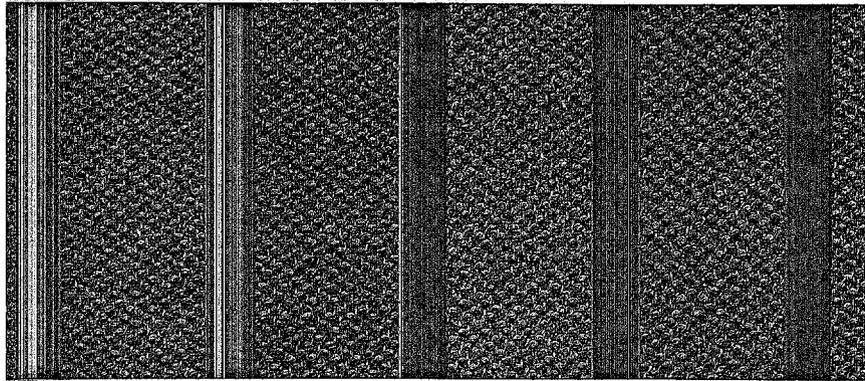


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# DEMOCRATIZATION



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DEMOCRATIZATION AND  
ETHNIC CONFLICT

*Summary of Two Meetings*

Lois E. Peterson and Sabri Sayari, editors

Panel on Issues in Democratization  
Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education  
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F

## CONTENTS

BACKGROUND	1
THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC IDENTITY	1
MANAGING ETHNIC CONFLICT	4
ENGINEERING DEMOCRACY IN ETHNICALLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES	9
ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEMOCRATIZATION	13
ROLE FOR THE UNITED STATES	14
CONCLUSION	16
REFERENCES	17

G

# DEMOCRATIZATION AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

## BACKGROUND

Many countries that are attempting to make the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy face the daunting challenge of managing and regulating ethnic, religious, social, and political divisions in their societies. The process of democratization may well flounder if these cleavages come to dominate political life and lead to deadlock, turmoil, and violence. Recent political developments in the former Soviet republics, some African states, and most tragically in Yugoslavia underscore the critical relationship between democratization and the integrity of a state. The failure of political elites to devise the right strategies for managing ethnic conflict may well undermine the basic precondition for the establishment of a democracy, namely, the willingness of people with different ethnic affiliations to live together within the same political community.

As part of its Democracy Initiative Program, the U.S. Agency for International Development (A.I.D) requested the assistance of the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education of the National Research Council through its Panel on Issues in Democratization to organize two expert meetings on ethnic conflict management in newly democratizing countries. The meetings, held in November and December 1991, brought together a group of experts from several social science disciplines and senior A.I.D. and State Department managers and policy analysts. The experts from the academic community were asked to explore sources of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts, strategies for managing social cleavages in ethnically divided societies, and the potential role of donor countries to assist the process of managing ethnic conflict.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

The first session of the meeting began with a discussion of the sources and development of ethnic identity. Charles Tilly and Donald Horowitz both emphasized that ethnic identity is not something that necessarily remains constant: it can change over time. Ethnic identity can also vary in different contexts. Tilly examined the social construction of ethnic identity, particularly in Europe, and Horowitz focused on its contextual nature.

Tilly noted that the common wisdom regarding ethnicity--shared by many theorists and politicians--is that people are born with fixed ethnic and religious identities. People often think of identity as a state of primitive consciousness or something that is built deeply into the personality. In reality, however, ethnic identity is malleable, changing, flexible according to circumstances, and often overlapping or nested. For example, people who now live in Romania present themselves as Romanians in contrast to the people from Bulgaria or Hungary. But within Romania, the very same people frequently interact with others not as Romanians, but as Transylvanians, Jews, Hungarians, Gypsies, etc.--some of which overlap. Tilly suggested that identity can be better understood if it is viewed as a language rather

than a state of the soul. Like languages, public identities are social, not individual, and they reside in the relations to other people. Even people who are monolingual in a language such as English often speak different varieties of English depending on the type of people with whom they interact.

Belgium provides a good example of how public identities can change over time. People are inclined to think that there has always been a line separating the French and the Dutch: there is a linguistic frontier that has remained relatively constant for quite some time, and for hundreds of years people on one side have spoken various German or Dutch dialects and on the other side several French dialects. Yet, the organization of the identities involved and their geographic distribution and political significance have actually changed enormously over time, and people have redefined themselves. Hence, many people in Belgium today with traditionally Dutch names are francophones and are identified as French.

Tilly commented that this should not be taken to mean that ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities are unimportant. On the contrary, they have intermittently played a powerful role in European politics. Typically, groups that have some claim to a shared origin and kinship have been mobilized when two broad conditions exist. One is the presence of some form of internal organization that gives them the capacity to act such as a segmented labor market. The division of labor in this instance would roughly correspond to those found in migration systems, which are great creators of ethnic identity. The other condition that facilitates ethnic mobilization is the presence of an opportunity or a threat that bears directly on that particular identity: for example, the differential allocation of concrete rewards and punishments--such as occupational niches, political privilege, and access to military service--according to linguistic, ethnic, and religious criteria.

Tilly discussed the concept of the nation-state--the idea that a state ought to correspond to a people. This idea has two corollaries: (1) if you belong to a given state, you ought to adhere to its dominant cultural forms; (2) if you are a distinct people, you deserve your own state. These two principles, which obviously clash with each other, grew out of the consolidation of states after the mid-eighteenth century. European states started to claim one dominant identity, make it national, and give priority to one among several languages, cultural traditions, historical myths, and social forms that were available on their territory. The result was that in the nineteenth century national states managed to homogenize their populations.

This process of homogenization in Europe did two things. First, it posed threats to populations that were not going to be part of the majority identity. In fact, the repeated attempts to impose one national language and uniform cultural symbols generated resistance to the process of state building under one dominant nationalism. At the same time, the claims of the state to be homogeneous justified the demand that distinct people should have a distinct political standing. The notion that homogeneous and distinct populations justified distinct political status became especially popular after the French Revolution with the attempts of the European states both to homogenize their populations and to justify their claims to control their populations.

Tilly added that differential opportunity often corresponds to ethnicity, at least in the European experience. For example, migration systems--the informal networks and processes that facilitate the movement of migrants--with their internal patronage and occupational specialization, create ties that can be used to fortify the advantages of common group

affiliations. Similarly, the differential recruitment of militaries--choosing the recruits from one or two particular ethnic groups through the mercenary system and providing them with political rewards--was commonly practiced in Europe until the nineteenth century. This policy was similar to that practiced by the European colonial rulers in Africa.

When citizenship corresponds to common origin, then the embedding of opportunity in ethnicity makes a very significant political difference. This, of course, is an issue that confronts Europe today. Most non-Soviet observers hope and predict that the former members of the Soviet Union will eventually back away from efforts to define citizenship in terms of proved ethnicity. But in proposing a test of "Lithuanianess" that depends on one's ability to prove prior involvement in that particular ethnic group, for example, the Baltic states are proposing to adopt forms of political division that have a long and unfortunate history in European experience.

Donald Horowitz focused his presentation on the contextual nature of ethnic identity. He began by noting that in the creation of ethnic identities, divisions change and boundaries are established by a perceptual process when one discerns affinities and disparities. For example, the Ibos of Nigeria came to Lagos not as Ibos but as members of village communities that were mutually hostile back home. Only after the range of differences represented in the urban environment were fully appreciated did a common Ibo identity emerge.

Group identity is a powerfully recurrent feature of social life. Individuals derive satisfaction from belonging to, or being affiliated with, groups that are regarded as worthy. Groups of similar individuals will always look to better their position in comparison to that of those who are different from them. Horowitz noted that there is research evidence for a view of ethnic conflict based on the quest for favorable collective evaluation relative to other groups. Social experiments have shown that individuals will always maximize the difference between in-group and out-group benefits, even when it means less in-group benefit. Struggles over group worth are transferred to the political system and converted to conflicts over questions such as whose language and religion will be accorded official status. Collective self-esteem is achieved largely by social recognition and by political affirmation.

The ties between ethnicity and kinship are often neglected. In fact, ethnicity is greatly extended kinship. Hence, actions taken on the basis of one can easily be mistaken as actions on the other. One of the reasons that ethnic conflict is generally stronger in Asia and Africa is that family ties are generally stronger than in the West. In the West, boundaries of kinship have generally been contracted, and increasingly fewer functions outside the home are performed by family and kin.

Horowitz argued that many of the assumptions about democracy are not applicable to societies that have major ethnic or religious divisions. Hence, institutions appropriate to those conditions must be devised, and policy makers have some power to alter the environment that influences perceptions about ethnicity. However, this is not the same as having the capability to manipulate ethnic affiliations at will. Policies to reduce ethnic conflict should take advantage of the contextual character of group identity.

## MANAGING ETHNIC CONFLICT

### Myths of Ethnic Conflict

Jonathan Pool began his presentation by discussing what he called the five myths of ethnic conflict. The first of these is that ethnic conflict is bad. He offered three reasons to question this myth. First, when ethnic conflict is ruled out or suppressed, hostilities tend to increase, and the skills that are necessary for compromise and accommodation are not developed; if ethnic conflict is permitted to exist, it leads to contact between different groups that, in turn, promotes ethnic bargaining and peace. Second, the suppression of ethnic conflict implies toleration of ethnic injustice or discrimination. Third, the word "conflict" is ambiguous: it means both the existence of conflicts of interest and the manifestation of disagreements over them. Pool suggested that it is possible to have one without the other.

The second myth is that democratization exacerbates ethnic conflict. This myth is based on the idea that the political elites are above ethnicity and know how to manage it, but the masses are bigoted. Pool noted that there is evidence to argue that elites create ethnic hostility to justify their own claim to power. It has been argued that inequalities in access to power constitute an important source of ethnic conflict. Since democratization helps to lessen these inequalities, it will also tend to undermine the escalation of animosities between ethnic groups.

The third myth is that of territorial integrity: it is widely assumed that allowing boundaries to be debated or adjusted will create havoc. One argument against this myth is that if territorial boundaries are realigned to coincide with ethnic or linguistic boundaries, one may be able to provide members of a threatened ethnic group with a feeling of security. At the same time, adjusting territory to ethnicity may also promote the economic well-being of that particular ethnic group. Both of these processes can reduce ethnic conflict. Another argument against this myth is that what really makes the idea of changing territorial boundaries threatening is the belief that they are fundamental to the existence of the state. If one can change that belief, it becomes possible to readjust those boundaries without people believing that something fundamental has been altered. Finally, it is worth noting that contemporary changes in communication and transportation technology are gradually reducing the importance of spatial contiguity.

The fourth myth is that linguistic unity is good. Even if this is true, it is costly to maintain linguistic unity since languages tend to diverge spontaneously from one another, and to keep them unified requires continuous investment. Pool suggested that the imposition of linguistic uniformity is one of the surest ways to spark violent reaction. Besides, he asserted, the cost of linguistic diversity is not actually very high. Language boundaries can be treated like natural boundaries, as the bases for institutional specialization and organization. Furthermore, the amount of cross-linguistic communication will be lessened once it is confined to take place within linguistic boundaries. Pool also argued that linguistic diversity will help promote diversity of conceptualization, while it also allows for greater specialization, experimentation, and different lifestyles and cultural expressions.

The last myth is that language conflicts can not be resolved as simply or as completely as other issues related to ethnic conflict. Pool argued against this notion and suggested that it is possible to make language policy both fair and efficient. This requires

that one devise policies that are efficient, such as not making every language official but only the one most widely used. It is also important to compensate the losers of these policies at the expense of the victors. Although this raises the question of how much compensation is due to the losers, Pool said that there are mechanisms that allow policy makers to figure out the true costs of having to use somebody else's language instead of your own.

Pool's presentation created considerable discussion and debate among the meeting's participants. Madeleine Albright disagreed with Pool's debunking of the myths. She said that ethnic conflict is bad because it can escalate and lead to violence, but she did agree that perhaps the problem has to do with the word "conflict." She noted that in the best of all possible worlds, there ought to be a way to compromise among a variety of groups so that different people can live together in a multicultural or multinational system.

The reason there are ethnic groupings, Albright stated, is the desire to belong. For example, in the postcommunist world, there are societies in which people who were forced to be the same are now trying to define their identity: ethnicity offers the easiest means to do so, even though this process creates more divisions in society. Albright stressed that democratization exacerbates ethnic conflict because it allows people freely to differentiate themselves from others. This process can lead to the problem of ethnically based political parties, which often emerge with democratization: they allow people to state publicly that they do not like somebody else with a different ethnic affiliation. Part of the problem is that people in these societies have long been alienated and victimized. They now want to belong to something to get a sense of who they are. They need help in creating institutions that relate directly to them, and these may not necessarily be political parties. Albright would like to see the creation of groups that are based on common interest rather than ethnic origins: this could help people to trust members of other ethnic groups and to develop the concept of civil society.

Albright pointed to Czechoslovakia as an example of the reality of the myths: ethnic conflict is bad; democracy has exacerbated them; the people are having problems with territorial boundaries; and they thought they had some form of a language that they could all understand. Czechoslovakia also provides a good case about the importance of working on practical rather than theoretical issues in managing ethnic relations. Leaders had been arguing in theory about the constitution and the federal system and how to divide powers between the two republics, and they were unable to come to terms on these questions. More recently, there was a surplus in the budget of Czechoslovakia and they had to decide how to divide it, and they did agree. Albright concluded that it is better to have practical things for ethnic groups to work on together than to engage in theoretical discussions about solutions for constitutional problems.

Rein Taagepera agreed for the most part with Jonathan Pool's views on myths. He maintained, however, that ethnic conflict is bad when it exceeds certain boundaries or when one ethnic group is in a position to oppress others. In the short run, democratization exacerbates ethnic conflict if it has been suppressed before. However, in the long run, solutions are generally worked out. Taagepera pointed out the example of integration in Western Europe: at some stage in this process, the transferring of a region from one country to another will have no military or economic consequences. In contrast, Eastern Europe first has to disintegrate before it can be integrated on a more natural economic basis.

With regard to Czechoslovakia, Taagepera suggested that any federation in which one component is more than one half is by definition unstable. This conclusion also applies to the new Commonwealth of Independent States and to Yugoslavia. Hence, in the case of Czechoslovakia, it would be better to create a multicomponent federation that would divide the Czechs and the Slovaks.

### **Regulating Conflict Through Institutions**

John Richardson's presentation focused on the role of institutional arrangements in mediating ethnic conflicts. Richardson discussed Eric Nordlinger's *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies* (1972), which identifies six principles that are operative when institutional arrangements are made for conflict regulation. At least one of these principles was always operative when conflicts are regulated over a long period of time.

The first principle is a stable governing coalition between political parties. Conflicts are often stabilized when party leaders make deals prior to the elections or during the process of putting together new governing coalitions following electoral contests. The second is the principle of proportionality. This involves not only electoral laws that are based on proportional representation, but also the recognition that the proportional allocation of positions can be quite useful in diffusing ethnic conflict. The third principle is that of mutual veto: government decisions can not be final unless they are acceptable to all the major protagonists. In practice, this principle may include either all decisions or apply only to those that pertain to issues of conflict, such as language, education, and customs. The fourth is the principle of purposive depoliticization: leaders of the ethnic groups that are in conflict agree not to involve the government in public policy areas that impinge upon one particular group's values and interests. Nordlinger's fifth principle is compromise and the mutual adjustment of conflicting values and interests. Richardson pointed out that Nordlinger has interesting examples of package deals that demonstrate how skillful leaders can work out ingenious solutions through compromise.

The final principle concerns concessions by the stronger group. Concessions by the weaker group may not actually be concessions since they are elicited by weakness. Concessions by one of two equally powerful groups may be interpreted by the other as a sign of weakness and actually intensify conflict. Examples of a dominant group willing to make compromises are rare. In Switzerland, after the Protestants won the civil war in 1847, the Catholic cantons were given equal representation even though some of them were smaller. In the new constitution, a council of states was established in which each canton had an equal vote. In return, the citizens of the defeated cantons voluntarily agreed to be drafted by the federal army.

Richardson argued that since federalism is likely to be a product of negotiations by moderates rather than extremists, it is important to make concessions early rather than late in the negotiations. However, people are reluctant to make concessions until it becomes urgent, and when it becomes urgent, there is no time. Moreover, at the time of urgency, there is often a state of protracted social conflict feeding on itself. As a result, those with the capacity to negotiate may be either intimidated into silence or killed.

Richardson also discussed several related issues. One of the keys to designing institutions for conflict regulation is to develop security forces that are not perceived to be taking sides in the communal conflicts. Otherwise, strains are created on maintaining loyalty to the center by those groups that believe the military is siding with their rivals. Elections are as likely to intensify as they are to diminish ethnic conflict. Strained economic conditions render mitigation of conflict more difficult. But if the economic pie is expanding, it becomes easier to "buy off" competing groups. Conflict mitigation is more difficult with third party involvement or when expatriates supply militants, as is now the case in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland.

### **Mechanisms and Techniques for Reducing Ethnic Conflict**

The discussion of specific mechanisms for reducing ethnic conflict was initiated by Donald Horowitz's presentation. He outlined four types of procedures, based on his more extensive treatment of the subject in *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (1985). The first is to disperse interethnic conflict, which can reduce conflict by proliferating power among the institutions at the center. A major source of ethnic conflict in developing countries has to do with the capture of central institutions by one group at the expense of others. If a single body or office will not give complete power to one ethnic group over other groups, then conflict may lose some of its urgency and intensity. Horowitz pointed out that politics can become a much more diffused game when power is dispersed among institutions. This process often makes lower level administrative units with important policy functions the main objects of political competition, and it reduces the intensity of the struggle to control the whole regime at the center.

Second, *interethnic* conflict may be reduced by arrangements that emphasize *intraethnic* conflict instead. Intraethnic conflict is usually, but not always, less violent and dangerous than interethnic conflict. If intraethnic conflict becomes more salient, it may reduce the energy for conflict between members of different groups. For example, reserved offices may have this effect, and so may territorial devolution, if it activates subgroup identities that compete for attention for overarching group identities.

Third, ethnic conflict may be reduced by policies that create incentives for interethnic cooperation, such as electoral inducements for cooperation or certain territorial arrangements. This and the previous point are not mutually exclusive: links may be easier to forge between portions of groups than between groups that are cohesive and undivided. Horowitz noted that intraethnic monopoly provides the leeway for interethnic cooperation, but often not the incentives. Intraethnic competition provides the incentives, but sometimes not the leeway.

The fourth mechanism to reduce interethnic conflict is through policies that encourage alignments on the basis of interests other than ethnicity. In deeply divided societies, it is unlikely that nonethnic lines of cleavage can be manipulated to displace ethnic cleavages, but some measures may provide the impetus for nonethnic lines of cleavage to compete for attention with ethnic cleavages.

Horowitz also discussed federalism as a technique by which these four mechanisms can be used to reduce ethnic conflict. Federalism as a technique includes territorial

devolution and regional autonomy. He pointed to India, Nigeria, and Malaysia as examples of federations based on the ethnic division of territory. None of these countries have solved all their problems of ethnic conflict, but federalism has performed a conflict-reducing function by transferring some conflict from the center to the state level. This process was at work in the Nigerian Second Republic, when individual states experienced much conflict due to their heterogenous composition. But conflict at the state level was different from conflict at the center. If ethnic groups in the states reflect the center but their proportions are different, then a minority at the center may be a majority at a local level, and it may be in a position to rule at that level, which mitigates its reduced influence at the center. Under a federal arrangement, political socialization to accommodative practices may take place among the elites of different groups at the state (local) level before they encounter each other at the center. This is likely to foster accommodation among the elites since they get used to the idea of interethnic negotiation before they enter national politics at the center.

Federalism always introduces ethnically cross-cutting issues of revenue and expenditure. For example, in Nigeria, the states that have oil argued for revenue distribution according to a principle called derivation, and the Nigerian states that did not have oil argued for the distribution of revenues on the basis of population. These arguments cut across Yoruba and Ibo ethnic ties, mitigating their solidarity. Federalism may also breathe new life into parochial political parties, which may lead to the adoption of an accommodative electoral formula. Again, Nigeria offers a useful example. There was a Kanuri party in the state of Bornu, which received few votes; when Nigeria was transformed from a country of 4 to one of 19 states, there was a Kanuri state, and the Kanuri party sprang to life.

Federalism can support democracy by making it difficult for one major ethnic group to establish its hegemony over others because of the vertical separation of powers. If implemented early and generously, devolution may avert secession by giving potential separatists a territory to exercise power--something that they could not do under a centralized arrangement. The devolution approach is especially likely to succeed if it is coupled with the reinforcement of two main disincentives for territorial separatism, namely, financial subsidies and the presence of a population of the separatist movement outside that particular territory. Horowitz maintained, however, that this should not suggest that federalism can help everyone or that it is easy to convince people to adopt the federal system. He reiterated a point made earlier by John Richardson about the paradoxical nature of policy initiatives: when there is time to adopt conflict-reducing innovations, there is no urgency to implement them; when there is urgency, there is no longer time. The utilization of incentives to achieve interethnic accommodation presents another paradox. Groups that believe their position is improving are unlikely to agree to conciliatory measures. Consequently, mutual weakness is more likely to produce agreement. Or, as in the case of Malaysia, uncertainty about the future may also facilitate accommodation between ethnic groups.

The institutions that are created for ethnic accommodation need to be consistent, coherent, and even redundant through all levels of government. If concessions are made only at some levels, the structures that support federalism may collapse. There may be a melange of institutions, some of which foster conciliation and others that permit conflict to go unchecked. If these are not properly balanced, these arrangements may be undone. For

example, the Nigerians decided in 1979 to use a mixed electoral system. To be elected president, a candidate had to win a plurality of votes nationwide as well as one-quarter of the votes in two-thirds of the states. However, the same incentives to multiethnicity were not used in the election of the legislators, so nothing prevented them from being ethnically extremist. In Malaysia, the social composition of the constituencies varied: some legislators were chosen from heterogeneous constituencies, and others were elected from homogeneous electoral districts. The latter did not like the compromises that their colleagues were forcing on them. With each census, the number of heterogeneous constituencies has decreased through redistricting; as a result, the number of politicians who were elected with the support of groups other than their own has also declined since 1974.

Finally, Horowitz noted that the pitfall of institutional engineering is that the institutions with the greatest legitimacy in developing countries are those that are derived from the colonial days. These include parliamentary systems, plurality or proportional representation with list system of election laws, and tightly centralized, unitary governments. Since these are established practices, institutional changes often seem unnatural and uncalled for.

## **ENGINEERING DEMOCRACY IN ETHNICALLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES**

Speakers focused on specific constitutional and electoral arrangements that could be used to mitigate ethnic conflict and promote democracy: Richard Simeon commented on federal institutions and their impact on democratization in ethnically divided societies; Donald Horowitz discussed how specific electoral arrangements can affect the balance of power among ethnic groups; and Douglas Rae examined the effects of electoral districting on the consolidation of political parties.

### **Federalism**

Simeon began his presentation by noting that there is no single model of federalism that can be used in the management of ethnic conflict and the promotion of democracy. Federal systems vary along several dimensions, such as in the powers assigned to different levels in government; in the mechanisms for regulating relations between these different levels; and in the degree to which state or local governments are represented in central political institutions.

He reiterated a point made by Carl Friedrich--federalism is not so much a fixed state but a dynamic and fluid process. Thus, there is a distinction between the dynamics of federalism at different points: at the nation-building phase, it is part of the process of coming together; at the nation "dis-building" phase, federalism becomes a means to achieve greater freedom and autonomy from the dominance of the majority. However, in the dis-building phase, federalism is likely to be an unstable solution, fostering a dynamic in which the logical stopping point is separation.

Federal institutions can make a difference in regulating ethnic conflict and promoting democracy. However, it is difficult to generalize about federal systems in the abstract--they

have to be understood in terms of the particular economic, social, and cultural environment in which they are found. He also emphasized that where linguistic groups are intermingled with one another and interspersed throughout a country, territorial federalism does not seem to be a workable arrangement. For example, if federalism were to be used in Eastern Europe to protect a minority, a new minority will emerge within that one and smaller and smaller units will be seeking autonomy. Hence, it might be useful to think of applying the federal principle in nonterritorial ways, such as in Lijphart's (1977) model of a consociational democracy where Catholic, Protestant, and secular authorities exercise real power in fields like education over groups scattered throughout the whole population.

The logic of federalism as an instrument to mitigate ethnic conflict is that it divides authority in such a way that each territorial unit will have sufficient freedom of action and autonomy to protect and advance its interests and identities without the fear of a veto by the majority. Federalism assumes that there is a distinction between national and local interests. A fundamental prerequisite for federalism is that citizens have dual loyalties to the national and the regional community and see these as naturally reinforcing. The majority needs to recognize the granting of some autonomy to the regional ethnic minorities as essential if the country is going to survive, and regional groups have to recognize that there are real political or economic advantages to be gained in remaining part of the larger unit. Historically, the chief forces leading to that kind of accommodation are external threats and economic necessity.

There are a number of problems that limit the usefulness of federalism as a device for managing ethnic conflict. One is that it might not be possible to carve the territory into perfectly homogenous units. Another concerns the possibility of conflicts arising from demands made by one unit over others, such as the demand for the redistribution of income. There is also the problem of perpetuating linguistic and cultural differences through federalism. Federal systems create governmental elites and bureaucratic structures that have vested interests in maintaining and accentuating group differences.

Simeon concluded his presentation by examining several questions that are relevant for designing federal institutions. One design question concerns the division of power, which involves a number of issues, such as centralization or decentralization, the extent to which powers are either neatly divided or shared, and the degree of asymmetry in the distribution of power among the states. Another question is one of representation at the center. The institutional arrangements for representing state or regional interests within a national government vary considerably. In Canada, for example, where one of the two legislative chambers is weak, the management of regional conflicts tends to be channeled into the intergovernmental arena, which intensifies the disputes. Next is the issue of intergovernmental relations--how will national and state governments interact to assure effective policy coordination and reduce conflict? Another question is that of creating institutions that will deal with the problem of revenue sharing and equalization when there are significant income disparities between different states. Finally, there is the need to design the mechanisms for umpiring the constitutional issues and the federal bargain.

In commenting on Simeon's discussion, Rein Taagepera pointed out the pitfalls of federalism. For example, Yugoslavia can be used to counter some of the recipes offered by federalism to mitigate ethnic conflict. Federal units, if they separate themselves from the center, leave minorities behind. This was the case with the Croats who were willing to

separate from the federation and leave many Croats behind in Bosnia. Yugoslavia is also a major example of the mutual veto that brought the federation to a standstill so that there was no way out.

Taagepera suggested that federal states can be arranged on the basis of ethnicity, as in the former Soviet Union and in India. Another possibility is the Swiss method of cantonization, where the units, or cantons, are more numerous than the three language groups and the two major religions of Switzerland. Another alternative is the Finnish system. In Finland, if a community is more than 6 percent bilingual, then all official business and street signs are in the two languages. However, it is a flexible system: when the Swedish community of a major city fell below 6 percent, the government passed a special law to keep it bilingual. Taagepera argued that more attention should be given to these alternatives to federalism, such as cantonization with more subunits than ethnic groups, or the flexible Finnish approach.

### **Electoral Engineering**

Donald Horowitz opened his discussion on electoral engineering by emphasizing that those who want to ameliorate ethnic conflict should abandon maximalist goals, like nation building, that were popular in the 1960s. One is not dealing with a completely malleable phenomenon if the tendency to intergroup conflict is recurrent, if perception rather than choice determines the boundaries of relatedness, if group affiliations are tied to family at birth, and if the state is the final arbiter of group merit. However, policy interventions seem to have made a difference in mitigating some cases of ethnic conflict.

For example, at independence the Malaysians opted for a multiethnic coalition running on a single electoral slate. That coalition became a vehicle for interethnic compromise for a considerable time. The Sri Lankans opted, by contrast, for ethnically based parties and for Sinhalese majority governments without the participation of the Tamils. The Malaysians took their more difficult problem and moderated it; the Sri Lankans took their much easier problem and exacerbated it. Following its civil war, Nigeria embarked on a Madisonian plan to make it more difficult for an ethnic group to establish its hegemony in politics. As a result of the territorial and electoral innovations that they adopted, ethnic conflict in the Second Republic (1979-1983) was far more contained than previously.

Horowitz asserted that the timing of policy adoption is crucial. In 1978 the Sri Lankans adopted a number of innovations that would have greatly moderated ethnic conflict if they had been adopted 10 years earlier. But by 1978, a half generation of Tamils had been deprived of university education, the Tamil presence had been studiously ignored in the 1972 constitution, and Tamil guerrilla groups had already been formed. For new democracies, now is a good time to get it right.

The more effective and enduring arrangements for conflict reduction are those fortified by internal incentives rather than by external constraints. Incentives that operate on politicians and their followers make the reduction of conflict in their self-interest. In other words, incentives are needed to make moderation pay, and certain electoral systems can help achieve this. The genius of the original Malaysian arrangement was that it forced the Malay and Chinese politicians who were competing in heterogenous constituencies to rely partly on

the votes delivered by groups other than their own. Those votes would not be forthcoming unless the leaders of that group could portray the candidate receiving them as moderate on interethnic issues. As a result, compromises at the top were supported by electoral incentives at the bottom.

Horowitz maintained that democracy may run into problems when there are permanent ascriptive majorities and minorities: those based on caste, clan, religion, or region of origin. For example, in a country with 60 percent A's and 40 percent B's and where rates of natural increase, registration, and turnout are equal between groups, if the A's vote for Party A and the B's for Party B, then there is no way to beat the A's. In many countries, particularly in Africa, the excluded B's did not like the election results and resorted instead to military coups where they were better represented in the officer corps than in the civilian regime.

Horowitz disagrees with those who contend that two-party systems are invariably superior to multiparty arrangements. Democratic elections presuppose no permanent majorities, but, rather, floating voters between parties who can affect the results of the electoral contests. This is not the case in countries with ascriptive majorities and minorities. Hence, the problem of engineering democracy in a divided society involves coping with the double difficulty of ascriptively defined groups and the propensity of parties to follow group lines. The key is to create electoral incentives for interethnic moderation. Electorally, the only mechanism that seems to work is to make parties marginally dependent on the votes of other ethnic groups. Various forms of preferential voting can be used for this purpose. He described one type, which requires a majority and not a plurality of the votes. For example, three political parties, A, B, and C have 40 percent, 40 percent, and 20 percent of the total votes, respectively. Since no single party has a majority of the first preferences, each would need second preferences to win. The candidate from Party A would talk with the candidate from Party C to get his voters' second preference in exchange for some concessions. The Australian lower house is elected in this way, as is the Sri Lankan president. This is a device that does not enable minorities to control, but it does provide them with the means to influence. Horowitz called this "vote pooling"--combining the votes of several groups to come up with the winning formula. He compared it to Lijphart's notion of consociational democracy, in which parties form a coalition after they win legislative seats. In vote pooling, the coalition is won before the seats are won. Horowitz argued that consociational democracy depends on rules to enforce compromise; in vote pooling there are internal incentives for accommodation.

### **Districting**

The discussion on specific aspects of electoral engineering was initiated by Douglas Rae. Rae argued that districting is the most powerful instrument available in regulating partisan or ethnic conflict by electoral means. One contrast is between heterogeneous and homogeneous districts: the former generally force compromise "early" in the electoral process, leading to the formation of large parties that seek to straddle lines of cleavage; in contrast, small homogeneous districts tend to push compromise toward "late" stages of the electoral cycle, and tend to make governance especially difficult.

Electoral systems serve as mechanisms for making choices, and as a result, they tend to compress alternatives. Thus, all electoral systems diminish the diversity of representation, favoring fewer smaller parties than a mirror-image of the electorate would produce. Rae uses the term "defractionalizing shift" to denote the strength or severity of this compression. Some electoral systems produce bigger shifts than others. Common wisdom holds that plurality systems compress diversity much more effectively than systems of proportional representation, and they do in fact yield very strong defractionalizing shifts in most electorates. An exception occurs when electoral districts are small and homogeneous (see above) so that conflict is unresolved in electoral competition. It is generally true that proportional representation systems produce weaker shifts, providing almost no incentive for coalescence, and little or no penalty for the formation of splinter groups. Another variable contrasts large and small districts, reckoning size by the number of seats returned in each. This turns out to explain most variation in the strength of defractionalizing shifts.

Elections in Italy and Spain in the late 1980s show how proportional representation can work very differently. The incentive for the formation of larger parties is totally missing in Italy. Since government coalitions are put together after elections, electoral contests decide very little. Small parties often play a key role in putting together majority coalitions. Consequently, they enjoy a degree of influence that is not proportional to their success among the voters. In contrast, the system in Spain has clear incentives for the formation of larger parties and alliances, and it has a powerful defractionalizing effect.

The key, Rae argued, is districting. The defractionalizing effects of the electoral systems diminish very rapidly as the size of electoral districts increases. Once there are 10 seats in every district, the defractionalizing effect is muted, and there is little incentive for creating coalitions. For example, in Italy the average size is about 19 seats in each district, and many of the seats are in very large districts. As a result, the defractionalizing effect that the electoral system might have is greatly diminished.

Rae also suggested that there is a relationship between the size and type of districts and where conflict would occur, with important implications for mitigation strategies. Small, homogeneous districts ensure that groups will have representation at the local level. They encourage personalism and the articulation of local demands, such as economic assistance and public works. They also generate pressures on parties to remain relatively small but to form coalitions. Conflict with other groups will take place later in the electoral cycle and at higher levels in the political system. Conversely, large, heterogeneous districts will mean that ethnic conflicts are confronted at the local level, early in the electoral process. They will also encourage more ideological and programmatic campaigning and promote centralization in party organizations.

## **ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEMOCRATIZATION**

The participants' comments on civil society generally emphasized the importance of its development for both democratization and the management of ethnic conflict. "Civil society" is characterized, first and foremost, by the presence of intermediary organizations and arrangements that exist between individuals or groups and the institutions of the state

(National Research Council, 1991). These intermediary organizations can help to build tolerance among different sectors and ethnic groups in a country and can also promote democracy. Unlike the developed Western societies--in which they are taken for granted--these essential properties of civil society are either weak or nonexistent in the developing countries and in Eastern Europe. Most participants agreed that the development of civil society in the latter may differ from the earlier historical experience of the West. For example, educational institutions and the mass media, especially television, are likely to play a major role in the development of civil society and democratic processes in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

Samuel Barnes compared Spain's transition to democracy with the current transitions in Eastern Europe. He noted a number of similarities between Spain under Franco and Eastern Europe today, such as the high level of depoliticization. More important, both Spain and Eastern European countries would probably have great difficulty in recreating the institutions of civil society that have existed in Western Europe for the last 100-150 years. In Western Europe, democracy was the product of organized efforts by the working class and the public to achieve the welfare state; the institutions of the democratic system were developed largely to attain this objective. In modern Spain or Eastern Europe, however, the welfare state was developed early; hence, there is no incentive to organize in order to achieve democracy.

Madeleine Albright commented that not only recent history, but also the political culture of Eastern Europe have a profound influence on the attitudes of the East Europeans toward political parties. The difficulty of party building in these countries is partly due to the anathema felt against the mass one-party arrangements of the Communist regimes. It is not an accident that the new political movements in Eastern Europe are called "civic forum," "new forum," or "solidarity"--anything but "party" because that term is identified with an authoritarian system.

Albright argued that it is very difficult to develop a civil society. In her research, she has found support for multiparty democracy, but people have negative feelings about political institutions. Since they believe that these institutions were used against them, they do not think that these institutions can work for them. Furthermore, they do not understand fully the role of such intermediate institutions as interest groups or professional associations.

## **ROLE FOR THE UNITED STATES**

There was considerable discussion on what role the United States can play in moderating ethnic conflict and how it can promote democratic alternatives. Time was mentioned as an important factor in United States policy: projects must show short-term gains for political reasons, but there should also be concern for long-term effects. Many policy initiatives that were discussed take time to show progress. Although none of the participants could offer an answer to this problem, they did believe that the United States can play an important role in promoting democracy in ethnically divided societies.

Most participants agreed that a useful starting point would be to put the ideas and theories on the subject into simpler language so that policy makers and other leaders can benefit from the comparative knowledge of academic specialists. Taagepera suggested a

type of "cookbook," which would offer short country portraits of solutions, methods, and outcomes, giving both positive and negative cases. What is needed is not necessarily recommendations, but a presentation of the possibilities. The United States could also help establish an inventory of different ways of organizing a compromise or temporary truce in ethnic conflicts. Tilly proposed that the United States on its own, or with the United Nations, could act as a third-party mediator and provide expertise on the probable consequences of different solutions.

The role of the "parachuting" academic or expert, who flies into a country for a short time to share expertise, was discussed. Many participants agreed that these experts could offer some knowledge and a different perspective on problems. However, it can be difficult to use this approach in many cases in a short time period. Horowitz suggested that working groups could be formed for countries that ask for assistance: such groups could look at the particular problem of a country and translate their knowledge into applicable form with the help of information and feedback from the local leaders.

Taagepera offered the alternative of the "reverse parachutists"--observers from developing countries who can come to the United States to learn about how things are done here. He noted that the academics who go abroad are often the same ones who say the same things over and over. This alternative would allow a few people from different countries to come here and confer with the specialists.

Horowitz noted that although there is a sensitivity to outside experts, there is also thirst for knowledge. This is what the United States can offer, but it is important to avoid cultural imperialism. Solutions should be grounded in comparative experience and not projected as the American answer. One form of intervention suggested by Tilly is to affect ethnic patronage: it would be useful to find a way to reduce the advantage of one ethnicity over another and to provide new opportunities that do not depend on ethnicity. Although such an approach would be resisted by the ethnic patrons in the short run, it could undermine the salience of ethnic divisions in the medium and long run.

Richardson maintained that a cost-benefit analysis of conflict may be a useful perspective. If the elites realize that violent conflict will be economically costly to them, they may consider other solutions that would lead to interethnic compromise. Albright suggested economic assistance to ease the transition process. Many countries are unstable, and as much as the people may want democracy, they need to eat.

Questions were raised about the relationship between economic development and ethnic conflict and the role of investment policy. The academic experts responded that there is no evidence to suggest that economic development can mitigate ethnic conflict--it may perhaps even exacerbate it. One problem is that ethnically divided societies have an ethnic division of labor. To support a market economy may, in fact, support one ethnic group over another. Consequently, it is important to recognize that any investment strategy will have implications for those with access to investment funds. To assume that all potential investors are equal would doom any strategy.

The problem of collecting reliable information was raised. It was asked if this would be an area in which the United States could assist the fledgling democracies. The point was made that official statistics are not a key ingredient of democracy and that a census that asks for ethnic identification may stir up more trouble.

Concern was raised about the role of values in ethnic conflict. There needs to be a tolerance for other points of view in order to resolve anything. Some participants thought that efforts should be directed at making the political cultures of ethnically divided societies more democratic. However, many participants voiced their objection to transmit American values to other societies. Horowitz noted that behavior is easier to change than values and that values develop in an institutional context. Richardson suggested finding areas to generate cross-cultural learning through the exchange of students, academics, or business leaders.

## CONCLUSION

The participants agreed that social scientists can offer policy makers important insights regarding the management of ethnic conflict through institutional and political mechanisms. In newly democratizing countries with multi-ethnic populations, the choices made about the forms and types of political representation are critical. The various methods of political engineering that were discussed by the participants, such as different kinds of federalism or electoral systems, for example, can create incentives for compromise and accommodation among ethnic groups and encourage fair representation in the political and administrative processes. There is no guarantee that these methods will lead to resolution of conflicts. However, they are likely to reduce ethnic tensions, provide incentives for coalition building and compromise, and facilitate continuing efforts at conflict management.

Overall, most participants agreed on several strategies to mitigate ethnic conflict:

- Writing a new constitution offers the possibility of creating new institutional arrangements, such as forms of federalism, for power-sharing among different ethnic groups.
- Establishing protection for ethnic minority rights, not only through constitutional and legal guarantees but also through civic education, is difficult but essential.
- Creating electoral systems with incentives for cooperation and accommodation among groups can foster cross-cutting cleavages and reduce the likelihood of ethnic violence.
- Providing knowledge about alternative political and institutional arrangements and comparative information regarding how different countries approach the issue of ethnic conflict management could be very valuable.

More broadly, looking at ethnic conflict from the perspective of constitutionalism and electoral design also broadens one's view of these processes. For example, aid donors are frequently involved in helping new democracies conduct elections. Elections that are considered "free and honest" by outside observers may not be perceived as fair by some voters if the electoral laws provide advantages to some groups over others. Knowing the implications of the type of electoral systems that are chosen may help donors in the design of projects to support or offset the effects of these electoral arrangements.

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