa (1989); *Elusive Peace: Negotiating and End of Civil Wars* (1995a); and *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (1995b). Ethnic conflict figures prominently in his analyses and in some of the scholarly contributions to the latter two books. Also of use has been Roy Licklider, ed., *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (1993).

23. As noted, when an ethnic conflict goes out of control, one possible consequence is the collapse of the state itself. Zartman's edited volume, *Collapsed States* . . . (1995b) contains useful contributions on two African cases in which ethnic conflict lurched out of control: Somalia (Hussein Adam), and Liberia (Martin Lowenkopf).

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APPENDIX 1
Some Indices of Ethnic Conflict by Stages

Incipient Stage

- Development or creation of enforced or institutionalized social and/or political status differentials and preferences, including (for example) restrictions on educational access, work and occupation, residence, land ownership/use, etc. by dominant or ruling group(s).
- Low-level violence expressed as strikes, demonstrations, sporadic attacks on property and/or persons, etc. by minority group(s), and counter-violence by dominant/ruling groups through private or state agents and/or institutions.
- Varieties of signalling activity designed to alert social targets about heightened ethnic/racial/religious sensitivities.
- Increased ethnic mobilization through identity/solidaristic groups, organizations, associations.
- Increased co-ethnic clustering in residential or other enclaves, often coupled with heightened social distantiation evidenced by increasing displays of symbols of ethnic solidarity such as dress, language, ceremonies and rituals, and so on.
- Increased ethnically-related criminal activity, including banditry, "mafias," covert armed groups, secret societies, and so on.
- Appearance and circulation of stories (true or not, about "horrors" and victimization) that cumulate anger and crystalize resentments.
- Appearance of (political) opportunists seeking to exploit the differences to their own or their faction's or group's advantage.

Open Stage

- Heightened manifestation of any or all indices of Incipient Stage, plus
- Open, but still manageable violence: usually (at least initially) low-level, accompanied by social dislocations/disintegration, institutionalized intolerance.
- Where conflict is of long duration, a "culture of violence" may emerge (e.g., indicator may be that low-level provocation is often met with violence).
- Levels of inter-group comity and toleration fall markedly.
- Institutionalized intervention or resolution formulae often fail to last or "take," (cf. Rwanda ontogeny; Note #23, above).
- "Plateaux" of detente, however created, become progressively shorter the longer the conflict lasts.
- Salience of other policy issues diminishes as conflict increasingly becomes preoccupation of government.

Out of Control Phase

- Conflict and violence no longer amenable to domestic CR intervention.
- Breakdown of law and order, possible slide into anarchy (Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia).
- High levels of inter-ethnic violence, possibly up to and including genocide (Rwanda, Burundi, ex-Yugoslavia).
- Conflict no longer localized: tendency to become generalized, affecting whole society, with possible spillover to neighboring countries.

APPENDIX 2
Some CR Intervention Strategies at the Main Phases of Ethnic Conflict

Incipient Phase

1. Institutionalization of civil rights to land and property use and ownership, educational opportunity, access to jobs, political expression, and so on.
2. Recognition, open discussion, and negotiation of ethnic grievances.
3. Elimination or mitigation of discriminatory social and/or political status differentials.
4. Prevention of escalation ultimately depends on transformation of conflict from zero-sum to variable-sum; case-specific, mixed strategies work best (Lederach, 1995).
5. Democratic political structures essential to preventing violence (A. Acland, V. Sidorov, CIU/ INCORE).
6. Attention to resource reallocation strategies, if resource disparities contribute to tensions.

Open Phase

1. Transformation strategies, where possible (see #4, above).
2. Consociational strategies—e.g., interpenetration of elites (Adam 1983, 140–44).
3. If minorities are involved, mixed "incorporative" strategies, including (institutionalized) containment, assimilation, pluralism, power-sharing (Gurr 1993, 306–312).
4. "Regional" autonomy (Gurr 1993, 298–305).
5. "Radical" surgery—partition as a solution—allow secession (Horowitz 1985, 588–592).
6. "Plastic" surgery—regional integration as a solution (Horowitz 1985, 592–596).
7. Conflict reduction strategies (Horowitz 1985, 597–600), generally applicable also to Incipient Phase:
   —dispersing a conflict, proliferating points of power so as to "take the heat off" a single point,
   —arrangements that emphasize intra- rather than inter-ethnic conflict,
   —policies that create incentives for interethnic cooperation,
   —policies encouraging alignments based on interests rather than ethnicity,
   —reducing disparities between groups so that dissatisfaction declines.
8. "Good offices" intervention by friends and/or neighbors.
9. Macropolitical forms of ethnic conflict regulation (McGarry & O'Leary 1993, 4–40):
   (a) methods for eliminating differences
      (I) genocide
      (ii) forced mass-population transfers
      (iii) partition and/or secession (self-determination)
   (b) methods for managing differences
      (I) hegemonic control
      (ii) arbitration (third-party intervention)
      (iii) cantonisation or federalisation
      (iv) consociationalism or power-sharing

Out of Control Phase

1. "Humanitarian" (armed, peaceful, or mixed) intervention by neighbor(s) or international community.
2. UN-mandated armed intervention.
3. If possible, "good offices" provided by friends, neighbors, members of international community to induce parties to negotiate differences, arrive at cease-fire, or find some kind of resolution.
4. Old, pre-20th century strategy: armed intervention, then coerce a detente (used by Turks in Maronite-Druse civil wars in nineteenth-century Lebanon).