CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL PLURALISM AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

In the early years of the twenty-first century, like the first decades of the twentieth century, much of the Third World suffered from ethnic, racial, and religious tensions periodically punctuated by outbreaks of brutality and carnage. Progress in one location was often followed by deterioration in another. For example, in 2005, the Sudanese government (led by Arab Muslims) signed a peace accord with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A)—a secessionist movement in the country’s South, representing that region’s predominantly Black (Christian and animist) population. The treaty, granting the South considerable autonomy (self-rule within Sudan), ended a 21-year civil war that had left about 2 million people dead (mostly Southerners killed or starved by the government). Soon after ending that conflict, however, the Sudanese government intensified its “ethnic cleansing” in the western region of Darfur, where government-supported Arab militias (called Janjaweed) killed many thousands of Muslim Blacks. The Janjaweed “raped women and destroyed villages, food stocks, and other [essential] supplies” and drove some 2.7 million people from their homes, many in refugee camps where they have often been victimized once again. To date, the United Nations estimates that approximately 300,000 people have been killed.\(^1\) Other authoritative sources put the figure far higher, as high as 500,000 dead.

Such conflicts are not new. Nearly a century earlier (1915–1916), in the midst of World War I, Turkey’s government massacred about 1.5 million Armenians within that country’s borders. Thirty years after that, as Britain relinquished power over India, it divided that “jewel in the [imperial] crown,” into two nations—largely Hindu India and overwhelmingly Muslim Pakistan. But the religious communities in each country then savagely turned on each other, with a resulting death toll of approximately 1 million. More recently, Hutus in the African nation of Rwanda massacred some 800,000 of their Tutsi countrymen, while in the former country of Yugoslavia, Serbian militias initiated “ethnic cleansing” of their Muslim and Croat neighbors, killing and raping untold thousands. During the twentieth century, religious conflicts (India and Lebanon), tribal animosities (Nigeria and Rwanda), racial prejudice (South Africa), and other forms of ethnic rancor frequently produced violent confrontations, civil wars, and genocidal brutality. Continuing ethnic tensions in the early years of the twenty-first century seem to confirm Mahabun ul Haq’s prediction—that wars
between “peoples” (ethnic, religious, racial, or cultural groups) will continue to far outnumber wars between nation-states.

Classic accounts of modernization, particularly those influenced by Marx, predicted that the old basis for divisions, such as tribe and religion, would be swept aside. As hundreds of millions of people poured from rural to urban areas worldwide, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was expected that new alliances would be formed, based on social class in particular.²

But, significant as class conflict has been, no cleavage in modern times has more sharply, and oftentimes violently, polarized nations than ethnicity. “Cultural pluralism [i.e., ethnic diversity],” notes Crawford Young, “is a quintessentially modern phenomenon.” It has been closely linked to the growth of the middle class and the emergence of politicians who articulated nationalist or other ethnic aspirations while mobilizing workers and peasants behind that ideal.³

Scholars point out that fear of and hostility toward other ethnic groups are far older and often more entrenched than modern principles of tolerance or equality under the law. “No matter how we may wish for it otherwise, we did not leave violence against outsiders behind us as our nations became modern and democratic.”⁴

To be sure, ethnic minorities have been victimized for hundreds of years. So such conflicts are not new. One needs only look to the nineteenth-century frontier wars between White settlers and Native Americans in the United States and Chile. And, contrary to common perceptions, the level of ethnic protests and rebellions within states actually diminished slightly since the early 1990s, after having grown steadily for the previous preceding 50 years.⁵ Alarmist warnings notwithstanding, the world has not been crumbling into a cauldron of small ethnically based states.

Still, the level of ethnically based internal conflict remains far higher than in the decades prior to the 1990s, in marked contrast to the dramatic decline in wars between nations in the same period. Indeed, over the past 50 years, the most frequent settings for violent conflict have not been wars between sovereign states, but rather internal strife tied to cultural, tribal, religious, or other ethnic animosities. Between 1989 and 2004, there were 118 military conflicts in the world. Of those, only seven were between nation-states and the remaining 111 occurred within a single state, a large portion of which involved ethnic conflict.⁶ According to another recent estimate, “nearly two-thirds of all [the world’s] armed conflicts [at that time] included an ethnic component. [In fact], ethnic conflicts [were] four times more likely than interstate wars.”⁷ Another study claimed that 80 percent of “major conflicts” in the 1990s had an ethnic element.⁸ Any listing of the world’s most brutal wars in the past few decades would include ethnically based internal warfare or massacres in Rwanda, the Congo, Ethiopia, Sudan, Lebanon, and Indonesia (East Timor). In 1998, one authoritative study estimated that some 15 million people had died worldwide as a result of ethnic violence since 1945 (including war-related starvation and disease).⁹ In the decade since, at least 5 million additional deaths resulted from ethnic conflict in the Congo alone, with hundreds of thousands more in Sudan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Since the end of the Cold War, the world’s attention has focused increasingly on ethnic clashes. Some experts
predict that poor, densely populated countries will experience increased ethnic conflict over scarce resources (such as farmland) in the coming decades.

Warfare between Serbs, Croats, Bosnian Muslims, and Kosovars in the former Yugoslavia, along with separatist movements by French-speaking Québécois, racially based riots in Los Angeles, Basque terrorism in Spain, and Protestant–Catholic clashes in Northern Ireland all demonstrate that interethnic friction and violence can erupt in both Western democracies and former European communist countries. But ethnic conflict has been particularly widespread and cruel in Africa, Asia, and other regions of the Third World—in part because LDCs tend to have more ethnically diverse populations, and in part because their political systems often lack the institutions or experience needed to resolve these tensions peacefully. A recent study determined that there are approximately 275 “minorities at risk” (i.e., ethnic groups facing actual or potential repression) throughout the world, with a total population exceeding 1 billion people (about one-sixth of the world’s populations) scattered in 116 countries. Approximately 85 percent of that population at risk lives in the LDCs. Although Asia has the highest absolute population of ethnic minorities, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of its population at risk (about 36 percent), followed by North Africa and the Middle East (26 percent).

The intensification of ethnic, racial, and cultural hostilities during the twentieth century undercut several assumptions of modernization theory; it also contradicted an influential social psychology theory known as the “contact hypothesis.” That hypothesis predicted that as people of different races, religions, and ethnicities came into greater contact with each other, they better understand the other groups’ common human qualities, causing prejudice to decline. Although the contact hypothesis frequently predicts individual level attitudes and behavior (i.e., as individuals of different races or religions come to know each other better, their prejudices often diminish), increased interaction between different ethnic groups, occasioned by factors such as urban migration, frequently intensifies hostilities. Moreover, in some cases such as Rwanda and Bosnia, despite years of close interethnic contact and intermarriage, neighbors and even relatives by marriage viciously turned against each other once group violence had taken on a momentum of its own. This is particularly true when the political and economic systems are biased in favor of one ethnic group or when ethnic leaders play on their followers’ prejudices to advance their own political agendas. Neighboring ethnicities that lived peacefully, side-by-side for decades may also confront each other when new, valuable natural resources are discovered on their common lands. Thus, for example, in Nigeria, the upsurge of oil production in the Niger Delta sparked unrest by tribal minorities in the region, who protested that great wealth was being extracted from the delta while leaving the local population in poverty. Similar ethnic conflicts have arisen in the neighboring country of Niger after the discovery of substantial uranium deposits.

This chapter focuses on the most protracted and intense ethnic group conflicts in the developing world. In doing so, it runs the risk of conveying the mistaken notion that all LDCs are aflame with violent ethnic clashes. In truth, most ethnic tensions do not lead to systematic violence and many developing nations have been comparatively free of such conflict. Ethnic
warfare is more pronounced in the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and much of Africa. It is less common in Latin America and the Far East. A number of developing countries—Uruguay and Korea, for example—are fairly ethnically homogeneous, eliminating the possibility of such conflict. Others have developed a fairly stable, if not necessarily just, relationship between ethnicities, including Venezuela, Ghana, and Taiwan. A number of Latin American countries are multiracial and have varying degrees of racial discrimination and tension. But rarely do those conflicts become violent any longer. So, although this chapter focuses on the difficult and brutal cases in order to illustrate the obstacles that ethnic conflicts may present to political and economic development, it does not imply that most LDCs are riddled with ethnic violence.

DEFINING ETHNICITY

Many scholars maintain that humans have a deeply rooted social and psychological need to identify themselves with a group that protects them from outsiders and gives them a sense of belonging (i.e., to create an “us” to protect oneself from “them”). Moreover, some argue that “conflict [between ethnic or cultural groups] is not extraordinary but instead grows out of the more [daily] practices and ordinary behaviors that characterize everyday life.”

Although it is difficult to define ethnicity precisely, certain common qualities set ethnic groups apart. Most analysts agree that ethnic identity is usually a social construction—a way that certain groups have come to view themselves over time as distinct from others—rather than an inherent or primordial characteristic. Each ethnicity “share[s] a distinctive and enduring collective identity based on a belief in a common descent and on shared experiences and cultural traits.” While they frequently have some basis in fact, these identities and histories are typically created or embellished by entrepreneurial politicians, intellectuals, and journalists who gain some advantage by “playing the ethnic card.” The real or imagined common history, tradition, and values not only unite the group, but distinguish it from neighboring ethnicities, sometimes giving rise to ethnic conflict. Thus, J. E. Brown’s cynical definition of a “nation” can be applied to ethnic identities generally: “A group of people united by a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of their neighbors.” In times of great uncertainty or crisis, intellectuals and politicians are likely to create historical myths that give their ethnic group a sense of security in the face of perceived external challenges. In the words of Vesna Pćisć, a Serbian peace activist, ethnic conflict is caused by the “fear of the future, lived through the past.”

Pakistanis and Indians in Uganda, Chinese in Malaysia, Hmong in Laos, and indigenous peoples (Indians) in Peru often form their own political organizations, business groups, or social clubs. However, ethnic groups are usually not socially homogeneous or politically united. Frequently, class, ideology, or religion divides them. For example, Sri Lanka’s Tamil-speaking minority is divided between those who have lived in the country for centuries and those brought from India to work on plantations in the nineteenth century, with
each group holding somewhat different political views. Each of those two subgroups is, in turn, divided by caste. Indian Muslims and Nigerian Ibos are internally divided by class. South Koreans may be Buddhist or Christian (or both). Still, the factors that bind these ethnic groups are more powerful than elements that divide them. Thus, Ibo peasants normally identify more closely with businesspeople from their own tribe than they do with fellow peasants from the Hausa or Yoruba communities. Indeed, Cynthia Enloe notes that “of all the groups that men [or women] attach themselves to, ethnic groups seem the most encompassing and enduring.”

At the same time, outside observers sometimes erroneously assert or assume that certain ethnic identities and ethnic conflicts are deeply rooted in history. For example, during the bloody civil war between Bosnian Muslims and Serbs (in the former Yugoslavia), many Western journalists and political leaders claimed that violence could be traced to centuries-old religious tensions and conflicts (dating to the Middle Ages) between Orthodox (Christian) Serbians, Muslim Bosnians, and Catholic Croatians. But actually, prior to the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the three groups had lived together in harmony for many years, and intermarriages were somewhat common. “In the 1970s, ethnicity played a minor and, compared to earlier realities, diminishing part [in Bosnian life]. The vast majority of Bosnians . . . were up to the 1990s determined to keep the significance of the ethnic factor to a minimum.” Only after nationalist politicians [particularly Serbs] used ethnic appeals to replace the recent demise of Communism, “was every person forced to choose an ethnic identification.”

Some ethnic classifications were initially imposed by outsiders. In the Belgian Congo, White colonial administrators, missionaries, explorers, and anthropologists erroneously lumped together people of the upper Congo region into a nonexistent tribe (or ethnicity) called the Bangala. After a number of decades, the “myth of the Bangala” took on a life of its own, as migrants from the upper Congo settling in the city of Kinshasa joined together under the ethnic label that had been imposed on them by the Belgians. Similarly, the classification of “Coloured” (written here with its South African and British spelling), once used to denote racially mixed or Asian South Africans, was an artificial construct established by the White regime. And although few Mexicans feel much in common with Cubans, Ecuadorians, or Nicaraguans when they live in their home countries, all of these nationalities have become an ethnic group called “Latinos” or “Hispanics” after they immigrated to the United States—viewed as a homogeneous mass by their “Anglo” neighbors. Once individuals begin to accept the group label imposed on them, however, even artificially created ethnic classifications become politically relevant.

Ethnic groups may have their own social clubs, soccer teams, schools, or cemeteries. For an insecure Peruvian Indian recently arrived in Lima from her rural village, or a Hausa migrant seeking a job in Lagos, ethnically based social clubs are invaluable for finding employment, housing, and friendships in an otherwise cold and inhospitable city. In the threatening environment associated with modernization and social change, “fear, anxiety, and insecurity at the individual level can be reduced within the womb of the ethnic collectivity.” At the same time, however, ethnic consciousness normally creates barriers between groups. Friends and neighbors often frown upon
interreligious or interracial marriages, for example. Almost inevitably, when two or more ethnic groups live in close proximity to each other, there will be some tension or apprehension. But the way in which society handles these relationships varies considerably from place to place. Countries such as Canada, Malaysia, and Trinidad-Tobago have managed ethnic divisions fairly amicably and peacefully. More frequently, however, ethnic divisions lead to tensions or even conflict. In multiethnic countries such as Angola, India, Indonesia, and the United States, a common consciousness and culture unite certain religions, castes, tribes, or races, while generating distrust or even hostility toward other ethnicities.

**ETHNIC AND STATE BOUNDARIES**

If the world were composed of fairly homogenous countries such as Uruguay, South Korea, or Iceland, ethnically based wars might continue between nation-states, but there would be no ethnic tensions or strife within individual countries. In other words, the underlying cause of most internal ethnic conflict is that boundaries for nations (distinct cultural-linguistic groups such as Serbs, Russians, or Kurds) and other ethnicities frequently fail to coincide with boundaries for states (self-governing countries). Indeed, the world’s nearly 200 countries are home to approximately 5,000 ethnic groups. In the Middle East, 25–30 million Kurds have their own language, customs, and traditions, but not their own state. Consequently, they have struggled for decades to establish a state, which they call Kurdistan, carved out of the four countries in which most of them reside. Similarly, Sikh militants in the Indian state of Punjab have demanded the creation of a Sikh nation-state. When ethnic groups feel that they have been denied their fair share of political and economic rewards, they will frequently mobilize to demand their rights.

A recent study of 191 independent countries throughout the world revealed that 82 percent contain two or more ethnic groups. Furthermore, earlier research indicated that in 30 percent of the world’s countries, no single ethnic group accounts for even half of the total population. This pattern is most striking in sub-Saharan Africa, where virtually every country is composed of several ethnic (tribal) groups. For example, it is estimated that Nigeria, the most populous sub-Saharan African state, has more than 200 linguistic (tribal) groups.

Many Africans attribute their continent’s legacy of tribal conflict to the European colonizers who divided the region into administrative units little connected with ethnic identities. In some cases, antagonistic groups were thrown together into a single colony, while elsewhere individual tribes were split between two future countries. In Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, colonial powers often exacerbated ethnic tensions by favoring certain groups over others and by using “divide and conquer” strategies to control the local population. Yet colonialism was but one of many factors contributing to ethnic discord. Given the enormous number of tribal groups in Africa, even if the European powers had shown greater ethnic sensibility, many multiethnic nations would have inevitably developed. The only alternative would have been the creation of hundreds of tiny states, which would not have been economically viable.
At the same time, however, the breakdown of European colonialism also led to a number of extremely unhappy ethnic marriages. When the Portuguese withdrew from the small Southeast Asian colony of East Timor in 1975, neighboring Indonesia annexed it against the local population’s will. In its efforts to crush the organized Timorese opposition, the Indonesian military killed or starved approximately 150,000 people (about 25 percent of the region’s population). Even after the Timorese was finally allowed to vote for independence in 1999, local militias tied to the Indonesian military slaughtered thousands more. Elsewhere, following years of Italian colonial rule and a brief British occupation, the East African colony of Eritrea was forcibly merged with Ethiopia in the early 1950s. The Eritrean people (who have different religions and cultures than the Ethiopians) generally resented the Ethiopian takeover and soon embarked on a long struggle for independence. Three decades of civil war resulted in thousands of deaths. The collapse of the Ethiopian military dictatorship in 1991 allowed Eritrea to finally achieve independence. But the two countries fought a bloody border war in 1998–2000 and are still on a war footing.

**TYPES OF ETHNIC-CULTURAL DIVISIONS**

In order to better grasp the range of ethnic tensions that currently pervade much of the developing world, I will classify all types of ethnicities into a set of somewhat overlapping categories: nationality, tribe, race, and religion.

**Nationality**

In ethnic analysis, the term *nation* takes on a specialized meaning distinct from its more common usage designating a sovereign country (as in the *United Nations*). It refers, instead, to a population with its own language, cultural traditions, historical aspirations, and, often, its own geographical home. Frequently, nationhood is associated with the belief that “the interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.” Unlike other types of ethnic groups, nationalities frequently claim sovereignty over a specific geographic area. But, as we have seen, these proposed *national* boundaries frequently do not coincide with those of *sovereign states* (independent countries). For example, India and Sri Lanka are both sovereign states that encompass several distinct *nationalities* (cultural identities). In each case, members of at least one of those nationalities—Kashmiris (India) and Tamils (Sri Lanka)—have waged long struggles for independence. On the other hand, the Chinese are a nationality that, through migration, has spilled over to several East Asian countries and to other parts of the world. The Kurds also reside in several countries, including Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Unlike the Chinese, however, they are a nation without a state of their own.

As with many types of ethnicity, the political significance of national identity is related to a number of subjective factors. Nationality becomes politically important only when its members believe that their common history and destiny distinguish them from other ethnicities in their country. The most critical basis for national identification is the preservation of a distinct spoken language. Because French Canadians, Turkish Kurds, and Malaysian Chinese have maintained their
“mother tongues,” their national identities remain politically relevant. Chinese
speakers in Southeast Asia have maintained their own cultural and political
organizations and feel strong emotional ties to China. On the other hand, because
most immigrants—including Chinese, Italians, and Germans—to countries
such as the United States, Canada, and Australia have fully assimilated into their
new language and culture, dropping their language of origin after one or two
generations, their original national identity loses much of its political and social
impact.

In their more limited manifestations, nationalist movements simply seek to
preserve the group’s cultural identity and promote its economic and political
interests. For example, the large Lebanese community in Brazil, East Indians in
Guyana, and Irish-Americans in the United States take pride in their distinctive
cultures, but none has entertained visions of self-governance. On the other hand,
nationalist movements become more provocative when they seek to create a
separate nation-state of their own. Such separatist movements can arise when an
ethnic minority is concentrated in a particular region of the country and repres-
sents a majority of the population in that area. Those conditions exist in Sri Lanka
(formerly Ceylon), where the Tamil-speaking population is concentrated in the
country’s northern and eastern provinces, particularly the Jaffna Peninsula
region in the far north. Even before the intrusion of European colonizers, the
Tamils kept themselves apart from other ethnicities inhabiting Ceylon. The
British conquest and colonization of the entire island produced a nationalist
reaction among the majority Sinhalese (Sinhala-speaking) population, which, in
turn, provoked friction between them and the Tamil minority.

Since Sri Lanka’s independence in 1948, political power has been
concentrated in the hands of the Sinhalese (who constitute some three-fourths
of the country’s population). As in most nationality-based ethnic clashes, lan-
guage issues were at the heart of the conflict. Eight years after independence,
Sinhala replaced English as the country’s official language, giving the
Sinhalese population a significant advantage in securing government jobs.
As one Tamil political leader put it, “Not until 1956 did we really believe that
we were second-class citizens. Until then all we engaged in were preventive
measures, which we thought would hold.”27 From that point forward,
however, the battle for Tamil self-rule intensified. Conversely, when Tamil
acquired equal legal status in 1978, many Sinhalese felt victimized. Religious
differences between the largely Hindu Tamils and the predominantly
Buddhist Sinhalese augment their language and cultural divisions, though
religious issues remained secondary.

As early as 1949, Tamil leaders (representing almost one-fifth of the country’s
population) demanded a federal system that would grant Tamil regions substan-
tial autonomy (a high degree of self-rule within the Sri Lankan state). Sinhalese
nationalists, in turn, tried to impose their language on the entire nation. In 1958,
Sinhalese mobs attacked Tamils in various parts of the country, and in 1964, the Sri
Lankan government signed an agreement with India calling for the eventual return
to India of 525,000 Tamils whose families had migrated from that country. Faced
with such threats, Tamil nationalism became increasingly strident and violent.
Early calls for autonomy were superseded by demands for secession and the
creation of a sovereign Tamil state. By the early 1980s, the most powerful force
in the country’s predominantly Tamil areas was the Liberation Tigers of Tamil
Eelam (also known as the Tamil Tigers or the LTTE), a secessionist force engaged in guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and ultimately conventional war.

In 1987, following a major national government offensive against the LTTE, India (concerned about demands for autonomy from its own Tamil minority) intervened militarily in Sri Lanka. The resulting Indo-Lanka Peace Accord called for a multiethnic, multilingual Sri Lankan state with increased regional autonomy for the Tamil areas. Though signed by the Indian and Sri Lankan governments, the accord was rejected by many Sinhalese, particularly the ultra-nationalist National Liberation Front (JVP). From 1987 to 1989, the JVP launched its own campaign of strikes, boycotts, and terrorism, resulting in thousands of deaths. A brutal government campaign eventually crushed the JVP, but the war against the Tamil Tigers continued. Although many Tamils welcomed the Indo-Lanka accord, the Tigers rejected it as inadequate. Instead, they expanded their bloody guerrilla war, first against India’s 60,000-man occupation force and then, after the 1990 withdrawal of foreign troops, against the Sri Lankan government and moderate Tamils.

By the turn of the century, the LTTE allegedly was raising more than $60 million annually by smuggling illegal immigrants and drugs into Europe and the United States. In addition, it has received millions more in donations from the large, Tamil communities living in countries such as India, Britain, Canada, and the United States. The Tamil Tigers are generally considered the first group in the world to use suicide bombings widely as a tactic. They were responsible for the 1993 assassination of Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa and more than 200 other suicide bombings. Human rights groups condemned the Tigers for using young girls as suicide bombers because they were more likely to get past police and army checkpoints with bombs strapped to their bodies. By 2000, about 62,000 people had been killed in the civil war, out of a total Sri Lankan population of 21 million. A cease-fire signed in 2002 restored relative peace to that devastated country for several years. But by late 2005, the truce had broken down as more militant factions of the Tamil Tigers emerged. The following year, the Sri Lankan armed forces launched a major offensive against the LTTE stronghold in the Northeast, progressively driving the rebels into a smaller and smaller area. Thousands of civilians died and many more fled the region as the Tigers regularly used the local population as human shields, while the government resisted UN calls for a cease-fire (to allow civilians to leave the conflict zone) and the armed forces shelled and bombed the enclave with little concern for civilian deaths. In May 2009, the rebels were forced to abandon their 25-year struggle and their legendary leader was killed. It is unclear, however, whether or not the insurgents will eventually continue their struggle through suicide bombings and small-scale guerrilla attacks.

**Tribe**

The very use of the category *tribe*—especially when applied to African cultures—is fairly controversial. Many anthropologists and political scientists find it arbitrary and unhelpful. They note that when cultural anthropologists first worked in Africa and South Asia, often they assumed that the social characteristics of the small groups of people they were studying could automatically be extended to
larger units they called a tribe. Critics also point out that the term tribe is sometimes used to describe African ethnic groups as large as the 15 million Yoruba (in Nigeria), a population that elsewhere in the world would be called a nationality. Hence, many scholars prefer to use the terms ethnicity or ethno-linguistic group. This text, however, still refers to tribal groups because that term is familiar to most readers and has long been used by some scholars of ethnic politics and by numerous political leaders in Africa and Asia. For example, in describing the problems of his own country, former Ugandan president Milton Obote lamented “the pull of the tribal force.” This chapter uses tribe to describe subnational groups that share a collective identity and language and believe themselves to hold a common lineage. The term is most often used in regard to African ethnicities and, to a lesser extent, Asia. In India, Vietnam, Burma, and other parts of Asia, tribe refers to hill peoples, such as the Laotian Hmong, who live traditional lifestyles in relative isolation from modern society. The term has also been used, of course, in discussions of North American Indians, as well as the lowland (Amazonian) Indians of South America. In none of these cases do we use the term pejoratively.

Recent survey data from 12 African nations indicate that tribal (or socio-linguistic) identifications tend to be the major determinant of support for political parties, though other variables—such as age, urban versus rural origin, and education—also play a role and sometimes reduce (though not eliminate) the influence of tribe. Moreover, intertribal conflict has frequently sparked violence in sub-Saharan Africa, affecting more than half the countries in that region at one time or another. Nigeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, the Congo, and Ivory Coast, among others, have been torn apart by civil wars that were partially or primarily ethnically based. In Liberia, Angola, and Mozambique, conflicts begun about other issues were aggravated by tribal divisions. From the time of its independence, Nigeria witnessed antagonism between the Muslims in the North and the populations of the South and East. With 50 percent of the country’s population, the Hausa-Fulani and other northern tribes were a dominant political force, resented by southerners and easterners such as the Ibo, who often considered northerners to be somewhat backward. Northerners, in turn, feared the influence of the more modern and commercially successful Ibo people. Each of the three major ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Ibo, and Yoruba) prevailed in one region of the country, casting a shadow over smaller tribes in their area. Each major tribe, in turn, feared domination by the others.

Two military coups in 1966 intensified friction between officers of differing ethnic backgrounds and sparked violence against the many Ibos who had migrated to the North. As many as 30,000 Ibos may have been killed. In fear of their lives, 1–2 million more fled from northern Nigeria to their homeland. In May 1967, Colonel Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, an Ibo military leader, declared that eastern Nigeria was withdrawing from the country to become the independent nation of Biafra. But, backed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Nigerian national government was determined to prevent Biafra’s secession. In time, the armed forces surrounded Biafra and tightened their grip. Up to 1 million Ibo civilians died of starvation in a pattern of war-induced famine that later became tragically familiar in other parts of Africa. On the other hand, when Biafra finally did surrender in early 1970, the Nigerian military regime refrained from acts of
vengeance. Since that time, the Ibos have been rather successfully reintegrated into Nigerian society, but intertribal tensions and periodic religious violence persist.

Unfortunately, the Nigerian conflict was but one of earliest ethnically based civil wars that were to plague the African continent over the next 40 years. Some of the most intense and prolonged tribal conflicts took place in the former Belgian colonies of Burundi and Rwanda in the Great Lakes region of eastern Africa. Burundi’s ruling Tutsi minority has crushed a series of uprisings by the majority Hutus (about 85 percent of the population) since they gained power in the early 1970s, massacring perhaps 100,000 people in 1972 alone. In 1993, when a Tutsi soldier assassinated the country’s first freely elected president, a Hutu, new bloodshed erupted. One year later, in the neighboring country of Rwanda, the Hutu president’s death in a plane crash set off an orgy of violence. A government-directed massacre led by Hutu extremists was directed at the minority Tutsis and, to a lesser extent, moderate Hutus. During the next 100 days, local Hutu militia and allied villagers beat or hacked to death approximately 750,000 Tutsis and 50,000 Hutus. Eventually, a well-trained Tutsi revolutionary army, supported by neighboring Uganda, gained control of the country and jailed thousands of Hutus. Hundreds of thousands more fled to nearby Congo, where many of them starved to death or were massacred by the anti-Hutu regime of then-President Laurent Kabila.

In other conflicts, such as the Angolan and Mozambican civil wars (which had both ideological and ethnic origins), major world powers supported one side or the other, thereby intensifying the wars and adding to the bloodshed. For example, acting in consort with the Soviet Union, Cuba provided military assistance to the leftist governments of Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique. The United States armed UNITA, the Angolan rebel force, while the South African military supported Mozambique’s RENAMO guerrillas. Belgium and France armed the Rwandan regime prior to its genocidal attacks on the Tutsi population. In each of those countries, hundreds of thousands perished from warfare or starvation. Although the end of the Cold War has reduced such inflammatory, superpower intervention, the recent brutal wars in the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast indicate that tribally based violence will undoubtedly continue in the region for some time. More recently, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Angola all intervened in the ethnically based civil war in the Congo.

**Race**

We have noted that cultural identity involves a common set of values and customs and a shared sense of history and destiny. Race, while normally the most visible of ethnic distinctions, is a more recent source of group identity. Only when people live in *multiracial* settings do individual racial groups use race to define themselves and distinguish themselves from “others.” Indeed, Crawford Young indicates that “there was no common sense of being ‘African,’ ‘European,’ or ‘Indian,’ prior to the creation of multiracial communities by the population movements of the imperial age.”

31 Slavery and other manifestations of Western imperialism in the Third World created an array of negative racial stereotypes about Asians, Africans, and (North and South) American
Indians. The subsequent migration of Asians to the plantations of East Africa and the Caribbean created further racial cleavages.

South Africa presented the most notorious example of race-based political conflict. From its colonization by the British until its 1994 transition to majority rule, the country was ruled by a White minority constituting only about 15 percent of the population. Meanwhile, Blacks, the majority population, were denied fundamental legal and economic rights, including the right to vote or hold political office.

Until the government renounced it in 1991, the legal centerpiece of South African racial policy was apartheid (separateness). That system rigidly segregated employment, public facilities, housing, marriage, and more, envisioning a day when most Blacks lived in eight allegedly self-ruling “homelands.” In fact, these homelands, consisting of desolate rural territories, could not possibly support the country’s Black population. Moreover, because important sectors of the South African economy, most notably its mines, were dependent on Black labor, the geographical segregation envisioned by apartheid was implausible even from the perspective of the White business community. Meanwhile, the millions of Blacks who lived outside the homelands were denied fundamental civil liberties, including the right to own property.

Apartheid officially created racial classifications for the entire population that defied international standards and often fell victim to their own logical contradictions. Blacks, by far the largest racial group, constituted 70–75 percent of the national population and were subjected to the greatest amount of legal discrimination. Coloureds—people of mixed race—totaled about 10 percent of the population, primarily concentrated in Cape Town and Cape Province. Asians (mostly Indians and Pakistanis) represented about 3 percent of the nation. Both Coloureds and Asians enjoyed a higher socioeconomic status and greater legal and political rights than Blacks did, but still ranked considerably below Whites. Finally, Whites (some 15 percent) held virtually all political and economic powers.

Despite international disapproval, South Africa’s minority government seemed determined to maintain apartheid indefinitely. In time, however, the country came under intense domestic and international pressure to end that system of White domination. South Africa became an international outcast—particularly after several massacres of peaceful Black protestors—subject to diplomatic, economic, and cultural isolation. Though slow to take effect, these sanctions eventually impaired the country’s economic growth. Growing protest and unrest in the Black townships (outlying urban slums) added to the country’s international isolation. Finally, a growing number of powerful voices within the White economic, legal, and intellectual elites pressed the government for racial reform.

By the start of the 1990s, President F. W. de Klerk’s government, recognizing that apartheid was no longer viable, legalized the African National Congress (ANC), the leading Black opposition group, along with two more radical organizations, after decades of banishment. The ANC’s legendary leader, Nelson Mandela, the world’s most celebrated political prisoner, was released from jail (after 27 years of imprisonment) along with hundreds of other political prisoners. These changes, coupled with the ANC’s suspension of its armed struggle, opened the door to a new constitution enfranchising the Black majority and ending White minority rule.
In December 1991, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) brought together the government, the ANC, and 17 smaller groups for discussions of the new political order. Most Whites acknowledged that apartheid could no longer continue. In a 1992 national referendum called by de Klerk, nearly 70 percent of all White voters endorsed negotiations with the ANC and other Black groups. The following year, the government and the ANC agreed to the election of a constitutional assembly that would create a new political system with equal rights for all South Africans. Universal suffrage ensured a Black majority in the assembly and in 1994, the ANC parliamentary majority elected Nelson Mandela president of the new South Africa.

In the 15 years since that time, South Africa has established itself as perhaps the most democratic nation on the continent. However, significant challenges to democratic consolidation remain. Blacks have discovered that although majority rule has established greater social justice and human dignity, many of them remain mired in poverty. To be sure, government housing programs have benefited numerous urban slum dwellers and the Black middle class has swelled. On the other hand, with most farmland still owned by Whites and limited funds available for schools and clinics in the countryside, the Black rural population remains impoverished. Faced with high unemployment, soaring crime rates, and one of the world’s highest incidences of AIDS, the urban poor also continue to struggle. Until now, at least, the government has pursued moderate economic policies to reassure the White business community. These policies have brought economic growth but have been slow to alleviate poverty. The ANC remains popular and still dominates all national elections. Over time, however, if Black living conditions do not improve and if there is not a sizable redistribution of economic resources, the ANC’s Black constituency may demand more radical policies. Widespread demands for more extensive and redistributive economic reforms led the ANC to oust national President Thabo Mbeki as party leader and replace him with a more populist leader, Jacob Zuma, who subsequently succeeded Mbeki as the national president in 2009. But, Zuma’s appeal to the urban poor may be eroding as the global economic decline increases already very high unemployment rates in the urban townships (slums). In mid-2009, only months after President Zuma took office, Johannesburg and other South African cities were rocked by riots over inadequate housing and poor urban services in a number of poor neighborhoods. The country’s soaring crime rate, a reflection of widespread poverty and pervasive inequality, could also turn into wider political violence. Zuma has promised to better satisfy the needs of the poor. His election also widened the ethnic origins of the ruling party’s leadership. He is the first ANC president and the first national president since the beginning of majority rule to come from the Zulu, rather than the Xhosa, ethnicity (tribe).

Religion

Because it involves deeply felt values, religion has frequently been the source of bitter “communal strife” (i.e., conflict between ethnic communities). In Chapter 3, we examined the influence of religious beliefs on political attitudes and behavior, particularly those of fundamentalists and others favoring close links between church and state. We saw that a group’s religious orientation often shapes its
political beliefs, including its ideas regarding a citizen’s political rights and obligations as well as its understanding of the country’s constitutional and legal systems.

In this chapter, we look at a related but distinct aspect of religion, namely the degree to which coreligionists identify strongly with each other and try to enhance their political and economic powers relative to other religious groups. In other words, we are concerned here, not with the political ramifications of religious beliefs (considered in Chapter 3), but with the potential tension or even conflict between religious groups (defined here as ethnic communities) living in the same country. Such discord may pit one religion against another or, particularly in the case of Islam, may involve conflict between two branches of the same religion. Two factors influence the likelihood of tensions between religious groups: first, the extent to which one religious community feels ill-treated by another; and, second, the degree to which any religion regards itself as the only true faith and totally rejects alternate theologies. Thus, Catholics and Protestants coexist rather harmoniously in the United States and Germany because neither of these conditions applies. On the other hand, in Northern Ireland, where Catholics have resented the Protestants’ political and economic powers and Protestants have feared political domination by the larger Catholic community, paramilitary groups representing both sides engaged in a nearly 40-year armed struggle.

In 1992, thousands of Hindu fundamentalists destroyed a sixteenth-century Muslim mosque in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya. Like many such clashes, the incident grew out of centuries-old beliefs and hostilities. Many Hindus believe this to be the spot where the god Ram had been born ages before. To the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the leading Hindu political party, and to the more militant World Hindu Council, the mosque was a symbol of Islamic domination during the 300 years of Mogul rule prior to the British colonial era. Within days of the 1992 assault, rioting in northern and central India left about 2,000 dead. Ten years later (2002), Hindu mobs in the village of Ahmedabad murdered over 1,000 Muslims, raping women, burning people alive, and occasionally cutting fetuses out of pregnant women. In neighboring Islamic countries, Pakistani crowds attacked Hindu temples and Bangladeshis assaulted Hindu-owned shops.

In fact, India and Pakistan were born of communal violence, and neither has been free of it since. Although both countries had been part of a single British colony, when negotiations for independence advanced in the late 1940s, the Muslim League insisted on the creation of a separate Muslim state. Using language that classically defines an ethnic group, League leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah declared, “We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature . . . customs . . . history and tradition.” In 1946, as independence approached, political conflict between the Muslim League and the dominant Congress Party (a nonreligious party led largely by secular Hindus) touched off communal violence that left thousands dead. Finally, the British reluctantly divided their most important colony into two countries: India, with roughly 300 million Hindus and 40 million Muslims at that time; and Pakistan, with approximately 60 million Muslims and 20 million Hindus. No sooner had independence been declared (August 15, 1947), when horrendous religious massacres began in both countries. Whole villages were destroyed, 12 million refugees of both faiths fled across the border in either
direction, more than 75,000 women were abducted and raped, and somewhere between 500,000 and 1 million people were killed in one of the twentieth century’s worst ethnic conflagrations. Two decades later, Pakistan itself split in two as geography, language, and cultural differences rather than religion divided its population. With support from India, the Bengali-speaking eastern region broke away from the dominant, primarily Urdu-speaking, West to form the country of Bangladesh.

Today, Muslim separatists in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir are waging guerrilla warfare aimed either at Kashmiri independence or unification with Pakistan. In 2001, Islamic fundamentalists attacked the Indian parliament, once again bringing India and Pakistan (both now nuclear powers) to the brink of war. Since early 2004, the two countries have engaged in a series of peace talks and confidence-building measures. But basic differences over Kashmir and engrained suspicions keep that region volatile as have recent terrorist attacks on India. In November 2008, an Islamist terrorists group named Lashkar-e-Taiba or LeT (“Army of the Pure”) launched a deadly attack on the center of Mumbai (formerly Bombay, India’s largest city and its financial center), killing nearly 200 people and wounding more than 300. Based in Pakistan, that group is committed to “liberating” the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir. Like the Pakistani Taliban, the LeT and other Islamist groups have received assistance from their country’s intelligence service in the past and may still be getting help from hard-line, anti-Indian segments of that service. Until recently, the Pakistani armed forces were reluctant to reorganize for counterinsurgency action against Islamist insurgents, preferring to train its soldiers instead for a possible conventional war against India. That may be changing, following the 2009 military’s liberation of the Swat valley from the Taliban.

Lebanon, from 1975 to 1990 and again in 2006–2008 was also a battlefield for warring religious factions. Today, the specter of renewed violence continues to haunt the country. Among the 17 religious communities represented in the Lebanese political system, the most important have been Maronite Catholics, Shi’a Muslims, Sunni Muslims, and Druze (a religion that combines Muslim and other religious beliefs). Despite its religious heterogeneity, for its first 30 years after independence (1943) the country was considered a bastion of peace and economic prosperity in the midst of a troubled region. During that time, the dominant Maronite (Christian) and Sunni communities coexisted under the terms of a political power-sharing arrangement dating back to the 1920s, when Lebanon had limited home rule, and reinforced at the time of national independence.

But power sharing and peaceful coexistence broke down in the 1970s as the Muslim population, particularly the Shi’a community, perceived that the terms of the old agreement no longer reflected the relative sizes of the major religious groups. Although the faster-growing Muslim community currently accounts for perhaps 60–65 percent of the population (statistics vary widely depending on whose estimate one believes), through the 1972 election (the last before the civil war), they were allocated only 45 percent of the seats in the national parliament, with 55 percent going to the Christians. This division of seats reflected the country’s religious affiliations in 1932, the last time a complete census was conducted. Since that time, the Muslim population had overtaken the Christians because of a higher birth rate and a lower rate of emigration. However, there was no new census and no reallocation of seats.
Religious, economic, and political differences also caused conflict within the Muslim community, between Shi’as and Sunnis. Despite outnumbering the Sunnis, the Shi’as had less political power, fewer allocated seats in parliament, and a lower standard of living than either the Sunnis or the Christians. Lebanon’s two most powerful political offices—president and prime minister—were reserved, respectively, for a Maronite Christian and a Sunni.

External intervention further aggravated the nation’s ethnic tensions. The influx of many Palestinian refugees (fleeing Jordan), including armed PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) militia, radicalized Lebanon’s political arena. Many poor Lebanese—particularly the Shi’as until the 1980s—were drawn to the Palestinians’ revolutionary rhetoric. Christian militia leaders, who feared the threat to their power posed by the Shi’as and the Palestinians, responded by establishing a military alliance with Israel. At the same time, Syria, wishing to expand its power in the Middle East and create a buffer zone between itself and Israel, occupied much of Lebanon and dominated that country’s politics for many years. By 1975, Lebanon’s national government had become an ineffectual, hollow shell, as power shifted to a range of communal warlords. Conflicts between Christian, Sunni, Shi’a, and Palestinian militias engulfed Lebanon in a civil war that lasted 15 years and took perhaps 150,000 lives. The country’s religious conflict had elements of a class struggle as well, pitting the more prosperous Christian community against the Shi’as, who saw themselves as the oppressed poor. Foreign forces, in the form of Palestinian militia, occupying Israeli forces in the South, and Syria all added to the bloodshed.

As Lebanese cities lay in ruins and Palestinian, Israeli, and Syrian forces threatened to destroy the nation’s sovereignty, the multinational Arab League helped negotiate a treaty between the warring factions. The Taif Accord, signed in late 1989, raised the Muslims’ percentage of parliamentary seats to 50 percent and established the basis for a “national pact” between the warring factions, finally bringing fighting to an end in 1990. During the next 15 years, the Lebanese rebuilt their economy and maintained a fragile peace between religious factions, although Syrian troops and intelligence units continued their occupation and often dictated policy to the Lebanese government.

But even before the 1989 agreement was signed, there were further confrontations between the Sunnis and Shi’ites. In the early 1980s, Shi’a clergy founded Hezbollah (the “Party of God”), a combination political party, social-services provider, armed militia, and terrorist group. Its goals included driving the Israeli army out of southern Lebanon, promoting Shi’a fundamentalism, closer ties to Iran (the party’s leading financial backer and arms supplier), and asserting Shi’a political power in the Middle East generally. The party gained widespread popularity within the Shi’a and Palestinian communities when it did help end Israel’s 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon. Furthermore, it set up a parallel system of schools, health clinics, and other services that have operated far more effectively than the government’s social services and have better served the Shi’a poor.

In 2006, after Hezbollah fighters crossed into Israel and captured two soldiers, Israeli troops invaded Lebanon and carried out saturation bombings of urban Hezbollah strongholds. Large portions of the country’s southern cities were destroyed, about 1,150 Lebanese and 150 Israelis were killed, and the country’s rebuilt economy once again lay in ruins. While many Christians
and Sunnis blamed Hezbollah for foolishly provoking Israel, the movement’s support intensified within the large Shi’a community as Hezbollah outperformed the Lebanese government in supplying emergency housing and services to the 400,000 civilians who had been forced from their homes during the 34-day war. By launching several thousand rockets (supplied by Syria and Iran) into northern Israel during the war, Hezbollah also enhanced its military reputation. Since that time, it has become the country’s most powerful political party. In 2009, however, although the Hezbollah-led March 8 Alliance had been expected to gain a parliamentary plurality in national elections, it was rebuffed by Lebanese voters.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, the most well-known conflict between Sunnis and Shi’ites has been in Iraq. Like many of the Third World’s ethnic clashes, its origins can be traced back to an earlier period. When Iraq received full independence in 1932, the outgoing British rulers transferred power to the Sunni Arab elite. For the next 70 years, the relatively small Arab Sunni community (about 15 percent of the total population) dominated both the Arab Shi’a majority (about 60 percent) and the Kurdish minority (20 percent). Although most Kurds are also Sunnis, they have long opposed Arab control, be it Sunni or Shi’a.* Upon taking full power, Saddam Hussein intensified persecution of the Shi’as, particularly after the United States defeated Iraq in the Gulf War (1990–1991). Believing that President George H. W. Bush’s call to the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam after that war meant that the United States would support an uprising, the Shi’a heartland in southern Iraq, like the Kurds in the Northeast, rose up. When U.S. assistance failed to materialize, both revolts were crushed. Towns across the South were razed and tens of thousands of Shi’as were massacred. Over time, thousands of Shi’ites migrated to the country’s Sunni-dominated, central region. In greater Baghdad, neighborhoods such as Sadr City became home to huge Shi’ite enclaves, bringing them into closer contact with the Sunnis.

Given Saddam’s relentless persecution of the Shi’as, it was not surprising that they rejoiced in his overthrow. Indeed, when the United States first invaded Iraq, the Shi’ites most respected religious leader, the grand ayatollah Ali al-Husayni Sistani, instructed his followers not to resist the American forces. But, contrary to Washington’s expectations, this did not mean that either Sistani or the Shi’a masses wished to ally with the United States. Once Sunni political domination was terminated—symbolized by the American program of “debathification,” a purge of former members of Saddam’s ruling Ba’ath party (mostly Sunnis) from government posts—Sistani opposed several U.S. proposals for a new Iraqi government, plans which he and his followers felt gave too much power to the Sunnis.

But despite their unhappiness with many American policies, Sistani and other Shi’a leaders favored peaceful negotiation with the occupation authorities. On the other hand, the Sunni community, unaccustomed to being out of power, were hostile toward American and allied occupation forces. Indeed, most Sunnis saw the American debathification of Iraq’s military and security police officers as

* When the U.S. media refer to the Sunni community in Iraq (and Sunni–Shi’ite conflict), they mean only the Arab Sunnis, not Kurdish Sunnis.
a de facto program of “de-Sunnification” of the government. Meanwhile, Shi’ites eagerly anticipated the dawn of a new state that they would dominate. Adding to long-standing theological differences between the two religious communities (Chapter 3), the Shi’as resented the persecution they had suffered at the hands of the Sunni-dominated, Saddam government. The Sunnis, for their part, viewed the Shi’as as agents of the Iranian government and its religious leaders. Iraq and Iran are among the few nations in the Middle East with majority Shi’a populations. But, they have been separated by language (most Iranians speak Farsi—Persian—while most Iraqis speak Arabic) and by each country’s long-term aspirations for leadership in the Gulf region. As we have seen, during the 1980s the two had fought a brutal war. Yet many of Iraq’s leading Shi’a clerics lived in exile in Iran while fleeing Saddam’s persecution, adding to Sunni suspicions about their loyalty. Indeed, the grand ayatollah Sistani himself was born and raised in Iran and still speaks Arabic with a thick Persian accent. But, most of all, the Sunnis were afraid of losing political power to the Shi’as whom they had so long dominated and often mistreated.

Within a year of Saddam’s fall, Sunni extremists were using their most lethal weapons—roadside bombs and suicide bombings—directed against police stations, outdoor markets, bus stations, religious shrines, and other crowded sites in Shi’a neighborhoods. Initially, foreigners carried out many of the suicide bombings, especially Saudis, Syrians, and Jordanians. In time, however, native Iraqis committed most terrorist acts. In April 2007, a suicide bomber penetrated the supposedly impregnable security of the parliament building in the American-controlled Green Zone, the most fortified area in Iraq. Although only one member of Parliament was killed, the attack sent a psychologically powerful message that no place in Iraq was safe from terrorism. From the start of the Sunni insurgency in 2003 through April 2007, there were more than 350 confirmed suicide bombings, killing thousands of Iraqis and many American soldiers. Of the bombers who have been identified posthumously, all have been Sunnis and almost all suicide attacks were directed at Shi’ites or foreigners. Bombs are delivered in cars, trucks, or, occasionally, on foot.

In May 2007, a leading American authority on these bombings noted, “Since our invasion, suicide terrorism has been essentially doubling in Iraq every year.” In fact, suicide bombings became so frequent that the mere rumor of a bomber can cause mass panic. For example, on August 31, 2005, 1 million Shi’a religious pilgrims converged on a holy shrine in Baghdad, their line stretching for miles. In the morning, a mortar attack on the worshippers killed 16 people. Later in that same day, a rumor spread in the massive crowd that a suicide bomber was in their midst. Panic produced a stampede in which more than one thousand people died—trampled or drowned in the nearby river—while trying to escape.

The 2007 surge in the number of U.S. troops sharply reduced the level of violence. At the same time, there have been important Sunni militia defections. Sunni military and terrorist organizations fall into two broad categories: first, religiously inspired groups (jihadists) who are often led by foreigners with ties to Al Qaeda; and, second, secular groups, led by Iraqis linked to the Ba’thist resistance. Of late, tensions between the two have been mounting. In 2007, some of the Sunni militias that had earlier battled U.S. troops formed alliances
of convenience with the Americans in order to battle the jihadists. American arms and training seemingly have improved those militias ability to fight Al Qaeda, but they also risk strengthening Sunni extremists in the event of future religious conflict. Sunni terrorists’ repeated attacks caused many Shi’ites to reject Ayatollah Sistani’s admonitions against violence and civil war. Instead, a young cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr, emerged as the face of Shi’a militancy. In contrast to the aging Sistani, who rarely appears in public and issues most of his pronouncements through his aides, al-Sadr (age 36) has a charismatic personality. A fiery nationalist, he has demanded an immediate withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. Al-Sadr’s support is most pronounced in Baghdad’s huge Shi’a enclave, Sadr City—named after his father, a grand ayatollah who had been executed by the Saddam government—and, to a lesser extent, in Basra, Iraq’s second largest city and the largest Shi’a stronghold. He and his followers have acted on two fronts: first, they formed a militia of several thousand men, called the Mahdi Army. For several years, they battled Sunni militias while also clashing with their chief Shi’a rivals and, occasionally, American troops. But its primary role has been to react to Sunni assaults on Shi’a neighborhoods, retaliating with kidnapping, torture, and execution of suspected Sunni militants. It has also provided medical and other services to Shi’a neighborhoods in the wake of Sunni bombings. Second, like Lebanon’s Hezbollah, al-Sadr’s faction has also created a political party that won several legislative seats in the 2005 national election. In 2007, the Mahdi Army declared a cease-fire in the face of the American troop surge and 1 year later it was weakened after U.S. troops and Iraq’s strengthened security forces attacked Sadr City. Al-Sadr’s political and military strength appear to have weakened considerably and in late 2009 his party chose to join Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s mostly moderate secular coalition in the coming parliamentary elections (see below).

The other major Shi’a militia is the Badr Brigade, the military wing of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC). The first Council was formed in 1982 and helped lead the Shi’a resistance to Saddam Hussein. Currently, its political party has one of the largest delegations in parliament. Though tied closely to Iran, SIIC has steered a comparatively moderate course—more militant than Sistani but less militant than al-Sadr—while fashioning a reasonable working relationship with the U.S military. As the Shi’ite government coalition’s largest party, it wields considerable political influence. Furthermore, members of the Badr Brigade control important segments of the Iraqi government’s security forces, where their history of reprisals against the Sunnis has included torture and extra-judicial killings. In 2006, the Badr Brigade and al-Sadr’s Mahdi Army clashed on a number of occasions in a power struggle for control of the Shi’a community and its financial resources. Thus, like the Sunnis, Shi’a paramilitary groups are not united. Although SIIC was an important backer of al-Maliki’s government, it plans to join an opposition bloc of Shi’a religious parties in the 2010 parliamentary elections.

The success of the American troop surge has lowered militia activity considerably. But, the country’s political leaders have failed to resolve fundamental
differences between the three ethnic communities. Starting in 2005, a number of Sunni, tribal militias in Anbar province (previously the center of insurgent attacks on American and Iraqi troops) agreed to switch sides and, in return for U.S. arms and supplies, turned their forces against Al Qaeda in Iraq. This movement—called The Awakening—spread to other provinces and was probably as important as the surge in reducing violence. But, now that the Sunni insurgency has diminished, the Shi’a-led government has reneged on its promises to pay Awakening soldiers and integrate them into the Iraqi military, raising concerns that these Sunni militias will resume their war against the government.

To date, most attempts to reconcile differences between the three ethnic communities at the highest levels of government have gone nowhere. However, in late 2009, Prime Minister al-Maliki announced the formation of a secular coalition that would team his own Shi’ite political party (Dawa) with a number of smaller, secular Sunni parties in parliamentary elections scheduled for early 2010. It remains to be seen whether there will be sufficient Shi’a and Sunni political cooperation to end the current stalemates in parliament and whether there will be a resurgence of sectarian violence as substantial numbers of American troops are withdrawn. Prime Minister al-Maliki has tried to create a governing coalition based on sectarian, nationalist aspirations. His level of success may well determine whether Iraq is capable of building a peaceful future.

**DEPENDENCY, MODERNIZATION, AND ETHNIC CONFLICT**

Western analysts once assumed that improved education and communications in the Third World would break down ethnic conflicts. Because of their country’s experience as a “melting pot” for immigrant groups, Americans in particular have supposed that socioeconomic modernization enhances ethnic integration and harmony.* Yet in Africa and Asia, early modernization has frequently politicized and intensified ethnic antagonisms. In fact, Crawford Young observes that “cultural pluralism [and ethnic strife] as a political phenomenon” was not significant in traditional societies but, rather, emerged “from such social processes as urbanization, the revolution in communications and spread of modern education.”

Early modernization theorists, who were quite optimistic about the positive effects of literacy, urbanization, and modern values, clearly underestimated the extent to which these factors might mobilize various ethnic groups and set them against each other. Dependency theorists, on the other hand, provided a rather superficial analysis of ethnic issues, tending to blame conflicts on colonialism or neocolonialism (the industrialized “core’s” post-independence economics of the LDCs).

During the era of European colonialism, ethnic divisions in Africa and Asia were often kept in check by the struggle for independence, which

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* Of course, America’s image as a successful melting pot has been overstated. For example, prejudice, though much diminished, continues to divide Blacks and Whites. Furthermore, many Hispanic immigrants are barely integrated into society.
encouraged a common front against the colonial regime. After independence, however, previously submerged ethnic rivalries frequently rose to the surface. In the new political order, religious, racial, tribal, and nationality groups competed for state resources such as roads, schools, and civil service jobs. Subsequently, rural-to-urban migration has brought previously isolated ethnic groups into proximity with each other for the first time. Furthermore, urbanization, rising educational levels, and the spread of mass communications have politicized previously nonparticipating segments of the population. Because many of these newly mobilized citizens identify primarily with their own caste, religion, nationality, or tribe, their recently acquired political awareness often produces clashes with other ethnicities. The spread of higher education, rather than generating greater harmony, frequently produces a class of ethnically chauvinistic professionals and intellectuals, who become the ideologists of ethnic hostility. In time, as these groups come to know each other or as ethnic identities take on more conciliatory forms, these tensions may diminish. For now, however, ethnic conflict remains a potent phenomenon in the Third World.

Just as colonialism and modernization challenged traditional religious, national, and tribal identities, the economic and social forces of globalization may pose an even greater challenge. As international business conglomerates such as Nike, Coke, Wrangler, and McDonald’s spread their brand names and associated cultural habits throughout the developing world, they bring a certain homogenization of world culture, which may undercut traditional ethnic practices and values. Western rock and blue jeans frequently replace distinct ethnic music and dress among young people.

Bhikhu Parekh notes that American films have driven out traditional, local films in many developing nations, not only because of their entertainment value but because U.S. studios can market their films at a lower price than local producers. Through the 1980s, Indonesia (the world’s fourth most populous nation) protected the local film industry from foreign competition. While few of the Indonesian films—like American films—had outstanding artistic merit, they did reinforce national (or at least, Javanese) folktales and beliefs. In subsequent trade talks, Indonesia agreed to remove its barriers to foreign films, in return for which Washington lowered tariffs on Indonesian textile exports. By “1992, 66 out of 71 cinema houses in [Indonesia’s] major cities showed only foreign, mainly US, films, and domestic gems such as My Sky, My Home, which won awards in France, Germany, and . . . the US, could not secure a domestic outlet.”

The long-term effects of the expanding “world culture” advanced by globalization are not entirely clear. On the one hand, it may be argued that the spread of Western world brands will eventually reduce or eliminate the differences of dress, food, and customs that currently separate different ethnic groups. For now, however, the prospect of globalized culture has often created a nationalistic or ethnic backlash and widened tensions between neighboring ethnic communities. To the extent that globalization economically benefits certain ethnic groups at the expense of others, it has the potential to sharpen ethnic conflict. If national governments can stop that from happening, ethnic relations may remain static or even improve.
LEVELS OF INTERETHNIC CONFLICT

Although most countries are ethnically heterogeneous, there are wide variations in how different ethnicities relate to each other. In some cases, different races or religions interact fairly amicably; in others, deep resentments inspire shocking atrocities. Having examined the various types of ethnic communities, we will now consider the nature and intensity of relations between them. In theory, these relationships can be measured by the frequency of interethnic friendships and marriages, by the degree to which political parties, trade unions, and other civic organizations are ethnically based, and by the extent to which ethnic divisions are reinforced by other social cleavages such as class. In any particular country, relations between ethnic communities may range from relative harmony (Brazil) to systematic violence (Sudan).

Relative Harmony

As we have seen, modernization often intensifies ethnic antagonisms in the short run, but usually ameliorates them in the longer term. Consequently, affluent democracies are more likely than LDCs to enjoy amicable ethnic relations. In Switzerland, for example, German-, French-, and Italian-speaking citizens have lived together peacefully for centuries. The United States and Canada also enjoy relative ethnic harmony, having successfully assimilated a large assortment of immigrant groups. In North Dakota or Saskatchewan, for example, few people are concerned when a person of Ukrainian-Orthodox or German-Catholic origin marries a Lutheran of Norwegian ancestry.

Relative ethnic harmony is less common in developing countries. However, in Brazil and the island nations of the Caribbean, relations between Blacks and Whites are generally more harmonious than in the United States. For instance, interracial dating and marriages are quite common, particularly among lower-income groups. Still, that harmony is relative, because even those countries have maintained a social hierarchy between races. Although there are many Blacks in the Dominican, Brazilian, and Panamanian middle classes, most Blacks in those countries remain mired in the lower class, and very few make it to the top of the political and economic orders.

In short, even the countries classified as harmonious are only categorized that way relative to other, more sharply divided societies. They continue to have some glaring examples of ethnic discrimination and tension. In Cuba, despite a long history of interracial marriage and more recent government efforts to promote racial equality, Blacks have yet to attain their share of leadership positions in government or the Communist Party. And Canada, in many ways a more successful melting pot than the United States, has not resolved the vexing problem of French separatism in Quebec. But such tensions are the exception, and conflict is rarely violent.

Uneasy Balance

In LDCs such as Trinidad-Tobago and Malaysia, relations between the principal ethnic groups are more strained than in the aforementioned cases of relative harmony. Although still generally peaceful, interethnic relations are in an uneasy
balance, in which different groups predominate in specific areas of society. For example, in Malaysia the Muslim Malay majority dominates the political system, including parliament and the government bureaucracy, while the Chinese minority dominates the private sector. Race riots in 1969 led the Malaysian government to introduce a “New Economic Policy” designed, in part, to redistribute more of the country’s wealth to the Malays. Fearful of Chinese domination, the Malays have benefited from a system of ethnic preferences in education and the civil service. Interethnic relations may soon be tested, however, as the Malaysian government has announced plans to sharply reduce these preferences.

The Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago offers another example of uneasy balance.* During the second half of the nineteenth century, British colonial authorities encouraged the migration of indentured plantation workers from India who joined the Black majority and the small White elite. Contrary to the common Caribbean practice of extensive racial mixing, there was less interracial marriage between Blacks and East Indians (immigrants from India), at least until the twentieth century. Each group currently constitutes about 40 percent of the population, with the remaining 20 percent made up of Chinese, Whites, Arabs, and others. Following Trinidadian independence in 1962, ethnic frictions increased as Blacks and East Indians competed for state resources. Most of the important political, civil service, military, and police positions since that time have been held by Blacks, who predominate within the urban middle and working classes. Whites continue to predominate in the upper ranks of the business community. Traditionally, most East Indians have been either small to medium-sized businesspeople (with significant collective economic power) or poor farmers and farmworkers.

Trinidadian politics do not feature the same overt ethnic appeals that characterize many LDCs, but most of its political parties and unions represent one race primarily. During the first parliamentary elections after independence, each of the major parties received 80–90 percent of its votes from one ethnic group. For 24 years (1962–1986), the People’s National Movement (PNM), the party that led the independence movement, headed the national government. While drawing votes from various races, the PNM’s leadership and voter base have been primarily Black. For more than two decades, the opposition was led by various Indian-dominated parties, including the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) and the United Labour Front (ULF). Major labor unions also tended to be either predominantly Black or East Indian. Only in 1986 did the newly formed National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) finally dislodge the PNM from power by forging the first electoral alliance between the two dominant ethnic groups.

Black and Indian political and labor leaders cooperate periodically and in 1995 a party representing both races elected Trinidad’s first prime minister of East Indian origin. At the same time, however, the two communities continued to maintain their social, political, and economic distance. In 1990, a radical Black Muslim movement, the Jamaat al Muslimeen, briefly captured the parliament.

* Elsewhere in this text, I refer to Trinidad and Tobago as Trinidad-Tobago or simply Trinidad so that readers do not think that these are two countries.
building and held the prime minister and members of parliament hostage for 6 days while many poor Blacks rioted in the nation’s capital. Jamaat’s manifestos reflected the antagonism that many Black Trinidadians feel toward East Indians, but their violent behavior was an aberration in the nation’s racial relations.

**Enforced Hierarchy (Ethnic Dominance)**

One important factor permitting ethnic balance in countries such as Malaysia and Trinidad-Tobago has been the division of political and economic powers between the different ethnicities. Typically, one ethnicity predominates in the political arena and the other is more influential in the economy. But, in *enforced hierarchies* both forms of power are concentrated in the hands of the ruling ethnic group. South African apartheid represented the most blatant example of such a relationship. Through the 1980s, Whites dominated both the private sector and the state, including the courts, police, and armed forces. Blacks were denied the most basic rights.

Latin American nations with large Indian (Native American) populations—including Guatemala, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru—have a less overt, but still significant, form of hierarchy. Since the Spanish conquest, most Indians in those countries have been poor peasants at the bottom of the social and political ladder. Even today, despite important recent gains in Indian rights, most positions of political and economic influence remain in the hands of Whites or Mestizos. At the same time, however, unlike the United States, racial classifications in Latin America tend to be culturally rather than biologically defined. Consequently, they are more flexible and open up opportunities for at least some people of color. If a young Indian villager moves to the city, adopts Western dress, and speaks Spanish, he or she becomes a Mestizo (or *Cholo*), a higher social status. And in the rural highlands of Ecuador and Peru, entire peasant communities that spoke Quechua a generation ago have switched to Spanish and changed to Western clothing in a process called *mestizaje* (becoming Mestizo). Consequently, over the years, the percentage of the population considered Mestizos has increased, with a corresponding decline in the number identified as indigenous (Indian). This, more flexible, cultural definition has obvious advantages, but an important disadvantage as well. Although it facilitates upward social mobility, traditionally Indians have only been able to enjoy that mobility by abandoning their own culture.

Since the 1980s, however, Indians have begun to assert their cultural rights and political influence in several South American countries through grassroots political movements and through the election of indigenous government officials, sometimes at the highest levels. In Bolivia, where 60 percent of the population is indigenous, new Indian social movements organized mass protests against the government’s free-market (neoliberal) economic policies. Those protests brought down the nation’s president and subsequently led to the 2006 election of Evo Morales, the country’s first Indian president. Morales has placed several indigenous leaders in his cabinet and introduced laws to protect the rights of the country’s Indian majority. In Ecuador, a national Indian federation (CONAIE) joined the military in a 2000 coup that briefly installed a ruling junta that included the CONAIE president. Founded in 1996, Pachakutik
(“Awakening”), an Indian political party growing out of CONAIE, became an important political force. Peru elected a president of Indian descent in 2001. Finally, in the Mexican state of Chiapas, a group known as the Zapatistas staged a 1994 peasant rebellion in behalf of Indian rights. Though it never had a chance to seize national power (nor did it intend to), the group received a remarkable amount of national support from Mexicans of all ethnicities and social classes.

In all these cases of enforced hierarchy, racial and class distinctions are closely intertwined. Those higher up the social ladder tend to be lighter skinned; those at the lower ranks of society are generally darker. In Brazil, being Black is generally associated with being poor. Although upward mobility through the class–race hierarchy is possible, racial prejudice shapes social relationships and creates barriers to equality. Moreover, most Latin American Black families—like Indian families in the Andes—are too poor to provide their children with the education needed for significant upward social and economic mobility. Brazil prides itself in being a racial melting pot and in many ways it is. For example, there are numerous social and cultural bonds between Blacks, Mulattos, and Whites, including many interracial marriages, far more than in the United States. Yet, the most recent national census documented what most Brazilians already knew—people of color have less education and far lower incomes than Whites. Though Blacks and Mulattos constitute about 40 percent of the Brazilian population, they made up only 2–3 percent of university students. Furthermore, they are nearly twice as likely as Whites to earn below the official minimum wage. To rectify this situation, the current administration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has created affirmative action quotas that set aside university positions and government jobs for people of color. But, the program has been negatively received by the White middle and upper classes, which may weaken its implementation.

Unlike South Africa’s old apartheid system, Latin America’s racial hierarchy is enforced informally, not legally, and is far less repressive. Still, during nearly 40 years of revolutionary upheaval and intense government oppression, the Guatemalan armed forces viewed rural Indian communities as breeding grounds for Marxist guerrillas. Consequently, successive military regimes massacred tens of thousands of Indian peasants in a policy bordering on genocide. Fortunately, since the 1990s a peace treaty with the guerrillas has curtailed such violence.

Systematic Violence

In the worst-case scenario, deep ethnic resentments have sometimes led to mass violence or even civil war. As we have seen, in a number of Third World countries as well as in some European nations, *systematic violence* has resulted in thousands or hundreds of thousands of deaths and huge numbers of displaced refugees and rape victims—in Bosnia, Lebanon, India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Sudan, among others. Often, as with enforced hierarchies, violence develops when ethnic divisions are reinforced by class antagonisms. Muslim antipathy toward Lebanon’s Christian community has been fueled by Christian economic superiority. Similarly, in Nigeria, many Islamic northerners resent the economic success of the Christian Ibos.
Ethnic bloodshed sometimes occurs when one ethnicity seizes political power and then takes retribution for real or imagined past indignities. Thus, when General Idi Amin seized power in Uganda, he ordered the slaughter of Langi and Acholi soldiers who were identified with the regime of ousted President Milton Obote. In both Rwanda and Burundi, the deaths of Hutu presidents opened the floodgates to violence between Hutus and the long-dominant Tutsis.

OUTCOMES AND RESOLUTIONS

Whether ethnic antagonisms arise from competition over government resources, resentment over the division of political and economic powers, or an ethnic community’s demands for greater autonomy, there are a number of possible results. Although some outcomes are peaceful, others may spawn intense violence. And while some resolutions are successful, others do not endure. In seeking a peaceful and lasting resolution, government and ethnic leaders are constrained by the history and intensity of their ethnic cleavages, by the degree of previous ethnic cooperation, and by the country’s political culture. Nonetheless, within these constraints, the creativity and statecraft of national leaders and outside mediators can contribute to successful solutions. Of course, political elites may seek reasonable, negotiatied solutions or they may choose to play on ethnic tensions for their own advantage.

Unfortunately, all too often self-serving, chauvinistic political leaders make a bad situation worse. For example, although Bosnian Serbs and Muslims had enjoyed rather amicable relationships for many years, after the breakup of Yugoslavia extremist leaders such as then-Serb-president Slobodan Milošević; promoted ethnic hatred and mass murder in order to build their own political power base. In the end, Milošević brought both Bosnia and Serbia to ruin. Similarly, the appalling 1994 massacres in Rwanda were orchestrated from above. Government officials induced Hutu villagers to attack their Tutsi neighbors with whom most of them had been living peacefully for many years.

When more responsible elites are willing to resolve bitter ethnic conflicts through negotiations, they may arrive at one of several types of resolutions. In the next section, we examine those possible outcomes and also look at several options that have been attempted when negotiations failed. Although the alternatives presented here are not exhaustive, they cover a wide range of Third World experiences.

Power Sharing: Federalism and Consociationalism

Power-sharing arrangements are designed to create stability by constitutionally dividing political power among major ethnic groups. These settlements generally follow protracted negotiations and constitutional debate. If power sharing is introduced into the constitution at the time of independence, it may head off ethnic conflict before it gets started. Unfortunately, however, such arrangements often break down.

Federalism, the primary form of power sharing, is “a system of government [that] emanates from the desire of people to form a union without necessarily losing their various identities.”[^38] It may involve the creation of autonomous or
semiautonomous regions, each of which is governed by a particular ethnicity. It is only possible in situations where contending ethnic groups are concentrated in different regions of the country. For example, prior to its collapse, Yugoslavia consisted of six autonomous republics mostly governed by individual nationalities, including Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The constitution mandated power sharing between the various republics at the national level. But, that compromise began to unravel in the 1970s following the death of Marshal Joseph Broz Tito, the country’s long-term strong man. It collapsed completely in the early 1990s when the Communist Party lost its grip on several republics.

Industrialized democracies have had greater success with ethnically based federalism. Each of Switzerland’s 22 cantons is dominated by one of the country’s three major language groups, with German-, French-, and Italian-speaking cantons coexisting harmoniously. Canada’s federalism, though not based on ethnic divisions, has allowed the primarily French-speaking province of Quebec a substantial amount of autonomy regarding language and other cultural matters. Although the country’s constitutional arrangement has not satisfied many Québécois nationalists, it has accommodated many of their demands and, at least until now, has induced the province’s voters to reject independence.

In the developing world, power sharing has been less successful. Following independence, Nigeria tried to accommodate its ethnic divisions through federalism. As we have seen, the country’s North was dominated by the Hausa and Fulani, the East by the Ibos, and the West, to a lesser extent, by the Yoruba. That union came apart when the Ibos tried to secede. Although the Biafran war took a terrible toll, a new federal solution has subsequently taken hold. On the other hand, Pakistani federalism failed to overcome the antipathy between the country’s more powerful western region (populated largely by Urdu speakers) and the Bengali-speaking East. In 1971, relations between the two regions broke down completely, resulting in the massacre of 500,000 Bengalis by western Pakistani troops. When India went to war with Pakistan, the eastern region was able to secede and form the new nation of Bangladesh.

Consociationalism offers another potential solution to ethnic conflict. It tends to be used where major ethnic groups reside in close proximity and have no particular “homelands.” Like federalism, however, it has had a mixed record. Consociational democracy in plural (multiethnic) societies entails a careful division of political power designed to protect the rights of all participants.* It involves the following components:

1. The leaders of all important ethnic groups must form a ruling coalition at the national level.
2. Each group has veto power over government policy, or at least over policies that affect them.
3. Government funds and public employment, such as the civil service, are divided between ethnicities, with each receiving a number of posts roughly proportional to its population.
4. Each ethnic group is afforded a high degree of autonomy over its own affairs.39

* Consociationalism can exist among conflicting groups other than ethnicities, but we confine this discussion to ethnically based consociationalism.
Thus, consociational democracy consciously rejects pure majority rule. Instead, it seeks to create a framework for stability and peace by guaranteeing minorities a share of political power—even veto power—to protect them against the majority. It has been tried in several developing nations, including Cyprus (where it failed) and Malaysia (where it has generally succeeded). Perhaps the most widely known effort has been in Lebanon. From independence in 1943 until civil war erupted in 1975, government positions and political authority were divided between the nation’s various Muslim and Christian communities. As we saw, the system eventually broke down, in part because formulas for the proportional division of government posts were not adjusted to reflect population growth over the years among Shi’ites and other Muslims. Settlement of the country’s 15-year civil war restored consociational rule, but with a division of government positions that more accurately reflected the Muslim share of the population. Still, ongoing confrontations between the national government and Shi’a Hezbollah demonstrate that ethnic tensions continue.

Some mutual trust and cooperation between the leaders of contending ethnic groups is the key to effective consociational arrangements. Sadly, trust is difficult to establish in times of ethnic hostility and becomes ever more problematic after that hostility has erupted into bloodshed. Iraq’s current consociational arrangements involve the division of leadership posts (including prime minister, president, and speaker of the parliament) between the three major ethnic groups and the use of parliamentary election rules that indirectly guarantee a bloc of seats for the Kurds and Sunnis. But, continued mistrust between the three major ethnic groups has stalemated the national parliament.

**Secession**

When power sharing or other forms of compromise do not succeed, disgruntled ethnic minorities may attempt to secede (withdraw) from the country in order to form their own nation or join their ethnic brothers and sisters in a neighboring state. As one author put it, “Secession, like divorce, is an ultimate act of alienation.” It offers a potential way out of a “failed marriage” between ethnic groups within a nation-state. Unfortunately, however, like divorce, secession or the threat of secession frequently provoke bitterness and hostility.

Ralph Premdas indicates that these movements have several characteristics:

1. An ethnic group—defined by factors such as language, religion, culture, or race—claims the right of self-determination (independence).
2. The ethnic community has a defined territorial base that it claims as its homeland.
3. There is almost always some organized struggle.

Given the large number of ethnically divided LDCs, we should not be surprised to find many secessionist movements. Central governments, faced with such breakaway efforts, almost always try to repress them because they are unwilling to part with some of their country’s territory or resources, just as Abraham Lincoln was unwilling to part with the Confederate states. This chapter previously examined secessionist movements by Tamils in Sri Lanka, Ibos in Nigeria, Eritreans in Ethiopia, and Sikhs in northern India. Other secessionist movements
have included, Blacks in southern Sudan, Karen in Myanmar, Moros in the Philippines, and Muslims in Kashmir.

Following the Gulf War, the world briefly focused its attention on Saddam Hussein’s persecution of Iraq’s Kurdish population. A decade later, Kurdish militia supported American-led coalition forces in the war to topple Saddam. But the Kurdish secessionist movement preceded Saddam’s government and transcends Iraqi borders. Separatist efforts date to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the close of World War I. Residing in a mountainous region that they call Kurdistan, perhaps as many as 30 million Kurds live in adjacent regions of Turkey (home to about half of the region’s Kurds), Iraq, and Iran, with a smaller community in Syria. Over the years, the Kurds have been persecuted in all of those countries, and today they still have little prospect of attaining the independent Kurdistan that so many of them desire (though they have achieved regional self-rule in northeastern Iraq). As a result of America’s two wars with Iraq, Kurds have achieved virtual autonomy and currently exercise considerable influence in that country’s national government.

Although many aggrieved Third World nationalities would like to secede, few have accomplished that goal. The Bangladeshi withdrawal from Pakistan is one of the few “successful” Third World cases, but it was only achieved at an enormous cost in human lives. Moreover, it could not have happened without India’s military intervention. Eritrea attained independence from Ethiopia in 1993 after decades of struggle. But, more often than not, the most that secessionist movements can hope to attain is greater autonomy and government recognition of their group’s rights.

Noting the spread of secessionist conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s and the breakup of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia into many smaller, ethnically based states in the 1990s, many analysts predicted that Eastern Europe and portions of the developing world would see the disintegration of an ever-growing number of nation-states. Often they voiced alarm over the violence and disorder that this prospect suggested. For example, a widely cited book by noted sociologist and former U.S. Senator, Patrick Moynihan, predicted that the number of independent states in the world would increase from about 200 to 300 by the middle of the twenty-first century. But, in fact, the number of secessionist wars has actually declined significantly since the start of the 1990s. From 1991 to 1999, 16 such wars were settled and 11 others were held in check by cease-fires or continuing negotiations. Thus, as this century began, only 18 secessionist wars continued worldwide, fewer than at any time since 1970.

**Outside Intervention**

Because ethnic conflicts sometimes produces a considerable loss of life and other horrors—particularly when a conflict pits a government against a minority group—outside actors may face a moral and practical dilemma. On the one hand, they may feel morally compelled to somehow intervene on behalf of a victimized minority. Such intercession can span the gamut from simply agreeing to take in refugees all the way to armed intervention aimed at putting a stop to the bloodshed. At the same time, however, leaders of outside nations may be constrained from involvement by international law (concerning national
sovereignty), international power alignments, lack of resources, or fear of alienating their own citizens. Even the nonaggressive act of offering refuge to the victims of ethnic strife and persecution may seem too costly, too risky, or too unpalatable to the home country’s population. Indeed, the outside world stood by as millions died in ethnic massacres in such countries as Bosnia, the Congo, Rwanda, and Sudan. Looking at the world’s prolonged inaction regarding the Serbs’ and Croats’ bloody “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia, military strategist Edward Luttwak asked, “If the Bosnian Muslims had been needle-nosed dolphins, would the world have allowed the Croats and Serbs to slaughter them by the tens of thousands?” His blunt question raises important ethical and pragmatic questions about the world’s obligations and limitations in such situations.

Unless outside forces are invited in by a country’s own government (as when Sri Lanka asked India’s armed forces to quell its civil war), external intervention normally violates the principle of national sovereignty. But, since most serious ethnic violence is perpetrated, encouraged, or condoned by these governments themselves, very rarely do they invite outside intervention. Consequently, most external intervention raises a number of difficult issues. At what point do other nations or international organizations (such as the United Nations, NATO, or the African Union) have the right to violate a country’s sovereignty in order to save innocent lives? For example, should the United Nations or the West have sent troops into Rwanda or the Congo, with or without the permission of their governments, in order to stop the massacres of hundreds of thousands? Does the community of nations currently have any legal and moral obligations to protect the people of Darfur from genocide, even if that violates Sudanese sovereignty? Many Westerners would answer affirmatively. But if those interventions are justified, wouldn’t the same moral principles have given United Nations the authority to send troops into Birmingham, Alabama, and rural Mississippi in the 1960s in order to protect the lives of Blacks who were being terrorized by the Ku Klux Klan and the local police? Who is to decide in which situations outside intervention is legitimate?

Furthermore, there are pragmatic questions regarding the likely effectiveness of a particular intervention. Under what circumstances does outside intervention (including military intervention) prevent ethnic persecution and impose a durable solution, and when are such efforts futile? Will countries such as the United States, France, India, or Nigeria be willing to commit their soldiers and economic resources on a sustained basis to support future peacekeeping operations? How many casualties among their own soldiers are peacekeeping nations prepared to accept?

In the end, governments contemplating humanitarian interventions have to weigh their own national interests and the costs of intervention against their commitment to sustaining human rights abroad. Most nations are reluctant to risk their soldiers’ lives for humanitarian purposes. A fairly small number of American soldiers (18) brutally killed in 1993 during a mission to restore order and distribute food in war-torn Somalia shocked U.S. public opinion and caused President Clinton to withdraw the remaining American troops. Only 1 year later, government leaders in Washington, Paris, and other Western capitals were warned that an ethnic massacre was likely to unfold in Rwanda. Sobered by the recently failed intervention in Somalia and unsure how well they could
prevent genocide, they decided against interference. Some analysts insist that the United Nations or the United States or France could have saved many thousand lives if they had quickly sent a military force to quell the violence. Others disagree, arguing that the Rwandan genocide took place so quickly (most of the deaths occurring within a few weeks) that intervention could not have arrived in time to save most of the victims.

More recently, the United Nations, The African Union, and the Western powers have lamented the genocidal warfare unleashed against non-Arab minorities in Darfur (a western region of Sudan). Only after nearly 1–2 million people had fled Darfur to squalid and dangerous refugee camps and some 200,000 had died (largely of starvation) did the African Union send a small and ineffective military force, with the acquiescence of the Sudanese government. The United Nations has been even slower to take action. Several thousand U.N. peacekeeping troops were finally dispatched to Darfur in 2007 in a joint operation with African Union troops already on the ground. While some sources claim the level of violence has declined somewhat since 2007, other analysts insist that it has risen. What is fairly certain is that joint U.N. and AU peacekeeping force has been hampered by the Sudanese government and had been rather ineffective in protecting Darfur’s population. More than a year after the Security Council authorized a nearly 20,000-person peacekeeping force, Sudan has only allowed in 12,000.

Even when world opinion has forced the host government to accept external intervention, such as United Nations intervention in East Timor (then a part of Indonesia) and Sudan, troops have normally been sent in only after the worst outrages had already been committed. To be sure, outside forces occasionally have imposed solutions on some seemingly intractable ethnic conflicts. In such cases, the intervening power is often a neighboring state that either has ties to one of the warring ethnic factions or has a strategic interest in the country it invades. Such was the case with India’s intercession on behalf of the Bengalis in East Pakistan. Without that intervention, the nation of Bangladesh could not have been born. The Turkish invasion of Cyprus imposed an ethnic settlement by partitioning the island’s Greek and Turkish communities. Recent examples of intervention by non-neighboring nations include the U.S. and British protection of the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq during the 1990s.

But international interventions frequently come too late and often end badly. While the Iraqi Kurds have benefited greatly from America’s two wars against their oppressor, Saddam Hussein, a prior U.S. intrusion had devastating results. In 1974, the American CIA and Iran supported a Kurdish rebellion against the Iraqi government. But, for Washington, Kurdish interests were secondary to its own policy objective—supporting the Shah’s government in Iran, which at that time was America’s ally and Iraq’s enemy. The following year, however, the Shah temporarily resolved his differences with Iraq and withdrew his support for the Kurdish insurrection. The CIA then also terminated its assistance to the rebels and the insurrection collapsed. Thousands of Iraqi Kurds were killed or driven from their homes. Washington’s behavior was not unique. Most countries—especially powerful ones with a broad international agenda—will only assist persecuted ethnic groups if that help does not conflict with their own national interests. Indeed, some outside interventions
have intentionally intensified ethnic conflicts. For example, from the late 1990s to 2003, as many as nine African nations, particularly Rwanda and Uganda, intervened in the Congo’s ethnic conflict, which pitted the Congolese government against Congolese Hutus and some 2 million Hutus who had recently fled Rwanda. In what some have called “Africa’s World War,” perhaps 5 million people have died (either from malnutrition, disease, or warfare) in a conflict that went largely unnoticed in the West and may now finally be winding down. While the loss of life would have been horrifying no matter what, the Ugandan and Rwandan interventions surely added to the death toll.

As we have seen, India’s attempt to settle the Tamil–Sinhalese conflict in Sri Lanka ended disasterously. Not only did it fail to resolve the civil war, but it led subsequently to the assassination of India’s prime minister Rajiv Gandhi by a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber. Foreign intervention did halt ethnic violence in the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Kosovo), but peacekeeping troops now face an indefinite stay. Finally, sometimes minority groups wishing to secede from their country receive help from neighboring countries with whom they share an ethnic identity. Somali rebels in the Ethiopian region of Ogaden have received help over the years from neighboring Somalia. In South Asia, the Pakistani military has aided Islamic secessionists in the Indian, predominantly Muslim, state of Kashmir.* In all these cases, outside intervention may merely have thrown gasoline on the fire of existing ethnic strife.

In short, outside interventions frequently fail to resolve ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, even when they are well intentioned, outside powers are often unwilling or unable to “stay the course.” Thus, Glynne Evans notes,

A half-hearted [outside] military response [to ethnic conflict] without any underlying political action is a poor option. . . . Conflicts with a high degree of ethnic mobilization last for generations rather than years, and are intense in their impact; as neighbors turn on neighbors. An intervention for humanitarian purposes in such cases becomes a major military commitment, and one of long duration.  

Events in countries such as the Congo, Rwanda, and Sudan suggest that this is a commitment that outside powers are rarely prepared to make.

One of the most common types of outside intervention has come from a neighboring country that supports an ethnic rebellion, thereby enhancing the conflict rather than containing it. Idean Salehyan’s recent study of ethnic rebellions involving violence found that nearly 80 percent involved ethnic groups located along an international border. * Put another way, ethnic groups (usually minorities) that reside along such borders are far more likely to rebel than living elsewhere. Why is this? If nothing else, proximity to a neighboring country often allows rebel soldiers and their supporters to take refuge from pursuing government troops. In many, if not most, of these cases the rebelling ethnic group lives on both sides of the border and can take refuge and gain support from their fellow tribesmen or nationals. Often, the neighboring government may also offer sanctuary or even military support. This chapter

* The Kashmir region, lying between India and Pakistan, is divided into two regions largely controlled by those two nations.
offers several examples. Kurdish rebels in Turkey are able to gain refuge and material support from the Kurdish-controlled regions of northern Iraq. Muslim rebels in Kashmir, as we have seen, have often been supported by the neighboring Pakistani armed forces and intelligence service. Rwanda’s Tutsi-dominated government long supported Tutsi rebel forces in the Congo.

**Outside Intervention in Iraq: The Effect of the U.S. Occupation on Kurdish Autonomy**

While the purpose of the U.S. invasion of Iraq was surely not to resolve ethnic conflicts, the defeat of Saddam Hussein’s Sunni-dominated dictatorship unleashed formerly repressed ethnic grievances. Having previously discussed the intense conflicts between Shi’as and Sunnis, we can now turn to the effects of foreign intervention on Kurdish national aspirations. Iraq is home to perhaps 5 million Kurds (the precise figure is in dispute), the world’s third largest Kurdish community, after Turkey and Iran. Living primarily in the country’s mountainous northeast, they are the majority population in three of Iraq’s eighteen provinces. Under the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, which governed much of Iraq and the Middle East from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries, ethnic minorities were treated reasonably fairly. Hence, Kurdish nationalism did not really blossom until Ottoman rule collapsed after World War I. At that time, Britain, France, and Italy signed the Treaty of Severs (1920), which promised the creation of an autonomous or independent Kurdistan. Yet, just 3 years later, the Treaty of Lausanne terminated that commitment. Because the newly created Turkish and Iraqi states viewed the Kurds as a threat, the Kurdish dream of autonomy or independence remained unfulfilled.

When the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in 1958, the new government briefly allowed Kurdish culture to flourish. Soon, however, the republican regime initiated a 15-year campaign removing large numbers of Kurds from their homelands to other parts of the country, destroying Kurdish villages and moving Arabs into historically Kurdish regions. In 1980, only a year after Iran’s Islamic revolution had toppled the Shah, Iraq and Iran entered into a brutal, decade-long war. Because Iraq’s Kurds largely supported Iran, Saddam implemented a genocidal campaign against them (called al-Anfal) during the 1980s. During that operation, the Iraqi military was responsible for “the first documented instances of a government employing chemical weapons against its own civilian population.” In total, the Saddam dictatorship is believed to have killed over 300,000 Kurds, more than half of them during al-Anfal. Millions more were driven from their homes.

The Kurdish rebellion against Saddam following the Gulf War, like the Shi’a rebellion in the South, soon fizzled. As government forces recaptured the towns that had fallen to the rebels, more than a million Kurds fled toward or across Iraq’s borders with Turkey and Iran. When Turkey refused to allow them in and numerous refugees died of exposure in the high mountains, the European Community and the United States endorsed the creation of a U.N.-protected, Kurdish enclave within Iraq. Under “Operation Provide Comfort,” several Western nations placed troops on the ground and used their air power to establish a “no-fly zone” that prohibited Iraqi planes from flying north of the 36th parallel, thereby effectively creating the autonomous region that the Kurds had
so long yearned for. Thousands of Kurdish families returned to the region and established democratic political institutions, including the election of a Kurdish National Assembly in 1992.

During the 2003 invasion of Iraq, U.S. forces received valuable military and intelligence support from Kurdish militias. The ouster of Saddam Hussein’s regime raised the issue of the Kurdish role in postwar Iraq. In deference to U.S. pressure and Turkey’s adamant opposition to a neighboring Kurdish state, the Kurdish political and military leadership provisionally forswore their ambitions for an independent Kurdistan, but demanded substantial autonomy in the new political order. Yet, Phebe Marr, a leading Middle East expert, notes that in her many interviews of Kurdish leaders during the past 15 years, all but one of them identified themselves as Kurds first and Iraqis second. Iraq’s interim constitution (2004), the electoral rules for the 2005 referendum on a new constitution, and the 2005 constitution itself all gave the Kurdish and Sunni minorities considerable power to block legislation if they believed it adversely affected them.

Currently, the future of the Iraqi Kurdish community remains uncertain. Once unified by their opposition to Saddam regime, Kurds and Shi’as each have a distinct vision for Iraq’s political future. While Shi’ite leaders support the principle of majority rule, Kurdish representatives are more concerned with protecting minority rights. In sum, although foreign intervention—the Gulf War and the current war in Iraq—has benefited the Kurdish and Shi’a populations in many ways, it remains to be seen whether they can work out a way of living peacefully with each other and with their Sunni antagonists.

**Settlement through Exhaustion**

Finally, many ethnic conflicts have been resolved less through statecraft, constitutional arrangements, or external intervention than through the exhaustion of the warring parties. Although the Arab League helped negotiate an end to Lebanon’s lengthy civil war, it was the weariness of the Lebanese, after the virtual destruction of Beirut that permitted a settlement (even though some 15 years later that may be unraveling). Similarly, although the Ugandan government continues to clash periodically with the Acholi and Langi tribes, conflict has been held in check because Ugandans do not want to return to the ethnically based bloodshed of the Amin and Obote eras. In Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, exhaustion helped drive the warring factions toward United Nations-brokered peace treaties that halted their long and bitter civil wars. And, in Sudan, a similar process contributed to the end of a 21-year war between the Arab-dominated national government and the Black (non-Muslim) population of the South.

**Toward a Peaceful Resolution of Conflict**

If developing nations are to avoid the horrors of civil war, secession, and foreign intervention, they must arrive at legal, political, and economic solutions that can constrain ethnic tensions. That goal, though clearly reasonable, is more easily articulated than achieved. More difficult still is the task of repairing the damage done to plural societies that have been torn apart by bloody conflict
(e.g., Rwanda, Iraq, Kashmir, and Lebanon) or by decades of prejudice and segregation (South Africa). Not long after South Africa’s new, multiracial government was installed in 1994, President Mandela’s administration created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, before which perpetrators of racially based violence and injustices were invited to confess their crimes in return for amnesty. The goal of the Commission was to further unearth the crimes of apartheid and, more importantly, to allow the nation’s races to live together more harmoniously. Yet, as one observer of the Commission’s hearings has suggested, in countries that have experienced systematic repression or extensive ethnic violence, reconciliation—the creation of harmony between formerly hostile parties—may be too much to hope for. A more realistic goal, he suggests, may be establishing the basis for coexistence between these groups. Toward this end, governments or international agencies trying to assist countries previously devastated by ethnic violence need to create trauma centers for the survivors of atrocities, multicultural educational programs, contact programs that try to establish a dialogue between erstwhile perpetrators and victims of ethnic violence, and cross-ethnic economic development programs, all designed to help former antagonists live together peacefully. While, as we might expect, such efforts have had mixed records of success, they need to be tried.

**CONCLUSION: ETHNIC PLURALISM AND DEMOCRACY**

We have seen that, while modern plural societies (such as Belgium and Canada) are ultimately more capable of resolving ethnic tensions peacefully, in the shorter term early modernization has intensified such conflict in many LDCs. But, how has the spread of Third World democracy affected ethnic relations?

Crafting peaceful scenarios for multicultural societies remains one of the greatest challenges facing Third World leaders. Still, there is some basis for hope. The frequency and intensity of ethnic conflicts peaked during the late 1980s and early 1990s and have decreased modestly since that time. Although Africa has remained home to some of the world’s most brutal conflicts (Sierra Leone, Sudan, Congo), it has also experienced the most progress of late in bringing ethno-warfare to a halt. In fact, most of the continent’s remaining ethnic wars are conflicts that date back to the mid-1990s or earlier, as fewer new ones have emerged as of late. Realizing that their countries were being destroyed by ethnic hostilities and decades of the resulting economic decay, a number of governments and rebel groups in the region have become more accommodating.

During the 1970s and 1980s, increased ethnic violence in the developing world and the former communist states of Eastern Europe often coincided with the spread of democratic government. This raised two questions about the relationship between democracy and ethnic politics: First, “Are multiethnic countries less likely to maintain democracy than are culturally homogenous societies?” Second, “Do the growth of citizen participation and the creation of democratic government intensify conflict between ethnic communities?”

The first question can be answered quite easily. Democracy is clearly harder, though far from impossible, to establish and maintain in multiethnic countries. We have seen, for example, how Lebanon, long considered the most democratic
Arab country, was devastated by ethnic civil war. Looking at democracy’s failure to take root in most of Africa and Asia from the 1960s to the 1980s, Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle concluded that ethnic antagonisms had created important obstacles to democratization. Democracy, they argued, “is simply not viable in an environment of intense ethnic preference.” Here they referred to societies in which powerful ethnic groups receive special privileges, while others suffer discrimination.

An examination of both economically advanced and less developed nations reveals that democracy has fared best in countries that are most ethnically homogeneous (such as Botswana, Iceland, Uruguay, and Japan) and in countries of “new settlement” (including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia) populated primarily by immigrants and their descendants, who created a new common culture. In Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, where many countries labor with strong ethnic divides, the growth of democracy and mass political participation may unleash communal hostilities, sometimes intensified by opportunistic politicians who use group fears to build a political base.

Ethnic pluralism poses a particular obstacle to democracy in poorer countries, where various groups must contend for limited government resources (schools, roads, civil service jobs, etc.) in the “politics of scarcity.” But although democracy is more difficult to achieve in plural societies, it is not impossible even in very poor nations. Despite its history of religiously based violence, India, one of the world’s most ethnically diverse countries, has maintained democratic government for all but two of its 62 years of independence. Similarly, Trinidad-Tobago, a country divided by religion and race, is among the Third World’s most democratic nations.

To be sure, the initial transition to democracy frequently intensifies existing ethnic animosities. Newly formed political parties often base their support in competing ethnic communities. Politicians, even those opposed to violence, are tempted to use ethnic appeals as a means of gaining public support. As public resources are distributed through more transparent legislative decisions, ethnically based interest groups and political parties fight for their fair share. Some analysts warn that “the opening of democratic space throws up many groups pulling in different directions, that it causes demand overload, systematic breakdown and even violent conflict,” a danger particularly relevant in societies with deep ethnic tensions prior to their democratic transitions. That danger is greatest in strict majoritarian democracies, where a single ethnic group or allied ethnicities can dominate parliamentary or presidential elections without affording constitutional or other institutional protections to minority groups. Thus, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict concluded that

In societies with deep ethnic divisions and little experience with democratic government and the rule of law [a common phenomenon in Africa, Asia and the Middle East], strict majoritarian democracy can be self-defeating. Where ethnic identities are strong and national identity weak, populations may vote largely on ethnic lines. Domination by one ethnic group can lead to a tyranny of the majority.

But this merely indicates the importance of limiting majority rule in democratic, multiethnic societies. It does not suggest that authoritarian government is
preferable in such situations. Indeed, in the long run, the only way ethnicities can resolve their differences is through open discussion and bargaining in a reasonably democratic political arena, as long as majority rule is tempered by constitutional guarantees of human rights, consociational arrangements, or other institutional protections for minorities such as those previously discussed.

Although dictatorships in Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were able to repress ethnic conflicts for many years, in the end they actually intensified these grievances by denying their existence, silencing them, and failing to deal with them. After the fall of Communism, long-repressed antagonisms in Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Chechnya burst to the surface, producing civil war or lesser forms of violence. Elsewhere, dictators such as Laurent Kabila (the Congo), Suharto (Indonesia), and Saddam Hussein (Iraq) presided over ethnic massacres that would have been unthinkable in a democracy monitored by public opinion and a free press.

Conversely, democratic politicians are open to interest-group pressure from ethnic minorities and, hence, are more likely to settle disputes peacefully before they degenerate into violence. Indeed, the recent study of “minorities at risk” throughout the world revealed that democratic regimes are more likely than dictatorships to negotiate peaceful settlements of ethnic warfare. And during the 1990s, political discrimination and, to a lesser degree, economic discrimination against ethnic minorities were more likely to decline in democracies than under authoritarian governments. In short, to accommodate ethnic pluralism and resolve tensions, what is needed is democratic, mature, and enlightened political leadership, a spirit of compromise, and the implementation of politically negotiated solutions such as federalism and consociational democracy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the differences and similarities between ethnic tensions and conflict in the United States and ethnic divisions in the developing world?
2. Discuss the effect that modernization has had on ethnic identification and ethnic conflict.
3. What are some reasons that might explain why major civil strife related to ethnicity has declined in the last 10–15 years?

NOTES

1. UN estimates reported by Associated Press on the MSNBC Web site. http://www.msnbc.com/id/29494356 (updated on March 3, 2009). Because outside journalists and human rights workers have limited access to the conflict region, estimates of the number of dead and displaced vary widely and, of course, change over time.


10. Gurr, Peoples versus States, 10–11.


24. Said and Simmons, Ethnicity in an International Context, 10.

25. Said and Simmons, Ethnicity in an International Context, 10.


27. Appapillai Amirthalingam, quoted in Jack David Eller, From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999), 123.


33. Latif Abul-Husn, The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward (Boulder, CO: Lynne Riener
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35. Robert Pape, Director of the University of Chicago’s Project on Suicide Terrorism, quoted on “Spate of Suicide Bombings Threatens Iraq Surge,” National Public Radio (NPR), All Things Considered (May 2, 2007). Sunni insurgents have also killed many American soldiers, but most of these have come from hidden roadside bombs, not suicide bombings.

36. Young, Cultural Pluralism, 65.


41. Ibid., 14–16.


43. Gurr, People versus States, 276.


46. See, for example, Samantha Power, “Bystanders to Genocide”; Romeo Dallaire, Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2003).


51. Idean Salehyan, Rebels Without Borders, 86–87, 91. I took the total number of cases shown in Salehyan’s Table and subtracted those “rebellions” that did not involve violence (over 70 percent of the 1,043 cases). This left 335 cases involving violence, 265 of which (79 percent) took place along an international border.


58. Gurr, People versus States, 152–163, 169, 204.