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# ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION AND THE “NEW” ETHNIC STRIFE: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

*by Ronnie Lipschutz and Beverly Crawford*

## CONTENTS



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INTRODUCTION .....	5
WHAT CAUSES ETHNIC CONFLICT? THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM .....	6
LIBERALIZATION AND SOCIAL CONTRACTS .....	8
THE SOURCES OF DOMESTIC CONFLICTS .....	10
THE THIRD BALKAN WAR: YUGO MEETS HYUNDAI .....	11
MORE YUGOSLAVIAS ON ORDER? .....	14
CONCLUSION .....	16
<i>ABOUT IGCC</i> .....	<i>19</i>
<i>ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING AT IGCC</i> .....	<i>20</i>
<i>CURRENT IGCC PUBLICATIONS</i> .....	<i>21</i>



# ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION AND THE “NEW” ETHNIC STRIFE: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?<sup>1</sup>

*by Ronnie Lipschutz and Beverly Crawford*

## *Introduction*

December 1994 saw the Russian military launch an assault on Grozny, capital of the obscure Caucasian autonomous republic of Chechnya, in an effort to put an end to its pretensions to national independence. Three years earlier, in 1991, a renegade Chechen general in the Russian Army, Djokar Dudayev, had acceded to the pleadings of Chechen “elders” who wished to take the territory out of the Russian Federation-Russia. By mid-1996, what had quite unexpectedly become a very bloody operation, and a political hot potato in Moscow, remained uncompleted. In spite of a declaration of cease-fire by President Yeltsin and the killing of Dudayev, targeted by Russian surveillance while engaged in negotiations with Moscow via cellular phone, Chechen “freedom fighters” based in the mountains and villages continued to wage an Afghan-style struggle against the “occupiers” from Moscow. After some 30,000 deaths, most of them civilian, there was no end in sight. Is the war in Chechnya *sui generis*, as some would claim? Or is it symptomatic of a broader class of wars? As of late 1995, according to the Kennedy School’s Project on Internal Conflict (Harvard University), some 35 major armed intra-state struggles were underway around the world. In a number of ways, Chechnya is unique, but it can also be seen as an archetype for similar conflicts taking place, or pending, around the world. There could be many more than 35 in the future.

It behooves us, therefore, to ask *why* the apparent increase in ethnic conflict in the early 1990s and *what*, if anything, the United States and the rest of the world might do in the future to prevent such carnage from becoming an accepted feature of global politics. Absent satisfactory explanations of these crises—thereby, perhaps, making possible policies that might have prevented or ameliorated the bloodshed in the Caucasus, the Balkans, and elsewhere—the chances are better than even that, within the next few years, the United States and its allies will find themselves confronted by a similar “no-win” situation in any one of the dozens of places where very little provocation will trigger new episodes of ethnic cleansing.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper, prepared for the UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation as part of the project on “Redefining Global Security: Liberalization, Eroding Sovereignty and Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict,” draws in part on our own work and in part on case studies prepared for a collaborative project between the Adlai Stevenson Program on Global Security at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and the Center for German and European Studies (CGES) and the Institute of International Studies (IIS) at the University of California, Berkeley. It has been funded by CGES, the Pew Charitable Trusts and IGCC. A number of the case study papers cited here as CGES Working Papers will appear in: Beverly Crawford and Ronnie D. Lipschutz (eds.), *The Political Economy of Cultural Conflict* (in preparation).

In this paper, we offer an account of the causes of ethnic and sectarian conflict that is applicable to a growing number of countries and regions. In brief: What we have come to call “ethnic and sectarian conflict” is neither ethnic nor sectarian *per se*. Rather, it is about struggles over the levers of power and wealth within societies and countries in which ethnicity and religion provide the cultural and historical resources for mobilizing popular support for particular elites. These countries are almost always caught in the throes of economic and political transformations, brought on by external factors and forces. These erode or destroy old social, political and economic relations—old ways of doing things—and conflicts follow. The outcomes of such struggles are not pre-determined—ethnic cleansing is not dictated by some kind of historical materialism. There are possibilities for intervention *before* violence erupts.

We begin this paper with a general discussion of how others have accounted for ethnic and sectarian conflict. We then present our framework for explaining the ways in which a relatively stable society and state can be quickly fractured by the logic of market and political reforms. We next argue that, although certain choices are open to the leadership of states faced with the need to reform, as often as not, political entrepreneurs will utilize ethnic and sectarian arguments in order to mobilize populations and advance their individual political programs. Following this, we describe the breakup of Yugoslavia, emphasizing the fragility of the internal ethnically-delineated fault lines that undermined the economic competitiveness and political viability of that country as a whole. Finally, we propose some ideas for addressing the dilemmas described here and, perhaps, easing political and economic transitions to liberal systems.

## What Causes Ethnic Conflict? The Conventional Wisdom

For the purposes of this paper, we can identify five general “theories” of ethnicity. The first suggests that ethnicity is *biological*; one view argues that ethnic tensions are, somehow, “natural.” Observes one scholar, “people reflexively grasp at ethnic or national identifications or what passes for them.”<sup>2</sup> An alternative formulation, which falls back on sociobiology, argues that “the urge to define and reject the other goes back to

our remotest human ancestors, and indeed beyond them to our animal predecessors.”<sup>3</sup>

Another view, as enunciated by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and others, invokes “long histories” and *primordiality*. It accounts for the emergence of ethnic politics and the accompanying violence by invoking “centuries” of accumulated hatreds among primordial “nations.” These hatreds, it is often argued, have exploded as a consequence of the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the repressive mechanisms that kept them from boiling over for four decades. Indeed, as can be seen in the case of Croatia and Serbia, such invocations, akin to a form of historical materialism, serve to “naturalize” ethnic consciousness and conflict almost as much as do genetic theories. Inasmuch as we cannot change historical consciousness, we must allow it to work its way out.

A third theory, most closely associated with Benedict Anderson, but held by many others, is the *imagined community*.<sup>4</sup> This view suggests that ethnicity and ethnic consciousness are best understood as the “intellectual projects” of a bourgeois intelligentsia seeking to establish what Ernest Gellner has called a “high culture” distinctive from other, already existing ones.<sup>5</sup> Such individuals are, often, located in the peripheral regions of empires or states, excluded from the center by reason of birth or class, yet highly-educated and aware of the cultural and political possibilities of an identity distinct from that of the center. Ethnicity, from this view, is cultural, and not inherently violent.

A fourth perspective is what might be called the *defensive* one. Here, the logics of the state and state politico-economic system start to come into play. Historically, states have been defined largely in terms of the territory they occupy and the resources and populations they control. Hence, the state must, of necessity, impose clearly-defined borders between itself and other states. To do this, the state must plausibly demonstrate that the identities of other states and groups pose a threat to its specific emergent “nation.” Herein, then, lies the logic for the politicization of group identity, or the emergence of “ethnicity” and “ethnic conflict”: self-defense.

The last view is *instrumental*: ethnicity is the result of projects designed to capture state power and control. But such projects are not totally ahistorical, as rational choice theory might have us believe. They are a response to the logics of the state-based system of politico-

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, James B. Rule, “Tribalism and the State,” *Dis-sent*, Fall, 1992, p. 519.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lewis, “Muslims, Christians, and Jews: The Dream of Coexistence,” *The New York Review of Books*, March 26, 1992, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities—Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991, 2nd ed.).

<sup>5</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

economic relations and globalization, but draw on historical and cultural elements that are already present. They invoke the “threats” posed by other real or emergent ethnicities as a reason for their own formation.<sup>6</sup> Efforts to provide “national/cultural autonomy” to ethnic and religious groups were tried in the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires, but failed largely because they did not provide to these groups the power accorded to the dominant identity group in those empires and their sub-units. Only through a “state of one’s own” was this possible.

The problem with each of these views or theories is that each provides some element of the whole, but none, taken alone, is complete. Moreover, each assumes that what we call “ethnicity” (or, alternatively, “nationalism”) is the same today as it was 200—or even 1,000—years ago. But the international political systems within which “ethnicities” have emerged over the past two centuries have not been static. To the extent that these systemic conditions pose demands and constraints on domestic political configurations, definitions of who belonged to and acted as a member of a given “ethnicity” must have varied over place and time. But how?

We see the causes of ethnic and sectarian conflict differently from the theories offered above. Current episodes of ethnic violence, so obviously correlated with the end of the Cold War, have been fueled in no small part by large-scale processes of economic and political change set in train long before 1989. Specifically, changes in the international “division of labor,” economic globalization, and the resulting pressures on countries to reform their domestic economic and political policies in order to more fully participate in the “community of nations”—all of which began during the Cold War—have had deleterious effects on the relative stability of some countries. The erosion of what we call “social contracts” undermines the political mechanisms for addressing questions of how power and wealth are distributed within countries, with violent conflict often the result. People do not grasp “reflexively” for their essential ethnic identity when political power and authority crumble; rather, exclusive and oppositional identities, based on ethnic, religious and class elements, are politically constructed and made virulent as those in power—or “political entrepreneurs” who would grasp power<sup>7</sup>—try to mobilize populations in support of their

struggles with other elites for political power, social status, and economic resources.<sup>8</sup> As René Lemarchand has put it in his study of Burundi,

The crystallization of group identities is not a random occurrence; it is traceable to specific strategies, pursued by ethnic entrepreneurs centrally concerned with the mobilization of group loyalties on behalf of collective interests defined in terms of kinship, region or ethnicity.... Clearly, one cannot overestimate the part played by individual actors in defining the nature of the threats posed to their respective communities, framing strategies designed to counter such threats, rallying support for their cause, bringing pressure to bear on key decision makers, and, in short, politicizing ethno-regional identities.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, the situation is never quite this simple. Many of the societies where such political entrepreneurs are, or have been, at work are already characterized by class differences that parallel ethnic ones.<sup>10</sup> Thus, through an appeal to chauvinistic ideologies of identity, political entrepreneurs are able to transform “ethnic” identities into tools of political mobilization and opposition by extracting or negotiating for more economic resources, status, and power within a “state of their own” than is available to them under existing economic and political arrangements. The collapse of Yugoslavia falls into this pattern, but it is apparent in any number of countries afflicted by ethnic conflict. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that even democratic capitalist countries might be affected by this process.

In making these arguments, we do not claim that pressures for economic or political reform are to “blame;” rather, we believe that the political and social changes required of countries in order to make the transition to economic liberalism and democracy destabilize pre-existing “social contracts” and make them vulnerable to particular types of political mobilization and violence. As our colleague Georgi Derlugian has put it, regarding conflicts usually labeled “ethnic,”

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mize their returns. For additional comments on political entrepreneurs, see David Laitin’s “Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Imperial Control and Political Cleavages in Yorubaland,” pp. 285–316, in: Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 302.

<sup>6</sup> See the essays in Uri Ra’anana, Maria Mesner, Keith Armes and Kate Martin, *State and Nation in Multi-ethnic Societies—The Breakup of Multinational States* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Political entrepreneurs resemble their economic counterpart in that they seek to maximize their individual interests and in doing so, have an effect on aggregate interests. The political entrepreneur seeks to maximize political power rather than wealth. Like their economic counterpart, they engage in risk taking behavior to maxi-

<sup>8</sup> Laitin, “Hegemony and Religious Conflict”; Paul R. Brass, “Ethnicity and Nationality Formation,” *Ethnicity* 3,3 (September 1976): 225–239.

<sup>9</sup> René Lemarchand, *Burundi—Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice* (New York and Cambridge: Wilson Center and Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 77.

<sup>10</sup> Georgi M. Derlugian, “The Tale of Two Resorts: Abkhazia and Ajaria Before and Since the Soviet Collapse,” Berkeley: Center for German and European Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Working Paper 6.2, March 1995.

[their sources are] to be found in the prevailing processes in a state's environment, that may be only tenuously divided into "external"—the interstate system and the world economy—and "internal" which, according to Charles Tilly, shapes the state's structure and its relation to the subject population and determines who are the major actors within a particular polity, as well as how they approach political struggle.<sup>11</sup>

There is nothing particularly new or novel about these arguments, or about the impacts of international economic change on the domestic politics of countries at different levels of development: Alexander Gerschenkron wrote about this in the early 1960s.<sup>12</sup> What *is* different now is that the processes of economic liberalization and integration, thought so important to economic competitiveness and growth, have, on the one hand, undermined the state while, on the other hand, creating a whole set of demands for "new" states. In the section that follows, we present an analytical framework for understanding why formerly stable societies are subject to such sudden and virulent collapse and violence.

## Liberalization and Social Contracts

All stable countries are characterized by political and social arrangements that have some form of historical legitimacy.<sup>13</sup> Following Locke, we can call these arrangements "social contracts."<sup>14</sup> Sometimes, these contracts are expressed in written constitutions; at other times, they are not written down, but are found instead in the political and social institutions of a country. In either case, such social contracts structure the terms of citizenship and inclusion in a country's political community, the rules of political participation, the political relationship between the central state and its

various regions, and the distribution of material resources within the country.

These social contracts tend to specify, as well, the roles that people may occupy within the country and society, and the relationships between these roles. Frequently, these roles and relationships have what we would call an "ethnic" or "religious" character as, for example, in the traditional caste system in India, or the "ethnic divisions of labor" one might have found throughout the lands of the former Ottoman Empire, institutionalized in the *millet* system. Such arrangements are still found in the Caucasus.<sup>15</sup> We do not claim that these social contracts are just, equitable or fair, or that they are respectful of human rights or economically-efficient. We only argue that, as historical constructs, they possess a certain degree of legitimacy and authority that allows societies to reproduce themselves in a fairly peaceful manner, over extended periods of time.

Such social contracts are not, of course, found only in "traditional" societies; the ex-Socialist countries were also characterized by such arrangements which were, once again, constitutive, if not constitutional. Certain groups or classes—the *nomenklatura*—were endowed with mostly-informal rights and access to resources that gave them power and wealth within these societies, while other groups, lacking such rights and access, nonetheless had their welfare provided for by the arrangements in place. Again, it is not our intention to argue the relative merits or faults of such a system; only to point out that they maintained a relative degree of social stability and cohesion within these countries.

These types of arrangements functioned reasonably well only so long as a country was able to maintain a relatively high degree of political, cultural and economic authority over the domestic realm. Autonomy in this respect can be maintained only so long as the state of affairs on the "outside" does not place unreasonable demands or pressures on such internal contracts.<sup>16</sup> As Gerschenkron observed, such isolation has been very difficult to maintain in the industrialized world, and "followers" often find their survival resting on emulating the development processes of the "leaders." The successful development strategies pursued by followers such as Germany and Japan made it possible for them to become Great Powers after only a few decades of effort.

There is, however, a significant difference between the process described by Gerschenkron and the situation faced by countries today. At the turn of the century, state

<sup>11</sup> Derlugian, "Tale of Two Resorts," pp. 1–2.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962). For a more recent discussion of this process, see Beverly Crawford, "Hawks, Doves, but No Owls: International Economic Interdependence and the Construction of the New Security Dilemma," pp. 149–86, in: Ronnie D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> "Stability" is obviously a tenuous concept. What appears to the outside or historical observer to be stable is usually quite dynamic. See, for example, the semi-fictional account of Visegrad, in Bosnia, in Ivo Andrić's *The Bridge on the Drina* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, trans. L.F. Edwards).

<sup>14</sup> The notion of the Lockean "contract" is addressed by Andrew V. Bell-Fialkoff and Andrei S. Markovits in "Nationalism: Rethinking the Paradigm in the European Context," Berkeley: Center for German and European Studies, UC Berkeley, Working Paper 6.7, March 1995.

<sup>15</sup> Derlugian, "A Tale of Two Resorts."

<sup>16</sup> Again, truly-autonomous societies have not existed for thousands of years; the key to social stability lies in the extent to which societies are "penetrated" by others. Empires tended to be more insular and "multi-layered," so that a more-or-less standardized social contract was imposed on local societies and adapted to local conditions. Again, see Derlugian, "A Tale of Two Resorts."

security—territorial survival and cultural distinctiveness—was *the* primary national goal, and it was manifested within Europe through nationalism, imperialism, and alliances, when needed. In the name of state security, governments were able to mobilize populations toward statist ends via centralized systems of education, employment and social welfare. These programs also served, by and large, to improve individual welfare, thereby reinforcing loyalty to and identification with the state. The goals of state and individual were, for the most part, in concert.

While state security remains a concern today, the generation of national wealth and individual enrichment have replaced territorial integrity as the articulation of state strength—the “trading state” has replaced the “territorial state”.<sup>17</sup> Economic liberalism puts a premium, moreover, on *individual* rights and mobility as a central engine of domestic growth, this in place of the rights of the *state* to manage national development, which was primary at the beginning of the 20th century. Countries are pushed, moreover, by the pressures of the global economic system into the pursuit of domestic policies that will make them attractive to capital and foreign investment. This, according to the conventional wisdom, will help them to build up an industrial base that will allow further generation of wealth, creation of economic opportunities for individual and country, and a general improvement in living standards. In turn, it is hoped that this will reduce pressures on governments for domestic redistribution.

Such policies of “structural adjustment,” and their consequences, have been extensively analyzed, with conflicting conclusions. Some argue that they have little or no impact on social and political stability; others find that they do.<sup>18</sup> Such policies can lead, in any case, to a paradox—contradiction might be a better term: the state’s right and ability to mobilize popular support is being undermined at the very point at which the state is required to implement policies that further erode popular support and legitimacy. What is critical is that strategies of economic and political adjustment are not implemented, or even discussed, in isolation. They raise questions about the very matrix of social relations, power and wealth that characterize every society in every country in the world: the social contract, in other words.

Conflict can develop, in particular, when external pressures to adjust are translated into the changes

deemed necessary to the domestic political and economic system. Social contracts are characterized by particular distributions of power and wealth, which have become institutionalized over decades, if not longer. Political and economic transitions to democracy and capitalism challenge these distributions and threaten those—the dominant class, social group or political elite—who already possess power and wealth.

At the same time, such transitions also offer great opportunities to those entrepreneurial enough to see the opportunities to acquire power and wealth inherent in the newly-emerging systems. But these periods also set the context in which political violence can erupt, as struggles develop over *who* is to gain control of the newly-contested levers of institutional power. It is in these contexts that what appears to be ethnic or sectarian conflict is most likely to develop.

To borrow a term from Marxist analysis, such situations are “underdetermined.” Old institutional arrangements have been discredited and have lost their legitimacy, but this does not mean that the holders of power in those old arrangements have been executed or exiled. Often, they remain in place. But the new order, whether democratic or not, relies for its legitimacy on new practices, such as the holding of open elections or privatization of property. These can lead to shifts of power and wealth that are likely to be contested by the old power-holders. They may then seek to restore some version of the *status quo ante*. Ironically, perhaps, these very same mechanisms can also lead to reproduction of the *status quo ante*, under a different name (as in Romania), thereby generating oppositional movements who seek to capture power in the name of a “truly” new order.

Amidst all of this, the state, its agencies and its properties become mechanisms for retaining or acquiring the power and authority to enforce the new institutional mechanisms, as well as to acquire wealth, provide it to colleagues, and deny it to opponents. According to Lemarchand,

The essential point to note...is the centrality of the state both as an instrument of group domination and as an arena where segments of the dominant group compete among themselves to gain maximum control over patronage resources. So from this perspective the state, far from being a mere abstraction, emerges as a cluster of individual contestants and cliques actively involved in the struggle for control over the party, the army, the government, the civil service, and parastatal organizations.<sup>19</sup>

Such struggles are further exacerbated by the relative weakness of the state in transition: As an institution

<sup>17</sup> Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State—Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman (eds.), *The Politics of Economic Adjustment: International Constraints, Distributive Conflicts and the State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> Lemarchand, *Burundi*, p. 77.



whose very form is, momentarily, underdetermined, the possibilities for acquiring control are many and varied. One of the most potent possibilities exists through the mobilization of pre-existing social groups or communities, via manipulation of identity and, more specifically, what we call “ethnicity” or “sectarianism.”<sup>20</sup>

It is important to note that the exogenous forces which trigger such internal struggles are not, in and of themselves, to blame for the violence that may follow. Economically and politically liberal societies are, when all is said and done, preferable to non-liberal ones in terms of fairness, justice and equity. But the process of transition is fraught with risks and full of pitfalls, and the ability of a society to make the shift is strongly constrained by the continued presence of social structures (and memories) from earlier periods. There was no compelling reason why Yugoslavia should have fallen apart along ethnic lines, except that its constituent republics were named in these terms, and resources distributed to them in these terms.<sup>21</sup>

## The Sources of Domestic Conflicts

To return to the question: Why are ethnicity and religion implicated in so many of the political struggles and wars presently taking place around the world? Our analytical framework suggests that it is not ethnicity or religion, *per se*, that is at issue but, to quote Humpty Dumpty, “who is to be master?” In the setting of political struggle, the attributes of ethnicity and religion are resources that can be manipulated to invoke real or imagined historical episodes and injustices perpetrated by one group against another, the better to establish bonds of kinship between some people and bonds of enmity between others. The mobilization of ethnic and religious identity by political entrepreneurs is, in other words, highly instrumental.

Instrumental or not, however, once the furies of ethnic and religious enmity have been loosed, people die, communities are uprooted or turned to rubble, and histories vanish. Those are events that cannot be undone; the pieces of broken societies cannot be put back together. This makes it all the more imperative to understand, first, what conditions provoke effective mobilization of ethnicity and religion and, second, what

might be done to head off the wars of ethnic cleansing that are so rapidly become a commonplace part of the international landscape.

Not all social contracts are inflexible. There are many countries undergoing economic and political transitions of one sort or another that have not fallen into overt ethnic or religious warfare. What accounts for these different outcomes? Here, it is useful to introduce several terms and distinctions. First, we distinguish between *liberal* and *illiberal* political systems. In ideal terms, the former are characterized by impersonal contractual relations and procedural rules; individual rights; civil liberties; pluralism; secular society; social, political, and religious tolerance. Liberal politics seek social and ethnic integration in civil societies. Such systems institutionalize open competition for government office, and the resolution of social conflicts through representational systems. Losers are not supposed to try to reverse outcomes by force; rather, they join with other opposition forces to compete in the next election, or try to influence the winners through accepted political procedures.

Illiberal politics, by contrast, are characterized by competition for power among groups who seek to eradicate opposition and eliminate differences. Power acquired and held through personal relations or force, and categorization on the basis of group or collective characteristics, are common. Class and social difference may be reinforced. Some analysts explain the rise of illiberal politics by suggesting that they are “primordial” and, thus, more “natural” than liberal politics. These explanations blame the current wave of ethnic violence—illiberal politics in the extreme—on the collapse of the centralized power that was previously able to repress such conflict.

The second distinction has to do with the nature of conflicts within societies. Some conflicts are *constitutive*, in that they involve debate over the very terms of participation in the political system. Other conflicts are *distributive*, in that they have to do with the apportioning of power and wealth within a country. Generally speaking, distributive conflicts are governed by established rules and have to do with “who gets how much?” (Laswell’s classic definition). Constitutive conflicts seek to change the rules themselves, and have to do with “who gets to play?”

Thus, for example, “who is an American?” is a constitutive issue; “how much government help should we each get?” is a distributive issue. The latter is conventionally the focus of institutionalized procedures within the legislative and executive branches of the country and individual states. But distributive conflict can also be addressed by reading selected groups out of the polity, such as “illegal immigrants.” Changes in

<sup>20</sup> Suffice it here to note that the choice of ethnic identity or religion as the basis for political mobilization is a product of the fashions of the times. Just as attempts to grab power in client states during the Cold War were always framed in terms of East vs. West, so today they are much more likely to be framed in terms of identity, which comes to have all of the characteristics of an instrumental ideology.

<sup>21</sup> The basis for this division is discussed in detail in Branka Magaš, *The Destruction of Yugoslavia—Tracking the Break-up 1980–92* (London: Verso, 1993).

qualifying standards can, consequently, change the very character of the political system.

The problems defined by these two types of idealized distinctions—liberal vs. illiberal; constitutive vs. distributive—are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Types of Social Conflicts**

	Liberal systems	Illiberal systems
Distributive issues	Who gets what?	Who doles out?
Constitutive issues	Who belongs?	Who dominates?

### 1. Distributive conflicts in liberal systems

involve organized debate over the distribution (or redistribution) of social and economic resources and not fundamental questions of identity; such debates seem to be resolved, generally-speaking, within the institutionalized political processes of the polity.

### 2. Distributive conflicts within illiberal systems

involve the allocation of resources, either on the basis of a long-standing social contract or through outright division by “drawing lines.” A sufficiently strong state can, in these instances, force a solution; a weak state might simply decide not to contest *de facto* territorial divisions, so long as they don’t threaten outright centralized rule.

### 3. Constitutive conflicts in liberal systems

involve contestations over national identity, conducted largely in the symbolic languages and discourses of the political system.<sup>22</sup> Periods of instability involve redefinitions of identity. While these may include episodes of organized violence between ethnic and religious groups, they tend not, as a rule, to break down into instrumental warfare.

### 4. Constitutive conflicts in illiberal systems

appear to have the greatest propensity for collapse into outright warfare. Here, the very basis of the “social contract” is at issue, that is, the nature of the state and the question of who holds power are the focus of conflict. The government of a nation facing such a challenge must either suppress it through illiberal means, as Slovakia periodically attempts to do to its ethnic Hungarian citizens, or grant cultural or political autonomy to dissident groups. Doing so risks fostering a breakaway region; not doing so risks fostering outright resistance.

In reality, these categories are idealized ones. They tend to blend into each other, and circumstances can shift a political system from one category to another. What these categories suggest is that more liberal political systems are less subject to the types of ethnic and religious conflict ravaging the former Yugoslavia and other countries; political liberalism might, in other words, provide a solution. The difficulty is that the transition from an illiberal to a liberal system is, ordinarily, a *constitutive* process, in that it involves revising the rules of participation in the *distributive* process. But there are no firm rules in place governing such a revision of the rules of participation. The usual formula for such a rewriting is to hold a constitutional convention, but no one can ensure that such constitutions are fundamentally liberal or inclusive, as illustrated by the case of Croatia. In the end, power is often grabbed or lines are drawn. Either is a formula for shooting.

## The Third Balkan War: Yugo Meets Hyundai<sup>23</sup>

The case of Yugoslavia is almost archetypal in terms of the process described above. Burdened by a territorial, ethnically-defined “division of labor” established following the violence of World War II, by the 1980s, Yugoslavia faced the choice of economic and political reform or peripheralization. The competition for Western markets between the Yugo and the Hyundai symbolized the dilemma and the dead end facing the country: What export opportunities were there for a cheap, shoddily-made car, when a cheap, well-made one was also on the market? Even at the time, as late-night TV talk show jokes suggested, the answer to the dilemma was not so obscure. In retrospect, it is crystal clear: economic reform. But attempts to reform the economy of Yugoslavia, to make it better able to compete in world markets, foundered again and again on the shoals of the republican distribution of resources, which had been defined in terms of the “nations” of Yugoslavia (Slovene, Serb, Croat, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Macedonian).<sup>24</sup> In the end, to push an unfortunate

<sup>23</sup> This section is based on Beverly Crawford, “Yugo Meets Hyundai: The Fall of Yugoslavia.” We are indebted to Georgi Derlugian for the notion of an automotive competition.

<sup>24</sup> Within the Yugoslav Federation, Kosovo and Vojvodina were both designated as “Socialist Autonomous Provinces,” a status unilaterally abolished by the Serbian government in April 1989. Kosovo, although part of Serbia, is primarily Albanian; Vojvodina, also part of Serbia, includes a substantial Hungarian population. Both Albanians and Hungarians were treated as “national minorities,” since each had its own “national homeland” in Albania and Hungary.

<sup>22</sup> Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

metaphor farther, the crew fell to fighting amongst themselves and the ship of state went straight to the bottom.

Before the demise of the Soviet Union, Communist ideology tried to reduce the saliency of ethnicity in socialist states as a source of political identity, by substituting for it a more “cosmopolitan” socialist one. Public debate on ethnicity as a *political issue or point of conflict* was largely forbidden.<sup>25</sup> The grievances of particular ethnic groups thus had to be articulated in economic and social terms, which were the only bases regarded as legitimate by the state and party for a claim to resources.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the division of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia into “ethnic” republics was a deliberate attempt to transform what had been a sensitive matter throughout Europe since the days of the great empires into cultural identities and administrative entities, so as to prevent their re-emergence as a major political force that might challenge communist regimes.

The ultimate flaw in this strategy was laid bare when these regimes began to weaken: when administrative republics defined in national/ethnic terms became the new bases of state power for political elites, unequal distribution of resources among these administrative republics came to be viewed not administratively, but nationalistically/ethnically. This ensured a struggle among national/ethnic groups over those dwindling resources. Moreover, economic pressures, both internal and external, dictated that any efforts to defuse this point of conflict would, eventually, fail. On the one hand, resentment was nurtured between republics. On the other, “affirmative action” programs that were designed to address differences had the effect of institutionalizing inefficiency in the interest of inter-republic equity. This, in turn, reduced such international competitiveness as might have been achievable under central planning.

This dilemma is well-illustrated in the fate of Yugoslavia, where the federal government sought to maintain a communist monopoly of power by substituting regional ethnic “pluralism” for liberal-style political pluralism. Rather than risk the emergence of federation-wide (non-ethnic) political parties able to challenge communist rule, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, under Tito, established a decentralized federation of ethnically-based republics as the basis of constituency. These republics were never intended to

become autonomous bases of power for republican politicians; rather, they were meant to serve as pillars of support for the Federation and the power of the ruling party by *dividing* potential opposition along both regional and ethnic lines. This, of course, meant that when a constitutive “politics of resentment” emerged in the 1980s, it did so along exactly along these lines.

The pattern of entitlements among regions which was so resented by the individual republics was put in place by the federal government during Tito’s rule precisely in order to buy regional loyalty to the Yugoslav state through distributive tactics. Tito reasoned that ethnic tensions, largely the residue of the massacres of World War II, could be reduced if each republic was given access to the economic and political resources necessary to equalize them. He thus established an ambitious program that channeled resources to the republics and regions according to their economic needs and level of development. Inasmuch as each republic had already attained a different level of economic development, ranging from “developed” in the northwest to “less developed” in the southeast, such a redistribution program was, inevitably, unequal. Open knowledge of this inequality gradually began to create tensions that would ultimately undermine support for the federal state.

It is important to note here that political and economic resource differentials in Yugoslavia emerged not as the result of any logic of the international economy, but rather via particular historical circumstances under which ethnic differences had been made politically salient for the purposes of internal development. For instance, although Croatia was the second most developed region of Yugoslavia, it was deprived of its full share of resources throughout the post-war period as punishment for the Croats’ wartime collaboration with Nazi Germany. Montenegro and Serbia, as the centers of wartime Communist resistance, received the lion’s share of support during the same time. This imbalance led to a crisis at the beginning of the 1970s, in which Croatia agitated for greater autonomy (if not outright independence). Tito was only able to avert a blowup by threatening the use of force to put down the insurgents in Zagreb.

But Yugoslavia was, in many ways, also more vulnerable to international economic processes than other centrally planned economies. Unlike other communist states, after the break with the Soviet Union in 1949 it did not have a patron to which it could turn for economic assistance, cheap resources, or ready markets. Instead, Yugoslavia found itself increasingly isolated and dependent on the West for aid and investment, and the amounts forthcoming were never adequate for its needs. The oil shocks of the 1970s put the country into an economically-perilous position. During that decade and the following one, as a communist state—even one

<sup>25</sup> This is not to ignore the Bolsheviks’ original use of ethnicity as a means of generating support among minorities in the peripheral regions of the Russian Empire. Later, however, ethnic mobilization became a Communist “sin,” except where it was used for specific political purposes. See Derlugian, “A Tale of Two Resorts.”

<sup>26</sup> See Maria N. Todorova, “Language in the Construction of Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Bulgarian Case,” Berkeley: Center for German and European Studies, UC Berkeley, Working Paper 5.5.

courted by the West—Yugoslavia received stern treatment at the hands of the international lending community, and found itself falling ever farther behind.

As the economy stagnated, the federal government was forced to give up its program for equalizing regional development. This, in turn, undermined republican loyalties and heralded the onset of tension between the developed and less developed regions, triggering expressions of resentment along ethnic lines. Thus, in a reversal of Tito’s intentions and hopes, the shrinking of the economic pie, the weakening of the federal state, and the growing struggle over resources had the effect of *reinforcing* ethnic identities and enhancing the political power of regional and republican political entrepreneurs. It also contributed to further economic decline.

As the various regional political elites began to acquire greater autonomy—part of a negotiated deal to keep the increasingly fragile federation from flying apart—they began to implement self-protective import substitution policies, leading to significant losses in economies of scale. The governments of the various ethnic republics also failed to coordinate economic policies and foreign exchange stockpiles, which made capital for new investment scarce. Finally, the resulting losses of revenue to the federal government helped to undermine its ability to resist further regional encroachments on its increasingly futile attempts to coordinate economic activity.

But that was only half of the story: Yugoslavia was also thrown into an international economic competitiveness bind. The divergent effects of demand in international markets on the regional economies placed additional and competing stresses on the federal government. The relatively developed and more competitive republic of Slovenia demanded greater integration into the international economy, whereas the less-developed Montenegrins wanted protection from the vagaries of international market forces. The system was designed mainly to meet the loudest and best organized demands of various political entrepreneurs, and these conflicting demands further reduced the federal government’s ability to deal effectively with pressing economic problems and issues of economic restructuring.

What the republics and regions did not drain from the central state, the international economy did. By the early eighties, in an era dedicated increasingly to neo-classical economic reform, Yugoslavia found itself with an incoherent and *ad hoc* system of state interventionist policies in the economy. It faced mounting debt payments without any return on moneys spent. Unable to meet these obligations, Yugoslavia was confronted with stiff IMF conditionality requirements as the price for long-term and extensive debt rescheduling. Lacking the capability to create a coherent stabilization program, the

federal government’s application for assistance from the IMF was turned down.

By 1982, Yugoslavia was forced to accept an even more draconian policy of rescheduling. The IMF imposed a strict emergency package on the country’s economy, greatly reducing the state’s scope for policy discretion. By 1983, devaluations of the currency and an orchestrated drop in domestic demand, both of which were IMF requirements, as well as the Reagan recession in the West, led to a precipitous fall in growth rates for the country and the further cannibalization of the economy by the regional governments. With its powers and resources drastically reduced, the federal state became paralyzed. Centrifugal elements served to divert development funds to those regions with the most political clout, while federalists looked on helplessly.

With Tito’s death, it was inevitable that Croatian claims for greater autonomy and resources would re-emerge. The Serbo-Croatian alliance, which served as the backbone of the Yugoslavian federation, began to fall apart. As a state that was both weak and decentralized, Yugoslavia was not capable of with-standing these forces of fragmentation. The wars, predicted by many after Tito’s death in 1980, finally began, driven by the desires of some republics—particularly Serbia and Croatia—to bring within their borders those national brethren “trapped” in other republics.

Political entrepreneurs on both sides, intent on enhancing their power and independence vis à vis the federal government and each other, began to manipulate the cultural and historical symbols and practices that distinguished Serbians from Croatians. Thus, Slobodan Milošević in Serbia and Franjo Tuđman in Croatia rose to power through constitutive, rather than distributive, strategies. That is, their platforms did not propose unity on the basis of shared growth through a more equitable distribution of resources along regional lines, but instead promised access to resources on the basis of separate ethnic identities that, they claimed, would make each republic a rich and powerful actor in the region.

To do this, both Milošević and Tuđman recast history as one long struggle against an implacable and hostile “other.” In Croatia, for example, nationalist “scholars” asserted that references to Croatians could be found in 2,500-year old Persian sources. This supposedly proved that the Croatians were linked with “Aryans” (who were themselves Persians), a claim that served retrospectively to justify the wartime alliance with Hitler. Moreover, according to these Croatian intellectuals, enmity with Serbia was centuries old. In response, Serbia produced its own form of self-serving nationalist scholarship, proclaiming a right to a “Greater Serbia” that would include not only the Serbian republic and territories populated by Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro, but also the historical Serbian “heartland”

of Kosovo, more than 90 percent of whose current inhabitants are ethnic Albanians.

In point of fact, however, Serb–Croat hostility was not ancient at all, inasmuch as its origins are to be found in the declining decades of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The bloody battles in which hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Croats and others died, and which created such enmity between Serb and Croat, date only from World War II, when Nazi Germany encouraged and provoked such conflict as a means of maintaining control.<sup>27</sup> The results of political disintegration and ethnic enmity are now visible for all to see. Even at this late date, it is possible to say that such an outcome was neither inevitable nor natural: It was, rather, the result of deliberate choices made at specific points in time, fostered by a political system that provided no basis for constitutive change except outright secession. Whether the rest of the world might have forced different choices to be made is difficult to say.

## More Yugoslavias On Order?

The primary question that follows from the Yugoslav case is whether it is unique, or characteristic of a more general phenomenon. The case studies of other “ethnic” conflicts undertaken as part of this project suggest that Yugoslavia is unique only in terms of its recent political economy and the historical and cultural resources available for manipulation by political entrepreneurs. The particular resources vary from one place to another, but the pattern is largely the same: Where the circumstances supporting social contracts have come under sudden and strong pressure from various external forces, and where constitutive questions come into play, political entrepreneurs often emerge to manipulate contexts as a means to acquiring or restoring their power. In some instances, the result is a “revolution,” in which old constitutive arrangements are overthrown and new ones take their place; in others, outcomes are less clear, although casualties are not.

Following the organizing principle enumerated earlier in this paper—liberal vs. illiberal politics, constitutive vs. distributive changes—we briefly describe below cases that fall into each of the categories.

**Table 2: Cases of Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict**

Liberal systems	Illiberal systems
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<sup>27</sup> Cited in Daniel Chirot, “National Liberations and Nationalist Nightmares: The Consequences of the End of Empires in the Twentieth Century,” pp. 43–71, in: Beverly Crawford (ed.), *Markets, States and Democracy: The Political Economy of Post-Communist Transformation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).

Distributive	Germany	Ajaria
Constitutive	Russia	Yugoslavia, Abkhazia

### The Two Resorts: Distributive/Illiberal<sup>28</sup>

The ability of ethnic entrepreneurs, in illiberal contexts, to conclude various kinds of political and military alliances with alternative centers of power is best illustrated by the examples of Abkhazia and Ajaria, both located within the now-independent Republic of Georgia. There we see instances of both war *and* relative stability, each a result of ethnic differentiation and the construction of such alliances, as documented by Georgi M. Derlugian. The war between the ethnically defined “autonomous republic” of Abkhazia and the central government in Tbilisi is well-known, having been widely reported in the Western media. Virtually unknown has been the relative degree of peace within Ajaria, another “autonomous republic” within Georgia. Why the difference, especially insofar as it also involved Islam “against” Orthodox Christianity?

According to Derlugian, the Ajarian leadership developed alliances, and pursued a strategy, focused on minimizing the disruption to the “social contract” that existed prior to the Soviet collapse. Having seen the results of ethnic warfare in other parts of Georgia, the people of Ajaria—very few of whom are actually Ajarian—seem to have acquiesced to this approach. More to the point, following the defeat of the Georgian “armies” in Abkhazia, the authorities in Tbilisi reached a *modus vivendi* with Ajaria, as follows: We will not try to forcibly reintegrate Ajaria into Georgia, so long as you do not try to legally secede.

Why the different outcomes? Based on the categories outlined above, we can see the Abkhazian case as one in which the very constitutive nature of the “autonomous republic” was the focus of conflict: Was it to be “Abkhazian” or “Georgian?” Since it could not be both, a bloody war broke out. In the case of Ajaria—“the country without a people,” as Derlugian calls it—the issue has been: Who gets what? By tacit agreement—and in order to avoid more bloody showdowns—Ajaria remains a *de jure* part of Georgia at the same time as it has achieved *de facto* autonomy, if not independence. So far, no war.

### The Politics of Identity in Moscow: Constitutive/Liberal<sup>29</sup>

Another instructive Russian case involves the politics of identity in Moscow, where a constitutive/liberal conflict

<sup>28</sup> Derlugian, “The Tale of Two Resorts.”

<sup>29</sup> Michael Urban, “National Conflict Internalized: A Discourse Analysis of the Fall of the First Russian Republic,” Berkeley: Center for German and European Studies, UC Berkeley, Working Paper 6.3, March 1995.

is in progress. There, as described by Michael Urban, the focus of conflict was and is not ethnicity, per se—since all political entrepreneurs are either Great Russian or pretend to be—but *who* best represents *what* Russia ought to be, given the complete disruption of the old social contract.<sup>30</sup> Here, the most vituperative epithet available has been to call someone else a “Bolshevik,” since these are now seen as the direct antithesis of “Russian.” The paradoxical result is that even dyed-in-the-wool communists call their opponents “Bolsheviks,” in the attempt to legitimate their vision of Russia’s political future.<sup>31</sup>

But the cat-calling in the Duma seems to carry little weight on the outside, and this may be the reason that civil war has not broken out in Moscow (or elsewhere in Russia) among Russians. To the Russian people, the struggles amongst the political elite appear, for the most part, to be cynical ploys to gain political power. In an economic setting where entrepreneurs—usually criminal—are the new social elite, however, politicians cannot even deliver to their supporters a few extra rubles a month.<sup>32</sup> There is clearly little or no benefit to be gotten from getting involved in the politics of identity, and the low levels of interest are reflected in declining voter participation in elections and referenda.

Why, then, call this situation “constitutive” and “liberal?” The point is not that Russia is fully liberal, but that it has adopted a system within which constitutive matters are to be dealt with through semi-democratic institutions—at least in Moscow. Although Russia could shift into one of the other categories at some point in the near future—and some might argue that the Yelstine dictatorship has already arrived<sup>33</sup>—there is in place a more-or-less institutionalized system of elections for contesting the distribution of power. More to the point, attempts by various groupings to foreclose on the meaning of a Russian “identity” have, so far, been unsuccessful. Until someone is able to co-opt this meaning, the conflict will remain largely confined to the hallways and meeting rooms of Moscow.

<sup>30</sup> This is not entirely true, inasmuch as actions have been taken to expel from Moscow people from the Caucasus.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted, however, that one of the four Communist parties allied behind Gennadi Zyganov, the Communist candidate for Russian Federation President in the 1996 elections, proudly bears the name “Bolshevik.”

<sup>32</sup> See Jack F. Matlock, “Russia: The Power of the Mob,” *New York Review of Books*, July 13, 1995, pp. 12–15.

<sup>33</sup> The attack on Chechnya is a constitutive/illiberal phenomenon, however, inasmuch as, for domestic political reasons, the Yeltsin government was not content to “let sleeping dogs lie” and ignore the Chechen leadership’s “declaration of independence.”

### The Case of Germany: Distributive/Liberal<sup>34</sup>

It is not only developing nations or countries in transition, that can fall victim to ethnic or religious conflict through mechanisms brought on by external forces such as economic globalization and liberalization. The developed world is not immune. There are, however, greater possibilities for resolving such conflicts inherent in the political institutions and distributive mechanisms found in liberal societies. Recent events in Germany underscore the ways in which a strong liberal state, presiding over a mature, industrialized society, but experiencing economic and political transitions, may fall into conflict along ethnic and sectarian lines. At the same time, these conflicts have been addressed within the German political system, offering some hope that they will not play themselves out to a bitter end.

In spite of the establishment of liberal political institutions, German citizenship has been historically based on “blood.” To this day, Germany maintains the “right of return” for ethnic Germans, who can claim full rights of German citizenship regardless of where they live, what language they speak and how many generations their family has lived beyond the country’s current borders. In contrast, a child of Turkish immigrants, born and raised in Germany and speaking perfect, colloquial German, might never be able to achieve either the legal or societal trappings of German citizenship, and instead be attacked verbally and physically as a “refugee.”

As the costs of unification continue to mount and growth has slowed, the gloss on Germany’s liberal economic and political institutions has begun to fade. During the five years following unification, the extreme right in Germany expanded significantly, with a growing number of attacks by skinheads and neo-Nazis on Turkish and Asian *Gastarbeiter*, as well as on Jewish memorials, gay and lesbian organizations, and Eastern European economic refugees. Although rightist and xenophobic youth movements are to be found throughout Germany, it is in the former East Germany where they have become the most visible.

What is perhaps most alarming is that these attacks were facilitated by widespread resentment and xenophobia in large segments of the population as a whole, including in the former West Germany, evidenced by up to 27% voter support for virulently anti-foreigner *Republikaner* candidates in local elections of the late 1980’s. Through the early 1990s, those who attacked foreigners were often rewarded with limited and lenient sentencing by state officials.

<sup>34</sup> John Leslie, “Re-emerging Ethnic Politics in Germany: Far Right Politics and Violence,” Berkeley: Center for German and European Studies, UC Berkeley, Working Paper 6.11, June 1995.

How has this “ethnic” issue been addressed in Germany? Even at the time, it was clear that the “problem” was not so much the presence of non-German ethnic groups *per se*, as it was the fear that large numbers of immigrants arriving on Germany’s doorstep, asking for asylum, would impose excessive economic burdens on the country, even as the costs of unification continued to mount. Already by the time of the fall of the wall, the economic fortunes of the “bottom third” of the West German economic ladder had already declined precipitously: that group formed the strong base of support for early *Republikaner* calls to halt European economic integration—on, among others, grounds that full integration would be the death knell for such “truly German” foods as locally-made sausages—which rapidly expanded to calls more expressly xenophobic.<sup>35</sup> Still, the *Republikaner* primarily engaged in rhetoric. The more violent, vocal, organized, and widespread rise of the right in the former East Germany is, beyond question, a reflection of the extraordinary economic and political dislocation experienced by those who live there.

The German solution was not a particularly liberal one—abolishing the long-standing policy of asylum for refugees—but neither was it constitutive. It simply set much more stringent standards for the granting of asylum, thereby putting a theoretical limit, at least, on the costs associated with the presence of non-Germans in the country. More to the point, violence escalating to the extremes of massive, organized vandalism of Jewish cemeteries and fire-bombings of state-run hostels for asylum-seeking families so shocked the German polity that right-wing parties were finally largely driven out of the electoral arena, and much greater attention was paid to the economic difficulties at hand.

## Conclusion

Political and economic liberalism, often posited as the answer to the kinds of conflict we have described above, are not sufficient to stave them off. It appears that even the first attempts to rationalize formerly illiberal systems can foster disintegrative forces within societies. By setting in train changes in the terms of the social contract on which a relative degree of political and social stability has rested, such actions can throw open the fundamental constitutive rules that hold societies together and set the

stage for constitutive conflicts that may escalate into violence. Only those regimes willing to wield force, or those countries with strongly-institutionalized mechanisms for addressing these issues, seem able to dampen these ethnic and sectarian conflicts. Even then, as the case of India illustrates, what works in one situation (Punjab) may not work in another, similar one (Kashmir).<sup>36</sup>

There are very good reasons to think that even in those cases where such mechanisms exist, they may, eventually, break down. It is, for example, acknowledged widely that the post-World War II political and economic reconstruction and resurgence of Western Europe would not have happened in the absence of a strong welfare state able to hold off social conflict through the redistribution of resources.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, in many less-developed regions, various social groups demanded collective entitlements as the cost of political stability. Consequently, some states began to distribute or redistribute resources to them.

The muting of regional conflict, and the maintenance of liberal principles, were possible because ample resources were available to Western European states during the post-war period of high economic growth. As those resources began to diminish during the periods of stagnation in the 1970s and 1980s, these countries, and the European Union as a whole, began to implement policies of economic liberalization, and to “build down” the welfare state. As a consequence, central states were weakened and redistribution dwindled; today, regional (read “ethnic”) tensions have become a potentially serious problem in some parts of the EU. The principle difference between the Western European example, and developing and “post-socialist” countries, is the greater ability of the state to oppose and resist the centrifugal force of ethnic conflict. In the rush to regain competitiveness, however, these countries could be making a mistake that will come to haunt them in the future.

In short, the strength of a liberal political system depends not only on the availability of resources and economic growth that help to make it more attractive than the alternatives, but also on mechanisms to “bring in” those who, for whatever reason, do not benefit from the operation of the market. Economic depressions and major recessions have historically been correlated with resorts, often by dominant groups, to illiberal identity politics and to social mobilization along ethnic and

<sup>35</sup> Field officer reports, U.S. Consulate, Stuttgart, 1989, in personal interview with Jennifer. R. Pournelle, then a military advisor with the U.S. delegation, Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBM), Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Our thanks to Jennifer for her material and insights on events in Germany 1987–1991.

<sup>36</sup> The two cases are discussed in Nirvikar Singh, “Conflict in India: Punjab and Kashmir,” Berkeley: Center for German and European Studies, UC Berkeley, Working Paper 6.10, March 1995.

<sup>37</sup> John G. Ruggie, “International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order,” pp. 195–232, in: Stephen D. Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

sectarian lines, as various social groups seek the political means to grab the biggest piece of a shrinking pie. Ironically, the welfare state that managed the pie has become the key institution to capture in that distributive struggle; recent events in the United States clearly illustrate this last point.<sup>38</sup>

The bottom line of this project has been framed best by Derlugian, who argues that

ethnicity must be exonerated from being the main culprit in “ethnic” conflict. Ethnicity is, in other words, instrumental, and not primordial. Of course, the instrumentalization of ethnicity must be somewhat credible to those being addressed, and must therefore refer to a litany of more-or-less real conflicts and grievances—or imagine them into being by the means of modern propaganda. Yet, this always remains a fairly circumstantial process that cannot be completely controlled. “Accidents” (or contextual contingencies) such as violence-waging capabilities, the degree of regional insulation enjoyed by local bodies of power, external alliances and internal cleavages, the degree of popular participation and, yes, even the personality of current leaders, do make a difference.<sup>39</sup>

Given the argument and cases offered above, how should policymakers respond to situations in which ethnicity appears to be the trigger of violent conflict among neighboring or within multi-ethnic communities? This question is testing the ingenuity of some of the best diplomatic minds of the decade. The difficulties can best be framed as follows:

1. Where “ethnic and sectarian” tensions are building, external involvement is usually seen by those in power as an intrusion on state sovereignty. Hence, foreign policymakers and international institutions are loathe to become involved.
2. Where “ethnic and sectarian” violence has begun to occur, the state usually seeks to impose its “solution” on the communities in conflict. Inasmuch as the state is generally dominated by one of the groups in conflict—often the one that has provoked the tensions and violence—such “solutions” are likely to exacerbate the problem. Again, external involvement is seen as a violation of sovereignty.
3. If open social warfare has broken out, those who would intervene to restore or “keep” peace must be willing to commit military power and financial resources and to suffer casualties. Domestic opposition in the intervening countries is likely to make policymakers reluctant to do more than saber-

rattle. The inchoate response of both the UN and NATO in the former Yugoslavia between 1990 and 1994 suggest that “peacemaking” in the midst of war is a difficult, if not impossible, proposition.<sup>40</sup>

4. More to the point, if intervention is to take place, it must happen before war breaks out; once war has begun, it may be that, apropos John Mearsheimer’s solution,<sup>41</sup> the best that can be done is to separate ethnic groups and draw borders between them. In any event, responding to potential conflicts will be pointless if the international community remains unwilling to intervene in the domestic affairs of sovereign states.

Inasmuch as there remains a great state reluctance to even rhetorically countenance political intervention in troubled countries—although there seems little hesitation to meddle in the sovereign countries’ domestic economic affairs, as the daily activities of the IMF demonstrate—it is highly unlikely that either the UN, industrialized countries acting collectively, or the United States acting alone will be able or willing to undertake this task or pay its costs. This is especially the case if such policy also requires some modification of the whole process of democratization and liberalization, as illustrated by the recent economic travails of Mexico.

Our policy recommendations, therefore, fall into two categories. The first involves those that would need to be implemented through countries and international institutions. These involve such basic issues as diplomatic recognition and access to international financial resources and trade. Whenever a political community is on the verge of declaring its independence from a state to which it has belonged—the issue of secession is an important one, which we do not address here—international recognition must be made conditional on the fulfillment of certain constitutional prerequisites. For example, full membership in the international community would not be awarded to a newly-independent country until it had demonstrated, over some period of time, its commitment to and protection of minority rights. Under such conditionality, Croatia would have been refused diplomatic recognition because of its treatment of the Serb minority.

The second category of recommendations has to do with the actual process of intervention in troubled societies, which must take place *before* organized violence breaks out. Because there is a general reluctance by states to intervene in the political and

<sup>38</sup> Ronnie D. Lipschutz, “From ‘Culture Wars’ to Shooting Wars: Globalization and Constitutive Conflict in the United States,” CGES Working Paper 6.14, August 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Derlugian, “Tale of Two Resorts.”

<sup>40</sup> Some recent thoughts on this matter can be found in: Isebill V. Gruhn, “The United States: An Ill-Suited Peacekeeper,” Board of Studies in Politics, UC-Santa Cruz, Dec. 1994; Richard K. Betts, “The Delusion of Impartial Intervention,” *Foreign Affairs* 73, #6 (Nov./Dec. 1994):20-33.

<sup>41</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Robert A. Pape, “The Answer,” *The New Republic*, June 14, 1993, pp. 22–25, 28.



social affairs of others, we believe that such efforts must be undertaken by non-state organizations and institutions. If “ethnic” and “sectarian” conflicts are neither ethnic nor sectarian, attempts to head them off, or restore social peace, should not focus on ethnicity or religion. Instead, intervenors must identify how the “social contracts” of ethnically or religiously heterogeneous societies are constructed, how political and economic pressures and transitions undermine them, and who might try to retain or grab power using ethnic or sectarian differentiation as a political tool. To do this successfully, we require both a better understanding of societies “at risk” and “early warning systems,” put in place by non-state organizations and institutions, that will monitor for signs of friction, collapse and conflict. This is an area that requires both research and action.<sup>42</sup>

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be well-placed to monitor deteriorating or potentially-threatening situations, bring them to the attention of international and other institutions and, if locally-constituted, establish the conditions for addressing these deteriorating situations. In many parts of the world, NGOs are increasingly involved in a wide variety of economic development projects, intended to empower and help weak groups and communities, and these are models for dealing with the economic dislocations associated with economic and political transitions.<sup>43</sup> There are also a number of promising examples of NGO-initiated mediation efforts between ethnic and religious communities that ought to be more closely studied and emulated. Such efforts have been growing in prominence over the past few years, and should be encouraged and funded, preferably by private funds provided to local institutions.<sup>44</sup>

We do not delude ourselves into thinking that there are solutions to all instances of ethnic and religious conflict. We do think, however, that much more thought and action need to be directed toward these conflicts, for there is no sign of their becoming fewer in the future.

The resolution of even a very few of the struggles now developing would have to be counted a great success; it behooves us to attempt to do so.




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<sup>42</sup> A good overview of the entire process can be found in: Janie Leatherman and Raimo Väyrynen, “Structure, Culture, and Territory: Three Sets of Early Warning Indicators,” Paper prepared for a panel on “Early Warning and Conflict Prevention in Intrastate Conflicts,” Annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Chicago, Feb. 21-25, 1995.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Anne Gordon Drabek, *Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs*, Supplement to *World Development* 15 (Autumn 1987); Dharam Ghai and Jessica M. Vivian, *Grassroots Environmental Action--People's Participation in Sustainable Development* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> Louis Kriesberg, among others, has written extensively about the role of non-governmental organizations in conflict resolution and mediation. See, for example, “Formal and Quasi-Mediators in International Disputes: An Exploratory Analysis,” *Journal of Peace Research* 28, #1 (1991):19-27; “Conflict Resolution,” pp. 176-88, in: Michael T. Klare (ed.), *Peace and World Security Studies* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994, 6th ed.).



## THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

# INSTITUTE ON GLOBAL CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

The University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) was founded in 1983 as a multi-campus research unit serving the entire University of California (UC) system. The institute's purpose is to study the causes of international conflict and the opportunities to resolve it through international cooperation. During IGCC's first five years, research focused largely on the issue of averting nuclear war through arms control and confidence-building measures between the superpowers. Since then the research program has diversified to encompass several broad areas of inquiry: regional relations, international environmental policy, international relations theory, and most recently, the domestic sources of foreign policy.

IGCC serves as a liaison between the academic and policy communities, injecting fresh ideas into the policy process, establishing the intellectual foundations for effective policy-making in the post-Cold War environment, and providing opportunities and incentives for UC faculty and students to become involved in international policy debates. Scholars, researchers, government officials, and journalists from the United States and abroad partici-

pate in all IGCC projects, and IGCC's publications—books, policy papers, and a semiannual newsletter—are widely distributed to individuals and institutions around the world.

In addition to projects undertaken by the central office at UC San Diego, IGCC supports research, instructional programs, and public education throughout the UC system. The institute receives financial support from the Regents of the University of California and the state of California, and has been awarded grants by such foundations as Ford, John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur, Rockefeller, Sloan, W. Alton Jones, Ploughshares, William and Flora Hewlett, the Carnegie Corporation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the United States Institute of Peace, and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Susan L. Shirk, a professor in UC San Diego's Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies and in the UCSD Department of Political Science, was appointed director of IGCC in June 1992 after serving for a year as acting director. Former directors of the institute include John Gerard Ruggie (1989–1991), and Herbert F. York (1983–1989), who now serves as director emeritus.



## ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING AT IGCC



**T**he year 1994–1995 saw several critical events in the publishing world:

- Paper costs rose 25 percent;
- Postal rates rose 10 percent;
- Federal Executive emphasis sparked explosive growth in public availability and use of Internet resources (the so-called “information superhighway”).

With an ever-increasing demand for information about the Institute and its products, along with tightening of the California state budget, it was clear that we needed to expand worldwide access to our publications—right when we needed to hold down publishing costs in the face of rising expenses. “Online” publishing was the answer.

In cooperation with the University of California, San Diego Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, in December 1994 IGCC established a “Gopher” server. Thus, all text-based IGCC materials and publications (including informational brochures, newsletters, and policy papers) became available via the Internet.

In early 1995, IGCC joined the World Wide Web (the multimedia subset of Internet users), making not only text, but related full-color photographs, audio- and video clips, maps, graphs, charts, and other multimedia information available to Internet users around the globe.

Since “the Web” is expanding at a furious pace, with new sites (including, most recently, the U.S. Congress) added daily, the net result of our electronic effort has been (conservatively estimated) to quadruple circulation of IGCC materials with no increase in cost—and without abandoning printed mailings to those with no Internet access.

IGCC made a general announcement of its on-line services in the Spring 1995 IGCC Newsletter (circulation ca. 8,000).

Internet users can view information about or published by IGCC at:

- gopher: irpsserv26.ucsd.edu  
or, for www users, at URL:
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Edited by Susan L. Shirk and Christopher P. Twomey. Transaction Publishers, 286 pages, \$39.95. *Call (908) 932-2280.*

**Practical Peacemaking in the Middle East**

**Volume I: Arms Control and Regional Security.**

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Edited by Steven L. Spiegel

v1: 278 pages, 1995, \$34.95; v2: 411 pages, 1995, \$62.00. Garland Publishers. *Call (800) 627-6273.*

**Strategic Views from the Second Tier: The Nuclear Weapons Policies of France, Britain, and China.**

Edited by John C. Hopkins and Weixing Hu.

Transaction Publishers, 284 pages, 1995, \$21.95. *Call (908) 932-2280.*

**Space Monitoring of Global Change.**

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**The Arab-Israeli Search for Peace.**

Edited by Steven L. Spiegel. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 199 pages, 1992, \$10.95. *Call (303) 444-6684.*

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IGCC-SCC No. 2, 155 pages, 1991. *Available online.*

**Europe in Transition: Arms Control and Conventional Forces in the 1990s.**

Edited by Alan Sweedler and Randy Willoughby. 119 pages, 1991.

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Westview Press, 199 pages, 1991, \$29.95. *Call (303) 444-3541.*

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