Introduction:
Facing Ethnic Conflicts

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Over the past decades, ethnonationalist conflict has become the dominant form of mass political violence. The overwhelming majority of civil wars in the postwar era were fought in the name of ethnonational autonomy or independence (Scherrer 1994:74)—as was the case during earlier waves of civil wars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as during the Balkan wars or following the dissolution of the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. Since the 1950s, the number of ethnic conflicts continued to increase. The trend reached a peak 1993–1994, as figure I.1 illustrates. Recent examples abound: The intransigence of ethnonationalist politics had led to catastrophe in Bosnia; the dissolution of the Soviet empire ignited a bushfire of separatist battles at its southern borders; Burundi finds no more respite than does Myanmar's hinterland or southern Sudan.

Parallel to this trend, the desire to understand and to contain these conflicts has grown over the past decades and especially after the end of the Cold War, when governments and international organizations came to regard them as a security problem of global proportions—only recently overshadowed by the U.S. preoccupation to fight terrorist groups and their supporters. Ethnic conflicts became a testing ground for a new morality of promoting peace, stability, and human rights across the globe. Ethnic chauvinism and hatred were perceived by public intellectuals such as Ignatieff (1997) as the major obstacle for globalizing the Western model of a liberal society based on equality and the respect for cultural differences.

This book offers some of the best research on how to understand ethnic conflicts and on how to prevent such conflicts, settle them by outside
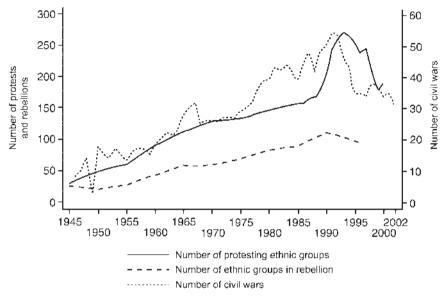
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Figure I.1.   Global Trends in Ethnopolitical Conflict, 1945–2002

Sources: For protest and rebellion data, see Bennett and Davenport (2003). Civil war data are from Eriksson et al. (2003), accessed at www.prio.no/cwp/ArmedConflict/. I would like to thank Brian Min for producing the graph.

Note: Protest data are for five-year periods from 1945 to 1985 and annually after 1985. Rebellion data are for five-year periods from 1945 to 1994 with partial data from 1995 to 1998. Civil war data are annual from 1945 to 2002

interference, and design institutions that reduce the risk of escalation. It combines research-based arguments with the expertise of peace negotiators, NGO officers, and government advisors. Before I summarize the structure of the book and the content of its chapters, I should like to outline, in broad strokes, four strands of the debate that have unfolded in different institutional environments and their respective discursive spheres: the general discussion about ethnic conflicts in the quality press and media, struggling with understanding the "new world disorder" produced, as it seemed, by ethnic chauvinism and nationalist fervor; the development of policy thinking over the past decades and its recent diversification into a range of approaches, from heavy-handed military intervention to mediation between grassroots organizations; a new research tradition that is closely tied to these policy debates and mainly rooted in think tanks and consulting firms; and, finally, a much older academic tradition, focused on how to understand the politicization of ethnicity in the developing world and beyond.

There is, as I will argue below, a general lack of communication between these various fields: Journalists are rarely aware of the scholarly

debate and the results it has produced; policymakers continue to discuss models that imply an understanding of conflict out of tune with the models that researchers have developed; academics often arrive at policy conclusions that are far off the accumulated experience of ethnic conflict management; scholars that evaluate policy options are sometimes unaware of the decades of research produced by their more academically oriented colleagues. This books documents the state of the art in three of these four fields and aims, by bringing them together in one single volume, to establish a basis for future communication between the various communities.

SOME POPULAR VIEWS

Four popular understandings of the post–Cold War surge in ethnic conflicts dominate public reasoning in quality newspapers and foreign policy journals—mostly ignoring the long-term trends that underlie this more recent wave. Many journalists and experts in governmental and multinational institutions attribute the growing political significance of ethnicity to what one may call a "defrosting effect." As the "ice" of authoritarian rule that was preserved through superpower rivalry melts away, "ancient hatred" between ethnic groups (Kaplan 1993) is being revived and fueled by incompatible claims to self-determination and political sovereignty (Callahan 1998).

A related view has recently spread, if rarely openly expressed, among Western foreign policymakers disenchanted with the prospects for preventing and settling ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus or the Balkans. The new states that issued from the former communist bloc are seen as being simply too heterogeneous in ethnolinguistic or ethnoreligious terms to function as "normal" nation states. The only "solution," cynics maintain, is therefore to give way to the drive for national self-assertion and let it follow its natural course until homogenous nation states emerge (see Jentleson 2001).

Other observers join best-selling sociologists like Beck (1997) in postulating a universal desire for cultural rootedness, accentuated under current conditions of globalization and rapid social change. Globalization makes people search for a secure homestead and produces an aggressive nationalism that threatens existing states where national and political boundaries do not coincide. More recently, Amy Chua (2004) has offered, in another best-selling book, a different version of the globalization hypothesis: The worldwide spread of markets increases inequality between trading minorities and the majority population, while the diffusion of democracy offers demagogues an opportunity to

point to these minorities as scapegoats responsible for the downsides of globalization.

The most successful thesis, repeated and debated ad nauseam by the informed public around the world, is Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations, which he sees replacing the competition between communism and capitalism during the Cold War. The major lines of conflict now run parallel to the civilizational fault lines separating orthodox from nonorthodox Christians, Confucians, Muslims, Africans, and Latin Americans (Huntington 1993).

It is striking how little this popular literature takes notice of the specialized academic literature that has developed over the past decades. Many prominent authors—and with them their replicators in the media— seem to be unaware of the existence of a rich literature that has been discussing such popular notions extensively, from the civilizational conflict thesis (Gurr 1994; Russet et al. 2000; Chiozza 2002) to the argument that ethnic heterogeneity itself is at the roots of conflicts and wars (Kasfir 1979; McRae 1983; Vanhanen 1999; Bates 1999; Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Ellingsen 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2003) to the debate on the trading minority hypothesis (Bonacich 1973; Horowitz 1985:113–124).

POLICY APPROACHES

In parallel to this rising public interest in ethnic conflicts, the political assessment has undergone considerable change. As mentioned before, governments and international organizations now regard ethnic conflicts as a security problem of global proportions—exceeded only recently by the potential for terrorist attacks by fundamentalist organizations or pariah states that have acquired (or are assumed to have acquired) "weapons of mass destruction."

The current attention to ethnic conflict contrasts markedly with the approach of previous periods. Since the prehistory of ethnic conflict management is largely forgotten, a digression may be permitted here.[1] The first systematic international approach to the question of ethnonational minorities was developed in the aftermath of the First and Second Balkan Wars and elaborated after World War I (Krasner and Froats 1998). The League of Nations introduced a detailed regime of minority rights, especially in the fields of language, education, and political representation. Sovereign status was given only to those newly independent states that had lived up to the minority protection provisions they had negotiated with the League. The main motive for the League's minority policy was to avoid, after having accepted the principle of national self-determination, claims to statehood

proliferating to unmanageable proportions. Seen from today's perspective, it is interesting to note that minority protection represented a transitory means for achieving, over the long run, full assimilation into the national majorities (Kovacs 2003). The League even accepted what we nowadays call ethnic cleansings in order to achieve stability and homogeneity, for example the "population exchange," as it was euphemistically called, foreseen in the treaty of Lausanne between Turkey and Greece (Bartsch 1995).

The minority rights regime, however, could not prevent the further politicization of the ethnic question in many mandate areas or other dependent territories that were to achieve full independence. It lacked an effective enforcement mechanism, and the rivalry between the colonial empires made a common stance impossible, which led many mandate powers to take the minority rights provision lightly. Most importantly, however, nationalist aspirations of many minorityelites could not be satisfied with language and educational rights and reserved parliamentary seats (Arendt 1951). The spiral of ethnonationalist mobilizations and countermobilizations culminated in a new wave of purges and ethnic cleansings all over Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Russia.

After World War II, the Western policy-making approach changed considerably. The minority rights regime of the League was completely discredited and the new hegemonic power, the United States, placed greater emphasis on individual human rights as opposed to group rights (Krasner and Froats 1998:244). In addition, the imperial powers of France, Britain, Holland, and Portugal soon abandoned the colonial project and sought to foster a process of "nation building" leading the colonial subjects to independence. "Nation building" (cf. Bendix 1964) was meant to overcome "tribal" or "ethnic" particularisms by creating a community of citizens. It was hardly compatible with the notion of "minority rights" that had prevailed in the interwar period. More often than not, however, the colonial masters saw one particular ethnic group, usually the most Christianized, most literate, politically most reliable, and so forth, as representing the core group of the nation-to-be and systematically supported them by recruiting members of this group into the army, bureaucracy, and university system of the embryonic state apparatus, thus laying the ground for many of the postindependence ethnic conflicts (Wimmer 2002).

Nation-building was complemented by upholding the territorial boundaries of the new states, usually corresponding to former imperial provinces. There was virtually no Western support for irredentist or separatist ethnonational movements during that period, mostly for fear of uncontrollable domino effects, especially in Africa, where few state

boundaries coincided with linguistic, religious, or other cultural dividing lines. Western governments saw the violent conflicts that were unleashed after independence as the birth pains of the new nations and largely a matter to be settled by the elites of the new countries themselves—as long as the winning parties and groups remained loyal to the former colonial power and ensured that the domains of French, British, or Dutch influence did not shrink.

The Cold War reinforced this pragmatic, selective interventionism. As soon as conflicting parties took on different ideological stances along the great divide between communism and capitalism, they were able to marshal support from the superpowers eager to prevent a country from falling into the hands of the archenemy. Peacemaking, democratic stability, or minority rights were non-issues in a time when conflicts were largely seen from a strategic geopolitical and military point of view. Winning the battle was the aim, not settling conflicts and promoting stability and peace. A systematic approach to ethnic conflicts, as had existed in the interwar period, never developed (Brown 1993; Callahan 1998).

The end of the Cold War has brought about a major shift in policy thinking in Western capitals in at least three different ways: First, direct political and military intervention in developing countries now seemed to be a feasible option, since the risk of escalation into a full-scale world war, a threat ever-present as long the nuclear powers watched each other's moves in every corner of the globe, now ceased to exist. Second, with the virtual defeat of the communist countermodel, Western political and economic doctrines became almost globally valid. Accordingly, Western governments felt responsible to help developing countries and especially the countries of the former Eastern bloc on their way to democracy, legal security, good governance, and market economy. Settling ethnic conflicts was important for achieving a politically stable environment conducive to these reforms. Third, the ethnonationalist wars, especially in the Balkans but also in Iraq, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and elsewhere, triggered a flow of refugees to the West that greatly enhanced the consciousness of living in a unified, interrelated global system. The refugees thus helped to build up the political will for prevention, early action, intervention, and peacemaking and fostered a new discourse of responsibility and morality that complemented the more instrumental power-balance arguments of traditional foreign policy. Seen from a global point of view, the many small-scale wars spreading in the newly independent states of the East or in democratizing societies of the South had replaced the confrontation between East and West as the main threat to global peace and stability— before the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon suddenly shifted the perception of threat, at least in the United States,

rather dramatically and gave rise to a new doctrine of prevention and intervention driven by a "homeland security" agenda.

In the shadow of these concerns and outside the United States, many governments continue to focus their foreign and security policy on the multiple small-scale confrontations with no clear strategic implications for Western countries. Some governments have developed far-reaching policy plans with the aim of preventing or peacefully settling such conflicts or reconstructing war-torn societies. Perhaps the most ambitious plan was the Canadian Peace Building Initiative, which brought together the Departments of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, and International Development. The Swedish government has also developed a comprehensive approach and has made conflict prevention the foremost goal of Sweden's development policy, acting in concert with the military and diplomatic services. Other such examples abound.

More specifically, several policy approaches to prevent, mitigate, or peacefully settle ethnic conflicts have been formulated during the past fifteen years, both by international organizations such as the UN, NATO, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE and by national governments and various sectors of the NGO community.

These include, first, several options to prevent escalation in the preconflict phase. A number of techniques, including early-action, round-table diplomacy; permanent field missions; and the like now fill the arsenal of governments and multilateral institutions. Preventive diplomacy has acquired particular importance and, at least in the white papers of several Western governments and international organizations, now is one of the foremost priorities of foreign policy and development cooperation.

Second, new techniques for negotiating peace between warring ethnonational factions have been developed and have been combined or alternated with military interventions and peace-enforcing operations. These range from negotiations in secluded places under heavy political and military pressure from the international community (such as the negotiations leading to Dayton, Rambouillet, or Stornton) to behind-the-scenes negotiations at the kitchen table organized by nongovernmental organizations, such as the famous Oslo negotiations between PLO and Israel as well as various combinations of official and unofficial diplomatic efforts to bring peace, now generally labeled "multitrack" diplomacy.

Third, a new branch of mostly NGO activities has come to flourish, nourished by the hope that conflicts between ethnic communities can be mediated through peaceful dialogue. Some involve the leadership level; others target civil society organizations or the grassroots. The aim is to overcome entrenched stereotypes and intolerance that are considered to

be at the root of the conflicts. Techniques include interactive conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and psycho-political trauma healing.

Fourth, the end of the Cold War has enabled the UN to establish supranational juridical institutions that prosecute ethnocides and other crimes committed in ethnonationalist wars that are not adequately addressed by national juridical systems. The international war criminal tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia are the most prominent examples here. Fifth, new experiences in the field of restorative justice—as opposed to the retributive justice of war tribunals—have been made, such as with the truth commissions of South Africa or of Guatemala. They rely on the idea that revealing the truth will make it possible to heal some of the emotional wounds of past conflict and make a new beginning in conflict-torn societies possible. The more modest international fact-finding commissions, such as the one on Kosovo, also belong to this repertoire of instruments.

Sixth, good governance, rule of law, and democracy are praised— among many other things—for bringing peace and stability to conflict-ridden societies. Many policymakers believe that this trio of institutional reforms will "civilize" political behavior and help de-escalate ethnic conflicts. Seventh, an even larger number of experts is convinced that institutional reforms should specifically address the issue of community relations where these have been characterized by violence and protracted conflict. A set of such institutions has been promoted for their conflict-reducing properties. Many favor federalism and other autonomy regulations as solutions to ethnic conflict, including various national governments (without exceptions and, not surprisingly, all of federalist states) and international organizations. A second prominent and much-promoted institution is power-sharing arrangements at the political center, including various consociational arrangements, in which cabinet seats are distributed among ethnic communities that choose separately among "their" candidates; reserved seats in parliament; various consultative bodies including minority representatives; and the like. A third group of tools includes minority rights, such as those offered by the ILO convention 107—so far mainly ratified by Latin American countries—the Council of Europe Convention regarding minority rights, and the recommendations of the OSCE.

These policy measures have been offered, tested, or implemented with varying degrees of success in a number of ethnic conflicts since 1989: in Ireland, Bosnia, Macedonia, Corsica, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Chechnya, Georgia, Turkey, Nagorno-Karabach, the Sudan, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Colombia, to name just a handful of the more prominent examples for each continent.

RESEARCH APPROACHES

These experiences have stimulated a growing interest among researchers, mostly in think tanks and consultancy firms, but also in conflict research units of universities. They have analyzed the political dynamics that led Western governments and international organizations to adopt such policies in the first place; their intended and unintended consequences for the dynamics of ethnic conflicts; and their relative effectiveness in bringing peace, stability, and justice to the victims of such conflict. Much of this applied research was undertaken by scholars who, before 1989, had studied negotiations in the framework of the Cold War, were specialized in small-scale conflicts such as between local communities and authorities or labor conflicts in the West, or came from the field of applied social psychology and the study of intergroup relations in multicultural societies. After 1989, many "discovered" ethnic conflicts as these gained importance both numerically and in terms of media coverage, and thus contributed importantly to the creation of the image of a "new world disorder" characterized by a multiplicity of civil wars with ethnic overtones (compare Kaldor 1999).

In that process, old concepts were adapted to the new object of study, such as the model of a "security dilemma," originally developed to explain the standoff between NATO and the Soviet Union (Roe 1999), with considerable impact on the way ethnic conflicts were perceived and the kind of questions researchers asked. Some scholars that participated in this debate, it may be noted, have in the meantime moved on to other topics and especially to the recent "war on terror" and its repercussions in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Aside from this field of applied research, we find a larger, more stable and continuous academic research tradition. The ramifications of this literature are manifold and include linkages to the general discussions on nationalism in political science, history, and sociology (Guibernau and Hutchinson 2001); the vast field of ethnicity studies in several social science disciplines (see, among others, Jenkins 1997); the not less extended realms of conflict theories—micro to macro (Miall et al. 2001); the literature on collective action in political science (e.g., Kuran 1998) and intergroup relations in social psychology; and, finally, the literature on political modernization and nation-building (Foster 1991; Alonso 1994). While it is impossible to review even the narrower domain of ethnic conflict research proper, some of the major stages of the development of this tradition should at least be alluded to here.

In the 1950s, studies of the process of tribal fusion and fission, a longstanding and well-established research topic in colonial anthropology, were combined with an emerging interest in "nation-building" in the

newly independent states of what now was termed the developing world (Bendix 1964). Both became related to a third tradition that had studied the consequences of cultural pluralism for the political integration and cohesion of colonial societies (the main exponent of this school is Furnivall (1944). These three research strands provided the basis for a series of important studies of the conflictual nature of postcolonial state building and the politicization of ethnic relations it often brought about (Geertz 1963; Young 1965; M. Smith 1969).

In a second stage during the 1960s and 1970s, a series of conflicts especially on the African continent became the focus of a specializing literature, mostly with a regional orientation (Kasfir 1976), and were understood as consequences of political underdevelopment (such as in the literature on "tribalism"), of the manipulation of a new class of leaders (Sklar 1967), or, finally and in contrast to the first view, of the political competition between elites brought about by modern political integration and social mobilization (Brass 1976; Bates 1974; Milne 1981; Rothschild 1981).

With the 1970's ethnic revival in many peripheral regions of Europe and North America, most notably in the Basque country, Wales and Scotland, Catalonia, Northern Ireland, and Quebec (Hechter and Levi 1979), a new wave of studies mainly in political science and sociology followed. The field broadened considerably, some looking at the link between ethnonationalist revivals and uneven capitalist development (Nairn 1977) or at the process of mobilizing ethnic constituencies by intellectuals and deprived middle classes (Brass 1976; Esman 1977; A. Smith 1984), others being preoccupied with the institutional regulations of such conflicts (Lijphart 1977; Lustick 1979; Horowitz 1985), and still others, in the tradition of the plural-society school mentioned above, examining the various modes in which ethnicity can relate to the institutions of the modern state (Young 1976).

During the 1990s, finally, new approaches to the study of ethnic conflicts mushroomed, specialized conferences were held, new journals such as *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* and *Nations and Nationalism* were launched, established journals such as the *Journal of Peace Research* or the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* published special issues, and a large number of books and edited volumes appeared. Figure I.2 illustrates this recent wave of books and articles. Interestingly enough, it rises only after the end of the Cold War, in contrast to the number of conflicts themselves, which increased continuously since the middle of the century. Most of the more important lines of this academic debate are represented in this volume and will be introduced in "Authors and Chapters," the final section of this chapter.
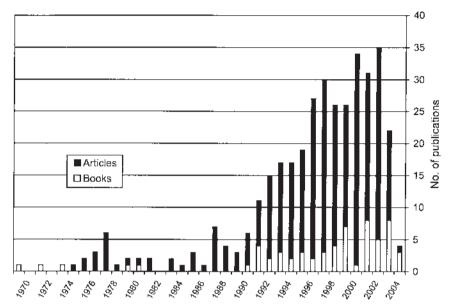
Figure I.2 Trends in Publications on Ethnic Conflicts, 1969–2004

Source: Books with "ethnic conflict" in the title were searched in Amazon.com and the University of California library system; a Social Science Citation Index search produced the number of articles that show "ethnic conflict" in title, abstract, or keyword.

A TOWER OF BABEL?

I have identified four major strands of a debate on how to understand ethnic conflict and "what to do about it": public opinion in the West, struggling with an adequate understanding of "new wars," "civilizational clashes," or counterreactions to "globalization"; a mushrooming debate among policymakers about the adequate tools for prevention and intervention; an applied literature of international relations and conflict regulation specialists, intertwined with the policy debate; and, finally, an established academic discourse on ethnic conflicts. There seems to be little systematic communication between these fields. Top journalists, such as the aforementioned Michael Ignatieff, cite Sigmund Freud to understand the wars in the Balkans—and not the major works of the specialized academic literature; others ignore scholarly knowledge about the historical and political background and may thus even contribute to an interpretation of a conflict along ethnic lines (see Allen and Seaton 1999). Policymakers stick to ideas about the root causes of conflict, such as the incompatibility of "cultures," which researchers have long since proven to be on shaky ground.[2] Academics discuss proposals, such as supporting

groups with a cosmopolitan view of society (cf. Kaldor 1999), that have little chance of being taken into consideration by policymakers because past experience has shown that they are, despite all their merits, not feasible for overcoming violence and war; and the scholars who "discovered" ethnic conflicts in the 1990s usually take little notice of the half-century of scholarly debate that preceded the wars in the Balkans.

On the other hand, there are also intersections between these discursive fields. Most notably, leading academics have been actively involved in the debate about the most appropriate institutional solutions to ethnic conflicts, such as federalism, specific designs for electoral systems, or minority rights regimes (see for example Horowitz 1991). Popularized versions of academic theories—such as the notorious "clash of civilizations"—are circulating among journalists, as noted above, and policymakers alike. Or journalists, policymakers, and academics may independently from each other arrive at the same conclusion, for example attributing the salience of ethnicity to the political manipulations of power-hungry tyrants (Berkeley 2001). Finally, policymakers, journalists, and academics often share an implicit frame of interpretation and normative ideals deriving from a common cultural background and political socialization. Multicultural solutions, to give one example, are dear to most persons, independent of their professional background, that grew up in the United States or the Netherlands. They are less prominent, to say the least, among French policymakers, intellectuals, and academics.

This book is the first, to the editors' knowledge, to bring these various strands of debate together and to represent the state of the art of current thinking about ethnic conflict. More ambitiously, it aims at overcoming the segregation between these strands and to stimulate further discussions across the dividing lines, reinforcing existing overlaps between discursive fields and exploring new ones. This search is motivated, obviously, by the hope that a more integrated knowledge will help bring about better solutions to ethnic conflicts, or at least a policy based on a sounder evaluation of empirical cause and effects as well as new research agendas geared toward policy relevance. To avoid the pitfalls of wishful thinking and technocratic utopia, we should acknowledge that the differences between these fields of discourse are far-reaching (Caplan 1979) and the relations between them mediated by power differences. Thus, bringing representatives from different fields together in one room and their papers in one volume will not automatically help bridge the divides. Building bridges is evidently a long-term goal, and its success depends on contextual factors and institutional constraints (Weiss 1991). However, mapping the different fields and debates is a first step and one that a single book may realistically set as a goal. It allows us to identify the major gaps in

communication and differences in approach, but also the common ground on which the various actors stand—perhaps unknowingly—a common ground from which to build a more integrated and more relevant approach in the future. While I will identify such elements of commonality in the conclusion, I will use the remainder of this chapter to introduce authors and their chapters.

AUTHORS AND CHAPTERS

This volume bring together authors from three of the four fields of discourse—from the "old" and "new" research communities as well as from the policy-making world—and from a variety of disciplinary and professional backgrounds: anthropologists, conflict researchers, constitutional lawyers, international relations experts, international lawyers, political scientists, and sociologists; representatives of international organizations such as the Organisation of African Unity, the UN Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the OSCE and the External Relations Directorate General of the European Commission; and experts from NGOs such as the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management or consultant firms such as GJW-BSMG Worldwide and Management Systems International (see the notes on authors at the end of this volume).

All authors were asked to represent their version of the state of the art in their respective fields, whenever possible on a cross-regional, general level. Clearly, their views remain shaped by specific experiences, and many chapters have one or more regional foci, some dealing with Africa in general, with the Great Lakes region, with the Chechen conflict, or with Indonesia. Despite diverging regional foci, all chapters center, with varying emphasis, on how to *understand* why ethnic conflicts escalate and what the possibilities are to *prevent* violence, to *intervene* in ongoing conflicts, and to *design institutions* that may guide the dynamics of ethnic politics into nonviolent forms. The book is structured according to this rather straightforward scheme, modeled after the different phases in a conflict cycle. It has three parts, dedicated to understanding, intervening in, and institutionally regulating ethnic conflicts, as well as a final part with two concluding chapters. Each part is divided into two groups of chapters.

In the part I, "Understanding Ethnic Conflicts," authors analyze how the ethnic issue arises in the first place and how to best understand the dynamics of escalation that may lead to a spiral of violence difficult to stop and reverse. The first group of chapters provides various answers to

the general question of understanding the political salience of ethnicity. While Walker Connor argues that this is a matter of deeply rooted identity and culture and therefore represents a perennial issue of political life, Rogers Brubaker maintains that ethnicity represents only one among many possible schemes of interpretation available to actors on the ground—not a naturally given basis of political solidarity and conflict, but rather the outcome of a specific constellation of circumstances that make it feasible to play the ethnic card. Chris Bakwesegha's chapter situates the rise of ethnic politics within the context of broader historical trends by pointing to the colonial and postcolonial practices of ethnic discrimination as major reasons for the contemporary salience of ethnic politics. The three chapters represent an ethnosymbolic, a constructivist, as well as a political economy approach and thus give an overview of some of the major trends in contemporary research.

The second set of chapters looks more closely at the political entrepreneurs that mobilize their ethnic constituencies and at the conditions under which they are likely to succeed. René Lemarchand analyzes the complex trans-border connections between the various conflicts in Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, emphasizing the political and legal discrimination along ethnic lines that provides the fuel for political mobilization. Valery Tishkov describes the politicization of ethnicity in Chechnya, passionately arguing that it relies on political manipulation and misinformation, rather than on deeply rooted identities. Peter Waldmann's chapter dissects the logic of escalation, for example the security dilemma leading to preventive violence triggering further violence. According to his analysis, there is no similar mechanism leading back to peace—a formidable challenge for domestic and international peace makers.

In part II, "The Politics of Intervention" are under review. The first group of chapters examines the experiences gathered in conflict prevention and peacemaking. Max van der Stoel shows that, when introduced at early stages of the politicization process, minority rights and political representation at the center may lead into a spiral of de-escalation and accommodation. The chapter by Michael Lund offers a comprehensive review of the prospects and problems of preventive action by different actors from international organizations to local NGOs. The two following chapters deal with negotiating a peaceful settlement where armed conflict has erupted. The authors debate various schools of thought on the adequate diplomatic strategies and tactics for negotiating peace, with a special focus on the appropriate moment, political level, actor, and technique of intervention. William Zartmann describes the specific problems in negotiating with parties of *ethnic* conflicts, for example the zero-sum situation that arises when the sovereignty of a state

is at stake, as is often the case in ethnonational conflicts. Hugh Miall maintains that such negotiations have to be embedded in an encompassing strategy of "conflict transformation" that addresses the structural causes of the conflict.

A second group of chapters is concerned with strategies for overcoming conflicts beyond the negotiation table of diplomats and war leaders— such as mediation between civil society actors or through the judicial system. Norbert Ropers discusses whether mediation projects, which have been integrated into the development and reconstruction programs of many Western governments, indeed keep their promise. Richard Goldstone presents a thoughtful analysis of the circumstances under which truth commissions, criminal courts, or a combination of both provide the adequate tools for reconciling conflict-torn societies.

Part III, "Institutional Reform," reflects on how to design institutions, constitutional frameworks, and laws that would channel ethnic conflicts into nonviolent forms or even into other, non-ethnic modes of political competition. Milton Esman's chapter introduces this part by giving a broad overview of the various institutional patterns of dealing with ethnocultural pluralism, including contemporary multiculturalism, an assimilationist model based on the cultural dominance of a *Staatsvolk*, and an ethnicity-blind republicanism *à la française*. Closer to current policy debates, the following four chapters examine the relation between ethnic conflict and democracy. Angel Viñas reminds us that fostering democracy represents a policy goal in itself—independent of democracy's conflict-reducing properties. He reflects about the lessons learned during the past decade of democracy support by the European Union. A less optimistic perspective is presented by Donald Rothchild, who argues that democratization can lead to a reinforcement or even escalation of conflicts if it is not allowed to follow a pace that is in tune with the capacities of conflict absorbtion. The two following chapters scrutinize the potential of various electoral systems to reduce conflict, including first-past-the-post systems of proportional representation and designs enhancing coalition building across ethnic boundaries. Donald Horowitz shows how limited the possibilities of designing electoral systems from the outside are—if we disregard exceptional cases such as Bosnia for a moment—and that local power constellations very strongly influence the approach adopted by reforming governments. In a similar vein, Andrew Ellis reports about his experiences as an electoral systems designer in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Guyana and demonstrates that for a proposal from the outside to be adopted, it has to be modestly designed to fit into the political context of an ongoing reform process.

A second group looks at various forms of federalism, autonomy regulations, decentralization, and devolution. Many policymakers and

academics considered federalism the "golden road" to sustainable ethnic peace. The three authors of this section take a more differentiated view and discuss the conditions under which federalism does indeed keep this promise and those under which it instead provides a platform for radical positions and spiraling counterreactions. Hurst Hannum gives an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of autonomy regulations and argues for an encompassing institutional approach that includes the option of secession. In Michael Hechter's chapter, a rational choice model combines with statistical evidence to show that federalism can exacerbate as well as mitigate ethnic conflict. Walter Kälin outlines the conditions under which a federalist model reduces rather than heightens the prospects of realizing human rights, especially for members of ethnic minorities.

Part IV offers two concluding chapters. Ulrike Joras and Conrad Schetter take a look at this collection of chapters and show that, despite apparent divergence, policymakers and academics share a number of sometimes implicit understandings about the nature of ethnic conflicts. My own conclusion takes off from there and identifies five common positions that the authors of this volume share—despite the wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds, paradigmatic approaches, and professional experiences. After decades of academic debate and more than a decade of evaluating various policy approaches, we have gained a better understanding of the protracted, deep-seated nature of ethnic conflicts and of the constraints in influencing political reality on the ground when powerful interests drive conflict behavior. This has helped us to develop, as I will argue, a more realistic assessment of how to face ethnic conflicts.

NOTES

1. The history of international approaches to ethnic conflicts remains to be written. For an overview of the development of the more general "conflict resolution" school, see Miall et al. (2001), chapter 2. The best summary from an international relations perspective is provided by Krasner and Froats (1998).

2. On the difficulties of having results of civil war research be taken into account by the policy community, see Mack (2002).

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