

Gurr + Harff

FIVE



A Framework for Analysis of Ethnopolitical Mobilization and Conflict

In Chapters 3 and 4 we recounted the distinctive historical, political, economic, and social experiences that shaped the identities, status, and grievances of four different ethnopolitical groups. We also showed when and how each group became involved in political conflict with the state in which it lives and pointed out the ways in which members of each group have been restricted and sometimes victimized by governments.

Most social scientists are committed to going beyond describing single cases to provide more general explanations. How do we explain the reasons for, and the causes of, ethnic conflicts in general? In this chapter we begin with a brief review of some social science approaches (or theories) for explaining why ethnic groups mobilize and become involved in conflict. We then introduce a variety of concepts and **propositions** that together form a preliminary theory of ethnopolitical conflict. By identifying general determinants of ethnic groups' behavior, our aim is to provide the common ground that will enable any citizen to critically analyze accepted wisdom about what causes ethnic conflict. In subsequent chapters we use information from the four cases in the previous chapters to illustrate our propositions and try to strike a balance between providing a sophisticated theory to explain all cases of ethnopolitical conflict and offering historical interpretations of single cases.

APPROACHES TO EXPLAINING ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT

Many theories have been proposed to explain political conflict and violence, either in general or in specific forms such as revolution.¹ But there is no comprehensive and widely accepted theory of the causes and conse-

quences of ethnopolitical conflict. Rather, there are approaches and **hypotheses** that seek to explain particular aspects of ethnic conflict. Some of these are concerned with how ethnic identities form and change over time.² Others examine the sources of competition and conflict between ethnic groups.³ We are most interested in explanations of why and how ethnic groups **mobilize** (organize for political action) and enter into open conflict—often violent conflict—with the governments that claim to rule them.

New theories usually begin as efforts to explain puzzles—that is, new political phenomena that are not explained by older theories. This is clearly the case with ethnopolitical conflict. In the 1950s and 1960s many social scientists thought economic development, the migration of rural peoples to cities, and growing literacy would lead to the creation of complex and integrated societies throughout the world. **Modernization** theory, as this argument was called, made a specific prediction about ethnic identities: that greater political and economic interaction among people and widespread communication networks would break down people's "parochial" identities with ethnic groups and replace them with loyalties to larger communities such as Canada, the European Community, or an emerging pan-Africa. The political facts of the 1970s and 1980s contradicted this prediction: Rather than declining, conflicts based on the assertion of ethnic identities and interests increased sharply. Moreover, ethnopolitical conflicts increased not only in modernizing societies but also in developed Western societies, which experienced an upsurge in regional **separatist** movements and ethnoclass protests in the 1960s.⁴

Several alternative approaches have been used to explain the persistence of ethnic conflict in a modernizing world. One approach argues that people's ethnic and religious identities have deep social, historical, and genetic foundations. From this perspective, sometimes called **primordialism**, modernization is a threat to ethnic solidarities that **prompts** minorities to mobilize in defense of their culture and way of life.⁵ A second alternative emphasizes the **instrumental** nature of ethnic mobilization. The main goals of a group are assumed to be material and political gains; cultural identity is invoked only as a means to attain those goals. In this perspective the most important effect of modernization is to increase economic differences, or awareness and resentment of differences, between dominant groups and minorities. "Political entrepreneurs" capitalize on these differences to establish ethnically based political movements aimed at increasing the economic and political well-being of their group or region. A version of this argument, called *internal colonialism*, was proposed to explain one source of growing ethnic conflict in developed European societies—the regional separatist movements like those of the Welsh and

Scots in Britain, the Bretons and Corsicans in France, and the Basques in Spain.⁶

The primordial and instrumental approaches to explaining ethnic mobilization and conflict emphasize different factors; the first emphasizes defense of ethnic identity, and the second stresses the pursuit of group material and political interests. But they are not fundamentally inconsistent. We think ethnic groups are most likely to mobilize when both conditions—a strong sense of ethnic group identity in combination with imposed disadvantages—are present. Recent theories of specific kinds of ethnic conflict incorporate both conditions. Scholars have proposed, for example, that secessionist movements like those of the Kurds and the Miskitos result from three general conditions: (1) the existence of a separate ethnonational community or society, (2) actual or perceived disadvantages in comparison with the central government, and (3) territorial contiguity. If we borrow from international legal arguments, a group's territorial base shapes its decision to pursue its interests by fighting wars of secession.⁷ We also find primordial and instrumental elements in theories designed to explain how conflict arises in multiethnic societies like Malaysia and modern Germany, where peoples of different ethnic origins compete with one another in the pursuit of jobs, political influence, and status. A common argument is that when peoples of different ethnic groups compete *directly* for the same scarce resources and positions, their ethnic identities become more important to them. And if some groups are more successful than others, inequalities increase, which provides the second general condition for ethnic mobilization and conflict.⁸

The mobilization of ethnic groups is the immediate precursor of the political actions used to make demands on governments. The extent and intensity of the resulting conflict depend upon the strategies followed by ethnic groups' leaders and those followed by governments. Few theorists have tried to explain what strategies governments have used in response to challenging groups in general or to ethnic groups in particular. One important exception, however, is directly relevant to our subject: theories about the causes of genocides and politicides (mass political murder). These theories are important for our subject because they show how competition between subordinate ethnic groups and dominant groups can lead to discrimination and repression of subordinate groups. In response to privation and repression, some ethnic groups mobilize for political action, which is then used to justify their destruction. Others, like the victims of the Holocaust and the Muslim Chams in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, are targeted because they are defined in the dominant group's ideology as a threatening group.⁹

We have identified five internal factors that, in combination, make genocides and politicides likely: (1) Persisting cleavages exist among eth-

nic groups; (2) elites have a history of relying on repression to maintain power; (3) elites use their power to reward groups differentially for their loyalty; (4) the society has recently experienced a political upheaval, for example, a revolution or a defeat in war; and (5) exclusionary ideologies arise that define target groups as expendable.¹⁰ When all of these five factors are present, ethnopolitical conflict is likely to have genocidal consequences.

Many of the foregoing arguments about the causes of ethnic mobilization, conflict, and genocide are incorporated in the theoretical model developed in the next section.

USING SOCIAL SCIENCE THEORIES TO EXPLAIN ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICT

Some people think the terms *theory* and *model* are too removed from harsh political realities. Theories use abstract concepts, which some regard as irrelevant to their perceptions of events in the real world. We recognize that there are different ways of looking at the world of ethnopolitical groups, one of which is to become so deeply immersed in information about a group—by direct observation, for example—that one gains an almost intuitive understanding of its members' perceptions and intentions.

Our view is that systematic comparison of different cases is needed to reach more general conclusions about how and why ethnic groups become involved in conflict. Therefore, we provide here a rationale and guidelines for students who seek more general, empirically grounded knowledge about ethnic conflict. Use of the theories and language of social science can generate the kind of satisfaction that comes with an increased understanding and appreciation of the complexity of political life. The reasons are not just "scientific"; we think general knowledge is essential if scholars and policymakers are to understand, anticipate, and respond to ethnic conflicts in ways that can reduce human suffering and improve the chances for accommodation.

Scientific analysis requires precise communication, a key to which is the development of a common vocabulary. The technical language of the social sciences is supposed to convey the same meanings to anyone who reads or reanalyzes a researcher's findings. Scientific analysis also requires the use of standardized concepts, categories, and indicators so as to eliminate as much as possible the observer's own subjective interpretations. Objectivity and logic, after all, are the tools of the scientist.

Assume one wants to argue that the UN-sponsored **sanctions** against Iraq preceding the 1991 Gulf War increased the conflict potential of the region. The concepts—here, sanctions and conflict—ought to have the same

meaning to all and should be measured by commonly accepted indicators. In order to describe something, we need to be able to observe or experience it. In order to be persuasive, we need to demonstrate that the conflict potential increases when sanctions are applied.

Now let us assume the following hypothetical scenario. The United States unilaterally cuts off trade relations with all Middle Eastern states that are either neutral in their policy toward Iraq or that subvert UN-sponsored sanctions against Iraq. The U.S. action is designed to enforce compliance with the sanctions. The targeted states respond by accommodating the United States: They abandon their hostile rhetoric and stop letting Iraq use their territory to smuggle in its food. Saddam Hussein reacts with open defiance by attacking Kurdish villagers and imprisoning some foreign nationals. The Kurds in turn attack Iraqi positions. Turkey, fearing unrest among its own Kurds, attacks Kurdish villages inside Iraq. It seems that the U.S. trade embargo has had the desired impact by forcing a change in the behavior of the target states. Yet it led simultaneously to the Iraqi attack against Kurdish villagers and to Turkey's intervention. At this stage of analysis we cannot assume that the changes in political behavior resulted from U.S. pressure, however likely this may seem. Perhaps Saddam Hussein had long planned an attack to reestablish government control over Kurdish rebels, and Turkey had used the circumstances to resurrect a long-standing policy of intimidating Kurds by force. We need to further test our argument.

An untested argument or idea about a specific kind of relationship is called a proposition. How do we test our proposition that sanctions against Iraq increased the conflict potential within the region? The standard procedure used by social scientists is to put the proposition into testable form: A testable proposition is a hypothesis. If we expand our ideas to include more than one hypothesis about the conflict potential within the region, we can call this a theory. In other words, logically related testable ideas (hypotheses) that specify relationships between concepts are commonly called a theory.

We argued that sanctions against Iraq increased the conflict potential in the region, but this is simply an untested idea (proposition). How do we change propositions into testable hypotheses? Let us briefly conclude our theoretical excursion by transforming our proposition into a hypothesis and **operationalizing** its concepts.

The hypothesis states that the degree of compliance in countries' political behavior increases relative to the strength of sanctions imposed by external actors. Sanctions imposed on states engaged in open conflict increase their degree of hostility toward internal and external opponents.

By specifying the type of pressure applied by the United States and relating it to a specific type of performance (stop supporting Iraq), we can

determine with much greater confidence whether and under what conditions the United States is able to influence a specific type of political behavior. Of course, we cannot assume that all of the countries in question would act similarly if the United States were to ask them to disarm, for example. In the second part of the hypothesis we argue that once a country is involved in open conflict, sanctions may have the opposite effect—namely, they may increase conflict behavior. Thus, we have qualified our statement because we recognize that political behavior and conflict are **multifaceted phenomena**, that they occur in different domains (domestic policies versus foreign policy behavior), and that they are applied with different degrees of strength (sanctions that force total versus partial compliance).

Another important step in social science analysis is to introduce criteria that enable us to disprove a hypothesis. If we were to identify only those instances in which the targeted countries complied with U.S. demands and ignored instances in which they did not, our task would be easy and our conclusions wrong. By selecting information to suit our particular argument, we overlook other information and may reach false conclusions.

What have we learned about states' behavior in our example? If we have observed the region's relations with the United States for some time, we probably recognize that many states were already in the process of changing their behavior vis-à-vis Iraq and only reacted more quickly than they would otherwise have done because the United States exerted pressure. This implies that the United States truly influenced some states' behavior, but possibly not to the extent we had thought. And we do not know with any certainty whether either Turkey or Iraq responded with increased hostility toward Kurds because of the U.S. sanctions or because they had long-standing designs to do so anyway. How much influence did the United States truly exert compared with states' own desire for change? Answering this question is far more complicated. Only if we were able to observe the same sequence of events at another time or in another area and find similar outcomes could we say with increased certainty that in some instances U.S. policy leads to changes in political behavior and under particular circumstances increases the conflict potential of a particular area.

Because of these difficulties we more often propose *likely* explanations rather than definitive ones, our statements are more often tentative than conclusive, and our tested statements (hypotheses) are **probability statements** rather than truths. Students should consider these obstacles as challenges, not barriers. The best we can do in most instances is to be as specific as possible, to be modest in our goals and objectives, to scrutinize as much information as we can obtain, and to follow procedures that can easily be duplicated by others.

Is the scientific approach we have just described worth using? Consider the alternatives. In the early stages of social science, scholars offered little more than learned opinions, similar to journalistic interpretations. The social sciences had little or no basis for claiming that their explanations had any general validity. Political science was little more than a combination of descriptive historical interpretation and philosophical discourse on human destiny. We have advanced at least to the stage of weather forecasting; that is, we can assert with some plausibility that certain actions lead to likely outcomes.

What, then, is our goal in this chapter? Our propositions about ethnic mobilization and conflict are essentially tentative statements describing likely relationships. We invite students to develop hypotheses based on the propositions and to test them against the reality of ethnic groups in various situations. Our model introduces a set of testable hypotheses (theory) and operationalizes some of the concepts (the building blocks of propositions and hypotheses). Operationalization involves the process of defining the concepts so they can be measured in real quantities. Thus, for example, if conflict is the concept, its **variable** properties can include the amount of conflict—such as numbers of armed attacks involving two countries—the extent of participation in street protests, or a number of other properties. In other words, variable properties differ depending on the context in which they are observed.

EXPLAINING ETHNOPOLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND CONFLICT

What contributes to ethnic mobilization? Here we use two concepts: discrimination and ethnic group identity. By discrimination we mean the extent of socially derived inequalities in group members' material well-being or political access in comparison with other social groups. An ethnic group consists of people whose identity is based on shared traits such as religion, culture, common history, place of residence, and race.

On the most basic level, people resent and react against discriminatory treatment. They may use their anger constructively or destructively, or they may be apathetic. In the former case they may opt for peaceful activism, channel anger into greater personal efforts to succeed, or emigrate to escape discrimination. Others are willing to openly challenge their opponents and attack the principal sources of their discontent. The extent of their grievances usually varies with the extent of their actions, and vice versa. Let us examine these arguments more closely.

We propose that when people with a shared ethnic identity are discriminated against, they are likely to be resentful and angry. Anger is expressed in a number of ways: Some people opt for accommodation; others

vent their frustrations openly (proposition 1). For people who are motivated to action, the greater the discrimination they experience, the more likely they are to organize for action against the sources of discrimination (hypothesis 1).

Rare is the individual who single-handedly challenges institutions or society at large. Finding like-minded individuals with similar grievances intensifies discontent and increases willingness to take action (proposition 2). The more strongly a person identifies with an ethnic group that is subject to discrimination, the more likely he or she is to be motivated into action (hypothesis 2a). Factors other than shared grievances, including a shared religion, language, history and culture, and place of residence, strengthen group identity. The greater the number of traits common to a group, the stronger the group identity (hypothesis 2b).

What triggers political action and turns action into open conflict with the government and other groups? And what kinds of action or types of violence are most likely to occur? Collective actions are shaped by the political context in which an ethnic group is situated. The type and extent of political conflict are determined by such factors as the cohesion of the group, the strategies and tactics of its leaders, the nature of the political system that governs it, and outside encouragement. Here we examine group cohesion and ethnopolitical leadership, the political environment, the severity of force used by governments, and outside encouragement. We examine each of these in turn.

A major determinant of the occurrence of ethnopolitical conflict is the cohesion of the challenging ethnic group and the strength and unity of its leadership (proposition 3). Cohesive groups are those that have dense networks of communication and interaction that link leaders with followers. Strong ethnopolitical leaders generate the type of climate in which peoples willingly subordinate personal preferences to group preferences. Cohesive groups with autocratic leaders are not likely to face internal constraints on decisions to use violent forms of political action, whereas democratically organized challengers are typically less cohesive and have more diverse views about the preferred form of action.

Group cohesion increases to the extent that groups are regionally concentrated, share many common traits and grievances over long periods of time, and have widely accepted autocratic leadership (hypothesis 3). Thus, if and when leaders decide to use violent forms of political action to protest grievances, they are more likely to do so in cohesive groups that share a history of discrimination and that accept strong, autocratic leadership.

The concept of political environment refers to the type of regime governing a state. We distinguish four types: institutionalized democracies and **autocracies**, and **socialist** and **populist states**. Democracies typically

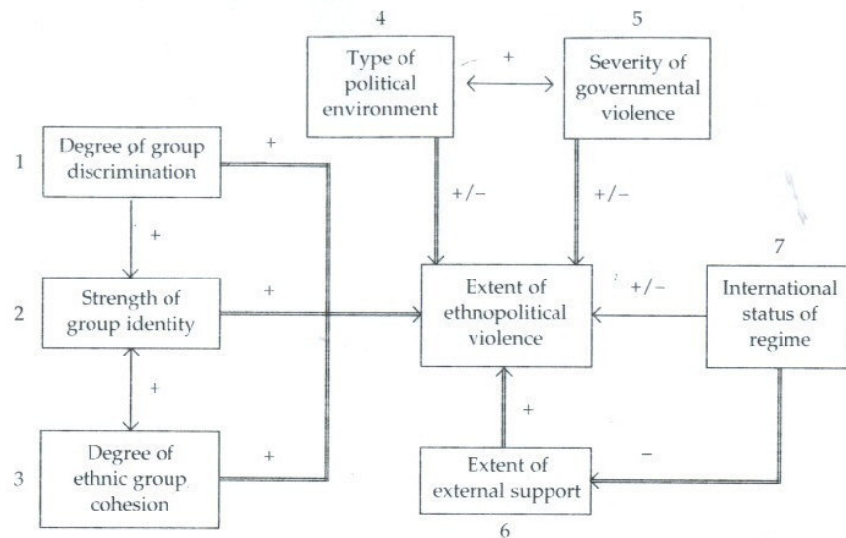
tolerate a wide range of political participation that at various times includes protests, riots, and open rebellion (proposition 4). However, we must keep in mind that fully functional democracies protect core values, such as equality before the law and full political and civil rights; therefore, discrimination is less likely, and violent protest and rebellion are less common. Thus, the more democratic the political environment, the more likely ethnopolitical groups will be to voice opposition nonviolently (hypothesis 4).

In political environments other than democracies, violence is more likely to be used to quell protest and riots (proposition 5a). The more violence is used by political authorities, the greater the likelihood that challengers will respond with increased violence (hypothesis 5a). However, state authorities that have used *extreme* force, such as massacres, torture, and genocide, to subdue challengers are also less likely to be openly challenged (proposition 5b), either because groups cannot organize open resistance or they fear the consequences of doing so. Thus, the more *extreme* force is used, the less likely the chances for open rebellion (hypothesis 5b). A curvilinear relationship thus exists between state violence and the extent and level of violence of political action taken by the challengers. Clandestine movements that use terrorism and guerrilla warfare are typically responses to situations in which government authorities have used deadly force in dealing with challengers.

What external factors contribute to ethnic conflict? Here we develop two concepts that relate to the international environment in which ethnopolitical groups act: external support and economic status.

As shown previously, the domestic political environment substantially determines the kinds of actions chosen by ethnopolitical groups. In addition, many groups depend on external support (proposition 6), which includes verbal encouragement, financial support, weaponry, military personnel, and other forms of active or passive support the ethnic group receives from outside the state. The greater their external support, the greater the chances groups will use violent means to challenge authorities (hypothesis 6). Of course, we need to point out that minor grievances do not provoke violent political action. Thus, the kind of action taken depends on the combination or interaction of the political environment (type of regime, external support) with the severity of discrimination.

A second external factor is the status attributed by the international community to the government that is facing ethnopolitical challenges. International status is awarded to groups and states according to the number and value of economic resources they command. States blessed with an abundance of resources are more likely to enjoy the support of the international community, which is dependent on such resources (proposition 7). They are also more likely to be free from unwanted interference



Numbers refer to the propositions and hypotheses that develop these concepts.

———— relations for which hypotheses are developed in the text
 ——— relations for which hypotheses are not developed in the text

FIGURE 5.1 Framework for explaining ethnopolitical violence.

than are those with fewer resources. Domestic stability, by whatever means it is achieved, guarantees the free flow of goods, currency, and primary resources. Therefore, the greater international status accorded to a state, the less it is likely that its challengers are externally supported (hypothesis 7).

During the Cold War two factors combined to favor ethnic and other challengers to Communist rule. First, the centrally planned, or "command," economies of Communist states rarely interacted in the global economy to the same degree as their capitalist counterparts. Second, internal challengers opposed to Communist rule were more likely to find outside support from states that opposed communism than they were to find challengers among states closely tied to the global economy.

The propositions and hypotheses spelled out in this section describe interactive relationships among concepts. Together they constitute a model that is shown schematically in Figure 5.1. The relationships are represented in the figure by bold arrows that connect the variables. No attempt is made to express the model in more formal ways, such as by using math-

ematical expressions. Positive relations (an increase in x leads to an increase in y) are represented by plus signs. Combined plus and minus signs represent complex relationships—for example, the argument, in hypotheses 4, 5a, and 5b, that ethnic mobilization and conflict are likely to be greater in authoritarian political environments than in democratic ones. In Figure 5.1 we use thin arrows to depict potentially important connections among the variables that are not discussed in the text. For example, the double-headed arrow between strength of group identity and degree of group cohesion summarizes two kinds of probable relationships: First, groups with strong identity are likely to be more readily organized into cohesive groups, and second, once cohesive leader-follower networks are established, group identity tends to become even stronger. This kind of mutually reinforcing connection is sometimes called a feedback relationship. Students are encouraged to identify and analyze other significant relations that are not developed in this chapter.

We next briefly review the concepts and variables introduced in this section and then suggest indicators for the variables. However crude some indicators may appear, they should guide students' efforts to collect and evaluate information more systematically.

CONCEPTS, VARIABLES, AND INDICATORS

In general, social scientists seek to minimize error in the interpretation of theoretical ideas by describing concepts like group identity and external support in clear and unambiguous ways. Concepts derive their meaning from careful observation of real-life situations. The challenge for researchers is to define variables and construct standardized indicators of those variables that can be used to make reliable observations of a number of groups and situations. Observations, or measurements, are said to be reliable if similar measurements are obtained by anyone who collects information.

A simple example involves the concept of the size of ethnic groups. The variable property is the number of people who belong to each group. But alternative indicators might be used for "belonging." One such alternative is to estimate the number of people who share the group's culture (which is difficult to observe in most cases). Another is to count the number who live in the group's homeland (but some will have emigrated, and outsiders may have moved in). A third is to rely on censuses that use standardized procedures for determining people's ethnic identification. Census data are usually the most reliable indicators for measuring and comparing the sizes of different groups, but not all governments conduct

censuses or ask people's ethnic identity. If census data are not available, less precise indicators of group size must be found.

Now we turn to concepts identified in the hypotheses of the theoretical model.

Concept 1: Discrimination. *Variable property: degree of discrimination.* The concept of discrimination was defined in the previous section as the extent of socially derived inequalities in ethnic group members' material well-being or political access in comparison with other social groups. The greater the differences in status by comparison to other groups, the greater the degree of discrimination.

Indicators of discrimination. Government policies that treat ethnic groups unequally are the least ambiguous indicators of discrimination. Inequalities between ethnic groups may also result from historical discrimination or from economic and cultural differences that give some groups persistent advantages over others.

Indicators of economic discrimination

- ☐ Public policies that restrict the economic activities or roles of group members
- ☐ Low income, poor housing, and high infant mortality rates compared with other groups in the society
- ☐ Limited group access to education, especially higher education
- ☐ Proportionally few group members in commercial, managerial, or professional positions

Indicators of political discrimination

- ☐ Public policies that limit the group's participation in politics and access to political office
- ☐ Low participation in politics compared with other groups in the society
- ☐ Proportionally few group members in elective offices, civil service, or higher-ranking police and military positions

Concept 2: Group identity. *Variable property: strength of group identity.* We proposed in the previous section that the strength of ethnic group identity depends upon the number of traits shared by group members. The greater the number of shared traits, such as religion, culture, common history, place of residence, and race, the greater the strength of identity.

Indicators of strength of group identity. The more of the following traits members of an ethnic group have in common, the greater the strength of group identity.

- ☐ The extent to which they share and use a common language
- ☐ The proportion of people who share a common religious belief
- ☐ Visible racial characteristics
- ☐ A shared history over at least a one-hundred-year period
- ☐ A common culture—identifiable social and legal customs developed and practiced within close proximity

Concept 3: Ethnopolitical leadership and group cohesion. *Variable property: degree of cohesion among leaders and followers.* Cohesive groups are those that have dense networks of communication and interaction linking leaders with followers. The more factions that exist within the group, the less cohesive it is. We proposed in the previous section that the type of leadership also influences cohesion within the group. Strong leaders generate a climate in which people willingly subordinate personal preferences to group preferences. Autocratic leaders are more likely to be able to mobilize people than their democratic counterparts, because democratic practices emphasize individual rights rather than the rights of the collective body over and above the individual.

Indicators of ethnopolitical leadership and group cohesion. Cohesion within ethnic groups increases with increased communication and interaction. In contrast, the greater the number of factions or self-proclaimed leaders, the less cohesive the group. Factors indicative of cohesion include

- ☐ Degree of acceptance of traditional roles of leaders
- ☐ Degree of acceptance of established social order within the group
- ☐ Number of factions within the ethnic group
- ☐ Number of identifiable leaders within the group
- ☒ Extent of open conflict within the group
- ☐ Number of newspapers and radio stations used by the group

Concept 4: Political environment. *Variable property: type of political environment.* The political environment sets the stage for political action. Here we propose guidelines for identifying the four types of regimes with which ethnopolitical groups may come in conflict: institutionalized democracies, autocracies, and socialist and populist states. Note that most contemporary states have one of these four types of political regimes; a few combine elements of several.

Indicators of institutionalized democracies

- ☐ Guarantee political and civil rights for all citizens
- ☐ Effective constitutional limitations on the power of the executive
- ☐ Multiple political parties that compete for office and transfer power by constitutionally prescribed means

Indicators of institutionalized autocracies

- ☐ Concentrate most or all political power in the executive
- ☐ Limit or ban political parties and sharply restrict civil rights and political participation
- ☐ Political power usually transferred and distributed among members of a tiny political elite

Indicators of socialist states

- ☐ Concentrate power in a single party used by the elite to mobilize mass support for the regime
- ☐ Encourage participation only within the party and restrict other political and civil rights
- ☐ Transfer political power through competition within the party

Indicators of populist states

- ☐ Weakly institutionalized political systems in a transitional state to either democracy or increased autocracy
- ☐ Transfer political power through military coups or popular uprisings, short of revolution
- ☐ Frequent leadership changes, with no predictive sequence
- ☐ Wide, often disruptive political participation through functional groups, and many transient political parties and movements

Concept 5: Use of violence by governments. *Variable property: the severity of force used by governments against ethnic groups.* The systematic annihilation of an ethnic people is the rarest and most severe form of violence used by governments and is called genocide. Less severe kinds of force include massacre, torture, execution, detention without due process, forcible relocation of a people, and many others.

Indicators for use of force by governments against ethnic groups. Governmental violence directed against ethnic groups varies with the type of government. Autocracies and socialist states use violence against political challengers more often than do their democratic counterparts. Populist states often alternate erratically between severe repression and accommodation. Means used to oppress ethnic challengers, in ascending order of severity, include

- ☐ Number of arrests
- ☐ Forcible relocation of group members
- ☐ Widespread torture and executions

- ☐ Massacres
- ☐ Political mass murder and genocide

Concept 6: External support. *Variable property: extent of external support.* As described in the previous section, the concept of external support refers to the entire range of active and passive support an ethnic group can receive from outside the country. Military support is, of course, more valuable than verbal support. The more numerous the sources, the larger the volume, and the longer it is provided, the greater the extent of support.

Indicators of external support. Ethnic groups may receive support from other states, from kindred groups in neighboring states, from international movements like the indigenous people's movement and the Islamic movement, and from international organizations. Major types of support include

- ☐ Verbal encouragement and advice
- ☐ Financial support
- ☐ Provision of intelligence information
- ☐ Provision of safe havens for exiles and refugees
- ☐ Mercenaries and military advisers
- ☐ Weaponry and supplies

Concept 7: International economic status. *Variable property: degree of international economic status.* We proposed previously that the international community awards economic status to states according to the number and value of resources they command. Resource-rich states are likely to enjoy higher status than resource-poor states and are more likely to deal with ethnic challengers as they wish.

The status accorded to challenging groups depends upon the position accorded to their state by the international community. Thus, movements fighting regimes with low status that are autocratic and have command economies are likely to enjoy higher international status than ethnic challengers fighting capitalist states.

Indicators for degree of international economic status. High economic status is accorded to states that

- ☐ Control large reserves of scarce resources (such as gold, uranium, titanium)
- ☐ Control a high percentage of the global trade of valuable commodities
- ☐ Have a high level of per capita income
- ☐ Rank high in gross domestic product and gross national product

- ☐ Have a global network of trading partners
- ☐ Have a large surplus in balance of payments

OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL

Remember that we want to explain *why* ethnic mobilization and conflict occur. The logical consequence of accurate explanation is to be able to *predict* under what circumstances ethnic conflict will occur. The model illustrated in Figure 5.1 represents our effort to tie our hypotheses together in a systematic fashion. The hypotheses are testable propositions about real-life events. By using a diagram we are able to demonstrate visually the underlying structures of complex relationships.

Scholars have produced many data-based **empirical generalizations** that are the premises upon which we have built our propositions. In other words, we know much about ethnic conflict thanks to the work of many historians and area specialists who are concerned with describing and interpreting particular ethnic conflicts in specific countries. A viable model is one that re-creates the process leading to ethnic conflict, not in one country but in all countries that have experienced ethnic unrest. Of course, there are idiosyncratic factors that are important in one or two particular situations but not others. It is impossible to incorporate literally all factors that lead to ethnic conflict, and, typically, the use of large numbers of specific factors yields no better predictive results. Instead, one should concentrate on key factors. The best models are those that explain the largest number of phenomena based on a small number of hypotheses.

Our model identifies seven key factors we consider important predictors of ethnic mobilization and conflict. Most of these factors are interrelated or interdependent—that is, they influence one another. The factors also differ in importance. Thus, research on a number of cases may show that external support has a greater impact on the extent of ethnic conflict than does group cohesion. This does not mean our model is incorrect; instead, it gives us additional information that may enable us to improve its accuracy.

Our seven key factors are also likely to vary over time. Thus, information about them needs to be updated periodically, especially in ongoing cases of ethnic conflict. When a rapid increase is observed in one or more of the variables in the model, we can infer that conflict is likely to intensify.

This brief review of the key factors emphasizes the way in which they are interrelated: We propose that a people who strongly identify with their ethnic brethren and who live in an autocratic political system with low international economic status, one that has used discrimination and intermittent violence to repress its ethnic peoples, are the most likely to challenge their oppressors. The conflict potential is greatest if the group

has traditional (autocratic) leaders who enjoy the widespread support of international organizations and actors.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN MODELING ETHNIC CONFLICT

Most of our indicators are straightforward and should provide reliable measurements of the variable properties of the concepts. But available information is sometimes difficult to assess. Take, for example, our indicator *the extent to which people share and practice the same religion*. One can usually estimate the number of Catholics or Protestants in a group, but how does one determine whether they truly practice their religion? This is possible only if we have access to surveys that report details about people's beliefs and practices. The same is true for all indicators that deal with attitudes—in essence, they are not readily observable and must usually be inferred from other information.

With regard to group identity, innate characteristics such as race are readily observable, but other factors may require judgment calls. Even more difficult are situations in which group identity is superimposed by outside groups on the basis of one or two traits whose significance is not self-evident or even visible to outside observers. The group identity of *Indios* (Indians) in Latin American countries is an example: The label reflects a social judgment by the dominant group about the culture of a number of rural peoples who to the observer may appear indistinguishable from mestizo villagers. In these and other situations, self-identification is the optimum measure of people's sense of belonging to an ethnic group.

Our indicators of discrimination are readily observable, with the possible exception of *public policies that restrict economic activities or roles of group members and that limit the group's participation in politics and access to political office*. Here we should look for widespread official and political practices, such as quotas that limit various groups' access to jobs and institutions of higher learning or that restrict them to token political roles and activities.

More difficult is our scheme that divides polities into four different categories. It is hard to make a neat separation between populist and autocratic states because of the transitional nature of the former. One may end up treating populist states as those that do not fit any of the three other categories. As a rule, democratic states should be classified as such if they possess most of the defining traits listed for institutionalized democracies.

Our indicators for external support include verbal support and intelligence information. We can focus our search for evidence on verbal support by analyzing the content of speeches made by major policy figures, such as officials of international organizations and presidents and foreign

ministers of neighboring states and major powers. The sharing of intelligence information can sometimes be observed in the actions that occur during or after episodes of significant conflict. For example, Israel's non-intervention in the Gulf War was evidently partly a result of its lack of tactical information. Israeli fighters were reportedly discouraged from engaging Iraqi fighters over Iraq because the Allies withheld critical information; thus, Israeli aircraft would have been subject to attack by the coalition forces. Kurdish nationalists fighting Saddam Hussein in Iraq likely had access to intelligence information from the Allies. Unfortunately, we rarely have decisive information on such intelligence issues.

Our indicators for a country's degree of economic status include its relative independence of international trade and control of world trade through industrial capacity, two seemingly contradictory indicators. The United States, an economic superpower, provides an example. The United States dominates trade of a number of items and has large reserves of scarce resources but is not self-sufficient in some other scarce resources; it has a surplus in balance of payments but has a negative trade balance; and it trades extensively but receives a small proportion of its national income from trade compared with other industrial nations such as Germany. In times of international instability or civil conflict, the United States is less vulnerable than Germany to economic blackmail or sanctions because of its lower degree of trade dependence, although the U.S. standard of living would undoubtedly suffer if sanctions were imposed over the long run. Therefore, if the United States committed gross human rights violations against some segment of its population, its high status would likely deflect international responses. Significant support for the victims, therefore, would not likely be forthcoming. High status, however, carries international visibility, and the internal behavior of high-status states is carefully scrutinized. All U.S. internal affairs attract world attention. If a situation of gross human rights violations were to develop in Mali, a country with low economic status, other states would be more likely to provide substantial aid to victims of government abuse.

CONCLUSION

The U.S. example in the previous paragraph is hypothetical: Oppression of ethnic people is much less likely to occur in a democracy than in other political systems. Two concluding observations follow. First, only the combination of indicators of economic status, with their relative weights assessed against each other, provides the necessary information to allow us to generalize about a country's international status. The same principle applies to discrimination against ethnopolitical groups, to group cohesion, and to all of the variables in the model that is summarized in

Figure 5.1: Reliable measurement requires us to obtain information on a number of indicators of a variable, not just one or two. Second, the assessment of the conflict potential of an ethnic group and of a country must take into account the combination and interactions of all of the variables included in the model, both domestic and international.

SIX



The Internal Processes of Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict: Four Cases

In this chapter we use the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 5 to interpret and compare the domestic processes of ethnopolitical conflict in the four cases described in Chapters 3 and 4. First we analyze and compare the Kurds in Iraq and the Miskitos in Nicaragua. As is the case with national and indigenous peoples elsewhere, the most fundamental issue of conflict is that both groups have sought greater autonomy from state control. We then examine the Chinese in Malaysia and the Turks in Germany. Like other communal contenders and ethnoclasses, they are in conflict with dominant groups over protecting and improving their status within existing social and political institutions. In each pair of cases we begin with variables that refer to characteristics of the group, then move to the state level of analysis. The concept of **levels of analysis** is explained more fully in Chapter 7, where we examine the international context of these four conflicts. Most of the information used for the analysis is taken from Chapters 3 and 4; some additional information on specific variables is also used.

We make one other preliminary observation: The framework developed in Chapter 5 is designed to help us understand the extent of ethnic mobilization and conflict. It also calls our attention to an important related issue, which is how the policies and responses of governments and international actors affect the extent and the outcomes of ethnopolitical conflict. In this chapter we give special attention to the ways in which changes in government policies shape the internal processes of ethnic mobilization and conflict; we examine international responses in Chapters 7 and 8.

CONFLICT PROCESSES: THE KURDS IN IRAQ AND MISKITOS IN NICARAGUA

Group Sources of Mobilization

The framework identifies three variables at the group level of analysis: the degree of political and economic discrimination that affects an ethnic group (hypothesis 1), the strength of group identity (hypothesis 2), and the degree of cohesion among leaders and followers (hypothesis 3). We assess each in turn and then suggest how their interactions have contributed to mobilization for political action. Our assessments are summarized in Table 6.1 at the end of the chapter.

Political Discrimination. None of the Iraqi or Nicaraguan governments during the 1970s and 1980s deliberately restricted the political participation of *individual* members of communal groups. This is not to say Kurds or Miskitos enjoyed Western-style civil and political rights: No one enjoyed such rights in Saddam Hussein's Iraq or the Somozas' Nicaragua.

Kurds had more opportunities than Miskitos for political advancement. The Iraqi government recruited many assimilated Kurds into the lower and middle ranks of the army, the **Baath Party**, and the bureaucracy. Some advanced to high levels, but not to the highest levels; those were reserved for the Sunni Arab clique from the town of Tikrit, who formed Hussein's inner circle.

The Somozas made no effort to encourage or discourage the participation of people from the Atlantic Coast in public life, although, except in local affairs, virtually none of them did participate. The Sandinistas, however, actively sought to recruit Miskitos into the governing party and decisionmaking bodies. The price was the same as it was for Kurds in Iraq: The Miskitos had to accept the dominant group's means and ends. The Miskitos who initially joined the Sandinista organizations used their positions to advocate Miskito communal interests; therefore, most were expelled, were arrested, or fled into exile.

The most serious political grievance of Kurds and Miskitos is not discrimination in the usual sense but, rather, involves restrictions on their efforts to express and pursue their group interests. Three such interests are common to both groups and to most other national and indigenous peoples: the right to exercise political control over the internal affairs of their own region and communities, the ability to control and benefit from the development of the region's resources, and the freedom to protect and promote their own culture and language. The immediate precondition of the mobilization of both the Kurds and the Miskitos has been their resentment of failures to reach satisfactory agreements on these issues.

It is important to recognize that the governments of the two countries did not reject outright the validity of group claims. On several occasions from 1961 to the 1980s the Baathist regimes in Iraq offered significant concessions to Kurds, as pointed out in Chapter 3. In each instance the offers were rejected as inadequate by some Kurdish leaders, who then began a new round of mobilization, which quickly led to armed conflict and repression. In the case of the Miskitos, at first the Sandinistas brought indigenous leaders into state organizations, but they rejected those leaders' insistent pursuit of communal interests and instituted new policies that created the conditions for mobilization. By arresting Miskito leaders and taking direct control of economic and political life in the Atlantic Coast region, they created resentments and stimulated organized opposition where little had existed previously.

Economic Discrimination. All Kurdish and Miskito villagers live in relative poverty compared with dominant groups, but their poverty is mainly the result of ecological circumstances rather than of deliberate economic discrimination by dominant groups. Kurds living in Iraqi towns and cities have long participated in the economic life of modern Iraq. There have been no formal barriers to Miskitos' economic participation, but few are fluent in Spanish, and most have not had access to technical or higher education; thus, in practical terms, they can only pursue the limited economic opportunities available in the coastal region.

The economic development policies of the Iraqi and Nicaraguan governments have adversely affected the economic interests of local peoples. The Mosul oil fields are located in a predominantly Kurdish region, but Iraqi governments have consistently refused to consider demands that a share of oil revenues be devoted to Kurdish regional governments and development. The Somoza regime promoted economic development along Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast by giving outsiders—companies from "Spanish" Nicaragua and North America—concessions to exploit the agricultural, timber, and mineral resources on land to which Miskitos had traditional claims. Development did provide employment opportunities for some Kurds and Miskitos; however, the process was controlled by and designed mainly for the economic benefit of dominant groups rather than the people whose traditional lands and resources were being exploited.

During the 1980s the regimes of both Saddam Hussein and the Sandinistas initiated policies that harmed the economic interests of both communal groups. The Iraqi government devastated the rural Kurdish economy by destroying thousands of villages and forcibly relocating their residents. The policy was a response to Kurdish rebellions and support of the Iranians during the Iran-Iraq War. The Sandinista government, motivated by socialist ideology, evicted foreign concessionaires from the Atlantic Coast region and sought to induce Miskitos to join fishing and farm-

ing collectives. The end of the concessions meant loss of employment, and the collectives were regarded as an infringement on Miskitos' freedom of economic action. The net impact of these policies on the Miskitos was modest compared with the hardship inflicted on the Iraqi Kurds, but it sharpened their sense of grievance against the new government.

Strength of Group Identity. The Miskitos should have a somewhat stronger sense of group identity than do the Iraqi Kurds, based on the five indicators identified in Chapter 3. Each group has at least four centuries of common history, but the unity of Kurdish culture has begun to be eroded by urbanization and modernization; as observed in Chapter 3, a substantial minority of Kurds have assimilated into modern Iraqi society. Most Miskitos, however, continue to live in their traditional villages and a few coastal towns and to share a common, gradually evolving culture that incorporates both traditional and modern elements.

With regard to religion, the third indicator of group identity, most Kurds in Iraq are Sunni Muslims, as are the dominant Sunni Arabs. Some are Shi'is; others are Alevis or Yazidis, sects whose members have been persecuted in the past. These religious differences may contain the seeds of future divisions within an autonomous Kurdish society. Almost all Miskitos, by contrast, are Moravians and are acutely aware of the differences between their faith and that of the Roman Catholic "Spaniards."

Language, the fourth indicator, points in the same direction. There are different dialects of Kurdish, and many Iraqi Kurds—our sources do not specify proportions—speak the Arabic language of the dominant group as well as Kurdish. Most Miskitos, by contrast, speak two languages—Miskito dialects and English—which differentiates them sharply from the "Spaniards," who speak neither.

The final indicator of strength of group identity is the presence of visible racial or ethnic traits. Outsiders would probably find it impossible to distinguish Kurds from Arabs or Miskitos from "Spaniards" solely on the basis of physiological characteristics. The visible markers people use to determine ethnic identity in these and many other cases are culturally prescribed—manner of dress, speech, and social behavior. Men in rural Kurdistan, for example, wear distinctive headgear that makes them instantly recognizable even to outsiders. Our sources do not give us enough information to allow us to judge whether urban Iraqis or Nicaraguans can make reliable distinctions between "us" and "them" based on other markers of this sort.

Consideration of the two groups' geopolitical situations suggests a background factor that affects strength of group identity. Both groups live in terrain that is inhospitable to outsiders—humid and swampy lowlands for the Miskitos, rugged mountain valleys for the Kurds—yet that permits

its residents to move freely. The separate identities of both groups have been nurtured and protected by these conditions. Of course, the mountains that separate areas of Kurdish settlement surely have played a major role in the emergence and persistence of tribal divisions within rural Kurdish society. Modern national identity seems strongest in cities, even among Kurdish migrants in Europe, where Kurds of different origins interact on a regular basis.

Group Cohesion and Leadership. This variable refers to the degree of cohesion among members of an ethno-political group. Cohesion is likely to be higher in groups that share a number of common traits, as discussed previously, but cohesion per se depends on whether group members accept a common authority structure, whether they have close communication with one another, and how fragmented or unified their political organizations are.

The political histories of the Kurds and the Miskitos provide strong clues about their potential for cohesion in the modern political era. Throughout their history, Kurds have been divided among a number of contending principalities, tribes, and clans. Past and present, each Kurdish political movement and rebellion has been supported by some of these segments and opposed by others. This generalization applies equally to all of Kurdistan and to the Kurds in Iraq. The Miskitos, by contrast, have recognized the local authority of village chiefs and for three centuries also recognized a line of kings who nominally ruled them all. Our sources do not mention serious rivalries or warfare among different segments of the Miskitos, although we cannot rule out the possibility that they occurred.

We have little information on communication networks within the two groups. Interesting research could be done on the use of newspapers and legal and clandestine radio stations to build solidarity among ethnic peoples and on the use of radiotelephone facilities for organizational work by bodies like the Moravian church.

The Kurds of Iraq had one widely respected traditional leader, Mustafa Barzani, and a dominant political movement, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), from the 1940s to 1975. Barzani returned from his long residence in the USSR in 1958 and for seventeen years was the Kurds' preeminent leader in negotiations and conflict with the government. From the 1950s onward there were two competing tendencies within the movement, however. Barzani represented more traditional and rural interests; Jalal Talabani, a member of the KDP politburo (governing council), led a more modern, socialist, and pro-Arab faction. Barzani's 1975 unilateral decision to end the rebellion after the Iranians cut off support provoked a political split. Talabani's faction broke away and established the Patriotic

Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The elder Barzani died soon thereafter, and the KDP has since been led by his son, Masoud Barzani. Since 1975 the two major organizations have sometimes cooperated but more often have followed opposing strategies; on some occasions they have had armed clashes.

The Miskito political movement, MISURASATA, which was founded in 1979, divided in May 1981 over disputes about whether to continue to cooperate with the Sandinistas. Steadman Fagoth led the breakaway MISURA into exile in Honduras, where his followers formed an army the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funded as part of its support for the Contras. Within a year Brooklyn Rivera, disillusioned with Sandinista policies, led the rest of MISURASATA into exile in Costa Rica. The Sandinistas' 1985 policy shift toward offering regional autonomy to the Miskitos prompted further splits and realignments. For example, one MISURA leader, Eduardo Pantin, broke with Fagoth, participated in peace talks with the Sandinistas, then was assassinated. In 1987 Fagoth, Rivera, and other leaders joined in a new organization called YATAMA, but it was not cohesive enough to overcome persisting splits between CIA-supported Miskito groups, which continued to fight the Contras, and the growing numbers of leaders and field commanders who participated in the peace process. The conclusion of the peace agreement in 1989 and steps toward implementing regional autonomy were accompanied by a decline in factionalism. The rivalries that continue among Miskito leaders are similar to those of competing politicians in democratic societies rather than being deep-rooted sources of violent factionalism.

Getting It Together, or the Mobilization of Ethnic Groups

Cohesive groups, as described previously, have dense networks of communication and interactions between leaders and followers. The concept is analytically separate from the extent of mobilization, which refers specifically to how much of a group's resources are being committed to political action against other groups and the government. Mobilization depends on decisions of leaders combined with the willingness of their followers to make the commitments and take the risks necessary for protest and rebellion.

The general proposition is that mobilization is likely to be highest and most sustained among groups whose members share a strong sense of grievance about discrimination, have a strong common identity, and are highly cohesive. Comparison of the Iraqi Kurds with the Nicaraguan Miskitos suggests that both had strong grievances against their governments. Both sought greater cultural autonomy and had economic grievances, but their political grievances were far more important. For the Miskitos, the

political grievances were the result of new government policies; in Iraq, repressive government policies made existing political grievances worse. Group identity was relatively strong in both groups and was undoubtedly strengthened by heavy-handed government policies. At the beginning of open conflict each group was represented by one political movement. The cohesion of the Iraqi Kurds in the 1960s resulted from the charismatic leadership of Mustafa Barzani; the evidence reviewed earlier points to many underlying cleavages. There were no obvious cleavages among the Miskitos in 1979 and 1980. In both cases, however, rivalries within the political leadership came to a head over differences about strategies of rebellion; as a result, both the KDP and MISURASATA split into two major factions (in 1975 and 1981, respectively). This reduced effective mobilization and made it easier for governments to contain rebellion. The Iraqi government played the two Kurdish groups against one another, which made it easier to defeat subsequent uprisings. The Nicaraguan government was able to draw less-militant factions into negotiations, which eventually paved the way for a settlement.

Political Context and Responses

Ethnic groups' political environment affects the ways in which they formulate and pursue their objectives. Democratic principles and practices encourage ethnically based political movements to use conventional politics and protest in the pursuit of limited demands (hypothesis 4 in Chapter 5). Most leaders of democratic states respect the civil and political rights of opposition groups and accept the principle that democracy requires that competing interests be accommodated. Politically, demands that are expressed persistently by a numerically significant group need some kind of positive response, because to ignore them is to risk loss of electoral support.

The leaders of authoritarian and populist states have different principles and political concerns. They usually feel no moral or political obligation to reach accommodation with challengers and generally rely on force to deal with threats to their positions and policies. If they do decide to accommodate demands from ethnic or other groups outside the power structure, it is usually because they have calculated that the costs of compromise are lower than the costs of protracted conflict. Ethnopolitical leaders in this type of political environment are likely to mobilize their followers for rebellion with far-reaching objectives—seeking independence rather than limited autonomy, revolution rather than reform (see hypothesis 5 in Chapter 5). First, their chances of achieving any success depend on their mobilizing strongly committed followers for high-risk conflict with high potential gain. Second, by thus raising the costs of conflict for

regimes, they may convince autocratic leaders that compromise is cheaper than fighting.

The responses of governments to the beginnings of ethno-political activism decisively influence later stages of conflict. They may do nothing in the hope that activism will simply go away. If activism is based on serious grievances and a strong sense of identity, however, it is likely to continue until regimes are provoked into some kind of response. The mix of policies of forceful suppression and of accommodation used at this stage is critical. The use of force, we argue, is a two-edged sword: It may dissuade some ethnic activists but is likely to encourage others to greater resistance, to the point at which the costs and risks become prohibitively high. Accommodation poses a lesser set of risks: The regime that responds to ethnic demands with prompt reforms may inadvertently encourage some activists to escalate their demands, but it usually satisfies moderates and minimizes the chances of rebellion. The optimum response from the perspective of a government that wants to limit escalation of ethno-political conflict is usually a mix of concessions that meet some grievances and the show or threat of force to discourage militants from escalating their demands and tactics.

Ethno-political conflicts escalate for many reasons, despite the best intentions of people on both sides. The accumulated grievances may be so great that activists cannot be satisfied with limited concessions; outside supporters may encourage leaders to fight rather than compromise; governments may decide not to implement promised reforms and, thus, frustrate ethnic expectations that were raised by earlier promises. Many observers of ethno-political conflicts have noted that the more protracted and deadly they are, the more difficult it is for governments and rebels to reach negotiated and enduring settlements.

The Iraqi Kurds and the Nicaraguan Miskitos operated in contrasting political environments and were met with different sequences of responses. All Iraqi regimes since the 1950s have had authoritarian leaders who gained their positions through popularly supported coups or internal power struggles and who relied on force to control opposition. The Baathist regime, which first came to power in 1968, was motivated by ideals of Arab socialism and nationalism and was prepared to accommodate Kurds who accepted those principles. But the concessions it offered at various times never satisfied the most militant Kurdish leaders, especially the Barzanis. As a result, proposals for limited autonomy were never fully implemented, and each phase of negotiation and concession was followed by renewed fighting in which the Kurds suffered increasingly costly defeats.

The revolutionary Sandinista regime was not a purely Marxist authoritarian regime, despite its portrayal as such by the Reagan administration. Its leaders were motivated by a mixture of socialist and democratic ideals,

and they pursued them by populist means—by attempting to mobilize mass support for the new government among all social groups. When the Sandinistas tried to incorporate the Miskito leaders into the regime, however, the Miskitos pursued their own objectives rather than those of the revolutionaries. The consequences were summarized previously: The Sandinistas abandoned policies of incorporation in 1981 and decided to rely on their own (and Cuban) personnel to implement revolutionary policies on the Atlantic Coast. When the Miskitos protested and began to arm for rebellion, the revolutionary government responded with force. The Sandinista decision to shift from incorporation to the use of force was paralleled by shifts in Miskito tactics from conventional politics to protest and then rebellion.

In 1984 and 1985 the Sandinistas again shifted their policies, this time toward accommodation based on recognition of the Miskitos' demands for autonomy (for reasons analyzed in Chapter 7). Cease-fires, regional self-government, and the return of refugees and guerrilla fighters were negotiated, but it took five years for accommodation to bring peace to the region.

The outcomes of the two conflicts contrast sharply. From 1960 to the 1990s Iraqi governments responded to a series of Kurdish rebellions with escalating force. The 1988 Al-Anfal campaign was genocidal in intent and effect. As the model in Chapter 5 postulates, this extreme level of force led the Kurds to suspend hostilities. But when the regime was weakened by its defeat in the Gulf War, the Kurds who remained immediately rose again in rebellion. Thus, each military defeat succeeded only in contributing to the conditions—intensified grievances, stronger sense of common identity—that prepared the way for future rebellions whenever the strategic balance shifted. Such a pattern is characteristic of most protracted communal conflicts.

Conflict between the Sandinistas and the Miskitos, by contrast, never escalated to the highest levels. Once it became clear that forcible relocation intensified rather than reduced rebellion, the Sandinistas drew back from armed confrontation and shifted decisively toward negotiation. The Sandinista leader, Tomás Borge, was personally committed to ending the rebellion by dealing with its root causes. Even in this case, though, the negotiations were long and difficult.

This case illustrates another general principle: It is always difficult and sometimes impossible to bring ethnic conflicts to a peaceful conclusion once they have escalated to rebellion. First, as a result of the fighting, the opponents are intensely hostile toward one another and are suspicious of each other's motives, usually for good reason. Second, some factions on both sides usually think they have more to gain from continued fighting than from accepting compromises. Participation of outside parties—for-

eign governments, international organizations, private mediators—and promises of outside assistance may help to overcome these problems.¹

CONFLICT PROCESSES: MALAYSIAN CHINESE AND TURKS IN GERMANY

These two minorities have similar origins and face similar problems: Both are descended from economic immigrants to long-established societies, and both live with political restrictions imposed by governments acting in the interest of dominant groups. And both groups have responded in similar ways: Rather than mobilizing for collective action, almost all of their members are pursuing their interests through conventional political and economic means—community associations, labor unions, and political parties. One important reason for considering these groups is to explain why they have *not* been politically more assertive.

Analysis of the contemporary situation of these two groups should also help us to understand the situation of many similar groups. Other Southeast Asian societies—Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia—contain Chinese minorities who are or have been subjected to discriminatory treatment. The Turks in Germany are one of many recently arrived groups that have migrated from less-developed societies to Western industrial societies, minorities that are often the targets of public hostility and the objects of both positive and restrictive government policies. Peaceful relations among groups in all such multiethnic societies depend upon delicate, government-managed balancing of the interests of minorities and majorities. Our two cases offer examples of how the potential for violent ethnic conflict has been contained in two democratic societies; a summary of our assessments is found in Table 6.1 at the end of the chapter.

Group Sources of Mobilization: Discrimination

Most Chinese in Malaysia are economically advantaged compared with the politically dominant Malays, and economic discrimination takes the form of “reverse discrimination” that gives preferences to Malays. Many Chinese fear their languages and culture are also threatened by pro-Malay policies in the area of education. One specific policy that vexes the Chinese is the use of quotas in university admissions that exclude many otherwise qualified Chinese youth, a policy that has both cultural and economic implications. As an alternative, many prosperous Chinese send their children to foreign universities.

In the 1960s the Turkish immigrants to Germany began at or near the bottom of the economic ladder, as did the first generations of Chinese im-

migrants in Malaya. At first the Turks encountered informal discrimination in access to better-paying jobs and good housing. By the 1990s, however, they had substantially improved their economic position, in ways similar to the Chinese, by establishing many small businesses. Moreover, by law their individual economic and social rights are guaranteed to the same degree as those of German citizens.

The most salient grievances of the Turkish community at present concern threats to their personal safety, which is a form of political discrimination. They are perceived by some Germans as constituting an economic threat, because they hold jobs when many citizens are unemployed. They are also seen as an affront to German society, because some still speak Turkish rather than German and some Turkish women still wear traditional clothing. These beliefs are used to rationalize anti-Turkish attacks and rhetoric.

A persisting source of political grievance for both groups has been restrictions on their citizenship rights. This was not an issue for the first wave of Turkish immigrants, because most expected to return to Turkey; it was also not an issue for those Chinese who came to Malaya in the 1930s and 1940s with plans to return to mainland China when the fighting ended. For immigrants and their descendants who have come to think of themselves as permanent residents, however, the citizenship issue becomes more important: It is both a passport to participation in democratic politics and a protection against deportation. In Malaya this issue was largely resolved through liberalization of the citizenship laws during the 1950s: By 1957 more than two-thirds of Chinese residents of Malaya were citizens, and, because of the rules in effect since that time, virtually all are now citizens.

By contrast, German law has made it very difficult for Turkish residents to obtain citizenship. Reforms debated in 1993 will ease the process, but it will likely be decades before all Turks who want to remain in Germany are granted citizenship. Germany has been slow to respond because it has long followed the principle that German citizenship is restricted to people of German descent; therefore, descendants of Germans who immigrated to Eastern Europe and Russia two centuries or more ago can and do return to Germany as citizens. In this respect Germany is out of phase with most other European countries, in which citizenship is determined by birth and residence, not by descent. Some countries, including the Netherlands and Sweden, routinely grant citizenship to immigrants after a few years' residence.

In summary, the Malaysian Chinese experience political restrictions on some economic activities that are justified by the goal of reducing inequalities between Chinese and Malays. The Chinese are also very sensitive to local and national policies that are seen as a threat to the teaching and use

of Chinese languages. At the same time, they and all other communal groups are barred from making ethnic claims or criticisms that threaten the Malay-dominated balance among communal groups.

The Turks face political discrimination with respect to citizenship plus some day-to-day social and economic discrimination. Their greatest concern in 1992 and 1993 was the right-wing threat to their personal security. The Chinese grievances in the early 1990s, thus, are different in both degree and kind than those of the Turks, but we judge that both are much less intense and widespread than were the grievances of the Kurds and Miskitos in the 1980s.

Sources of Group Mobilization: Group Identity

The bases of group identity were weak during the early stages of both groups' immigration, especially for the Chinese. They came to Malaya over a long period of time from different regions of China speaking different languages or dialects. The Turkish immigrants arrived in Germany within a shorter period of time but included a mix of Turkish-speaking and Kurdish-speaking people from urban and rural areas. In each instance the group's identity was, in effect, defined and reinforced by dominant groups who labeled them as a distinct category of people and practiced discriminatory treatment toward all members of the category. Interactions with dominant groups also made minorities more self-consciously aware of defining differences: They were Buddhists or Confucianists in an Islamic society or Muslims in a Christian society; they dressed and acted differently in social situations than did Malays or British or Germans; and they were physically distinct, which meant Malays and British and Germans could recognize them and treat them according to their assigned status.

We also concluded previously that the degree of discrimination against Chinese and Turks is relatively low. Members of both groups continue to be reminded that they are "different," but not at great personal cost. For such immigrant groups, we think discrimination is the main negative source of group identity. In the absence of deliberate discrimination, their sense of cultural identity is likely to be benign and is not a source of social conflict; it may eventually weaken or disappear entirely as successive generations are absorbed into growing economies and an evolving social order. The greatest threats to ethnic harmony in such situations are economic decline and the resultant intensified competition among groups for shares of the shrinking pie. As we point out in Chapter 7, the economies of Malaysia and Germany are both vulnerable to international economic changes.

Group Cohesion and Mobilization

An attempt to explain the Chinese-based insurgency of the period 1948–1960 raises an important theoretical question, because the conditions for mobilization specified in our theoretical model seem to be missing. Group identity was weak and fragmented, as we suggested previously. Discrimination against the Chinese was widespread but minor, and it was no greater than that experienced by other communal groups under colonial rule. The Malayan Chinese also lacked the cohesion that would have been provided by a common authority structure, by leaders, or by a large-scale political organization. Secret societies were important forms of social organization for Chinese immigrant communities, but they were local rather than countrywide. Trade unions were concerned mainly with economic issues, not ethnic issues. The Communist Party of Malaya (CPM), founded in 1930, was not established as an ethnic political movement, nor did it pursue exclusively Chinese interests. It attracted little external support from either the USSR or the Chinese Communists.

These conditions help to explain why few Chinese in Malaya openly supported the CPM's rebellion; they do not explain why the CPM's leaders initiated it. The most plausible answer to the theoretical question begins with the fact that the CPM was already mobilized and had credibility because it had led armed resistance to the discriminatory and repressive policies of the Japanese occupiers during World War II. Its leaders feared the postwar British policy of decolonization would lead to a decline in their political status in an independent, Malay-dominated society, so they made a strategic decision to direct the energies of an already armed and mobilized organization into a nationalist, anticolonial uprising.

The CPM example leads us to an important general conclusion: Once militant communal organizations have mobilized for rebellion, they may decide to continue or resume fighting for strategic or tactical reasons, even in the absence of some of the conditions that prompted their initial mobilization. This may help to explain why the leaders of the KDP, for example, so quickly rejected government concessions and resumed fighting in 1970 and at other times.

In Malaysia in the 1990s, the principal organizations that promote Chinese interests are legal political parties. The Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) has been part of the Malay-dominated government coalition since the early 1950s. It is a politically acceptable channel through which Chinese can pursue their interests and ambitions, albeit within Malay-dictated limits. The principal alternative for Chinese who are dissatisfied with the probusiness, procoalition stance of the MCA is the Democratic Action Party, which has taken more assertive pro-Chinese positions and,

for most of the past three decades, has been the principal opposition party at the national level, although it usually holds only a handful of seats in the Malaysian parliament.

In summary, the Malaysian political system gives the Chinese (and other communal minorities) a limited but guaranteed role in the political process and restricts the divisive pursuit of communal interest. Thus, it encourages participation in conventional politics and discourages any efforts to mobilize Chinese for ethnic protest or rebellion. In the absence of serious grievances or threats to their status, the Chinese have little reason to attempt more militant actions.

The Turkish community in Germany has fewer of the conditions for political mobilization. Group identity has been diluted by the partial assimilation of second-generation Turks into German society. Citizenship restrictions alone are not sufficient to create serious grievances. And, like the Chinese in Malaysia, the Turks have established an economic niche. These factors help to explain why the Turks have not developed political associations that command widespread support or promote political action. However, the wave of right-wing attacks in 1992 and 1993 prompted more Turks, especially younger second-generation people, to consider becoming politically more proactive. If the attacks subside and citizenship restrictions are eased, as seems likely, the most probable scenario is that Turks' political energies will be channeled through existing political parties and grassroots community organizations in the cities in which most live.

Political Context and Responses

The Chinese in postindependence Malaysia and the Turks in Germany both illustrate the argument, made previously, that minorities in democracies are likely to pursue their collective interests through conventional means. There are two important reasons for this—one specific to immigrant groups like these, the other a general trait of democracies. The group-specific explanation is that both minorities are descendants of economic migrants who have prospered—the Chinese more than the Turks—in their adoptive countries. In other words, they have been preoccupied mainly with material concerns and have been more accepting—or realistic—about the political restrictions placed on them by the dominant society. The second reason is that the governments of both host societies have sought to accommodate the immigrants, within limits. The Chinese have maintained their leading economic role in rapidly developing Malaysia and have more than token political participation. The Turks are eligible for the full, substantial range of social and economic benefits provided to German citizens; they mainly lack citizenship and, at present, physical se-

curity. The Malaysian limits on communal politics are sometimes criticized as being undemocratic. The Malaysian response is likely that in a divided society, a perfectly egalitarian democracy is at risk of destructive communal conflict that would have to be controlled by instituting authoritarian rule.

Both governments have also used coercive means to counter minority political militancy. The British and Malays' successful **counterinsurgency** tactics against the Communist Party in the 1950s are discussed in Chapter 4 in "The Chinese in Malaysia." The resurgence of guerrilla activity in the far north of Malaysia in the 1970s was also met with force, which was sweetened by offers of amnesty for fighters who were willing to come in from the jungle. Furthermore, Malaysian authorities have invoked national security considerations to justify the arrest and detention of political opponents; in October 1987, for example, 119 political members of legal political and religious movements were detained.

During the 1970s and 1980s a widely feared policy of both governments was deportation, which was used by Malay and German authorities to deport political activists as well as immigrants who violated various regulations. For example, Turkish Kurds who organized support for the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK; see Chapter 3) and other radical causes were regularly deported. In a well-publicized 1975 case, a Malaysian Chinese citizen was deported for temporarily residing and pursuing university studies in the People's Republic of China. The threat of deportation is one of the reasons citizenship, or the lack of it, has been an important concern of immigrants. Without the protection of citizenship they have little or no recourse against administrative decisions to deport them.² And there is little doubt that some specific deportation cases have been decided arbitrarily. The effect of deportation policies did not increase opposition; since it was a policy aimed at a few individuals rather than entire groups, it seems to have encouraged political caution and conformity.

CONCLUSION

Ethnopolitical conflicts usually center on one of three general issues: the desire for "exit" or independence from the state (the Iraqi Kurds), the demand for greater autonomy within the state (the Miskitos), or the recognition and protection of minority interests within a plural society (the Malaysian Chinese and Turks in Germany). Observers often argue that such conflicts are likely to be protracted and deadly and are difficult or impossible to resolve. Resolution is difficult but not impossible, as our cases illustrate. We conclude this chapter with a brief analysis of the ways in which each of these three issues of ethnopolitical conflict can be accommodated.³

Ethnonationalist demands for independence imply the breakup of existing states. States usually counter secessionist movements with all of the political and military means at their disposal, as exemplified by the responses of Turkish, Iranian, and Iraqi governments to the episodic nationalist rebellions by Kurds. *Autonomy of the kind negotiated with the Miskitos in Nicaragua is potentially a less costly alternative to protracted civil wars for all parties concerned. State officials who are prepared to consider this approach can usually find some leaders in virtually all ethnonationalist and indigenous movements who are open to compromises that guarantee regional autonomy within a federal framework. The Miskitos are one of seven peoples whose civil wars during the 1945–1990 period led to autonomy agreements; the others are the Basques of Spain, the Nagas and Tripura in India, the Afars in Ethiopia, the people of Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill region, and some of the Moros of the Philippines. This approach was also attempted by Iraq's Baathist government in 1970 to defuse Kurdish resistance. At least six other such conflicts, including those of the Palestinians and the Iraqi Kurds, are currently the subject of protracted and intermittent negotiations that have led to a preliminary agreement for the Palestinians. The autonomy gained through negotiations is generally more limited than that sought by ethnonationalist leaders and less limited than that desired by officials. Nonetheless, both sides may conclude that agreements regarding autonomy are preferable to starting or continuing destructive wars that cannot be won.*

The interests of communal contenders like the Chinese Malaysians and the Turkish ethnoclass in Germany are not likely to be pursued or satisfied by open rebellion. The strategy of rebellion failed badly for the Chinese who supported the Malay Communist Party in the period 1948–1960. We can distinguish four patterns of accommodation that have been attempted in multiethnic societies in the last half of the twentieth century.

Containment is a strategy of keeping minorities "separate and unequal," as was done to African Americans until the 1950s and to Black South Africans under apartheid. Such policies are usually forced on minorities by dominant groups and are accepted only for as long as the groups have no opportunity to pursue alternatives. The German government's policies toward the Turks from the 1960s through the 1980s were a relatively benign form of containment.

Assimilation was long the preferred liberal alternative to containment. Assimilation is an individualistic strategy that gives minorities incentives and opportunities to forsake their old communal identities and adopt the language, values, and behaviors of the dominant society. Until the 1960s assimilation was the preferred strategy for dealing with ethnoclasses and indigenous peoples in most Western societies. In practice, the Turks in Germany have moved toward assimilation, even though it is contrary to

the government's long-standing position that Germany is not a society of immigration—that is, one that incorporates people of non-German origin. Assimilation is also widely used by states in developing countries to complement strategies of containment. We pointed out that the Iraqi government has actively recruited Kurds and members of the Shi'i religious majority into the Baath Party, the officer corps, and the bureaucracy. The Turkish government has sought to assimilate Kurds by similar means. The strategy of encouraging national minorities to assimilate is attractive to dominant groups, because it diverts the talents of potential opponents into the service of the state. In the long run a stream of individual choices to identify with the dominant society causes a politically assertive ethnic group to lose much of its cohesion and human resources.

Pluralism is an approach to regulating intergroup relations that gives greater weight to the collective rights and interests of minorities. If containment means "separate and unequal," then pluralism means "equal but separate": equal individual and collective rights, including the right to separate identities and cultural institutions. In the United States and Canada the advocates of **multiculturalism**, which is another name for pluralism, seek recognition and promotion of the history, culture, language or dialect, and religions that define their separate identities.

The growing emphasis on pluralism in Western societies is a reaction to the limitations of assimilation. For Turks in Germany, assimilation is a potential solution to the discrimination most have encountered. But they are also aware that complete assimilation implies the loss of their distinctive identity as Turks, which most want to preserve. Furthermore, policies of assimilation in other Western societies have not meant an end to inequalities or informal discrimination, as the experiences of visible minorities in the United States and France show. So why, ask ethnic activists, give up our identity for incomplete integration? Pluralism has growing appeal for many minorities in this situation and can be expected to be favored by the next generation of Turkish activists in Germany.

Communal **power-sharing** is an alternative way of regulating group relations in multiethnic societies. It assumes that communal identities and organizations are the basic building blocks of society. State power is exercised through collaboration among the ethnic communities, each of which is proportionally represented in government and all of which have mutual veto power over policies that affect their communal interests. This kind of institutionalized power-sharing evolved historically between the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in the Netherlands and has been extended in modified form to new visible minorities who have emigrated to the Netherlands from Indonesia, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Power-sharing has intrinsic appeal to some ethnic activists because it

seems to guarantee that a communal group can possess both status and access to power without compromising its social or cultural integrity.

One problem is that power-sharing arrangements are not easily constructed, especially when the groups begin from an unequal footing. Attempts to improve the status of disadvantaged minorities often trigger a backlash from advantaged groups that fear the loss of some of their own privileges. Ethnophobic political movements motivated by this kind of concern became increasingly common in multiethnic Western societies during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Malaysia illustrates the liabilities of power-sharing arrangements in Asian, African, and Middle Eastern countries. The main flaw has been the fact that Malays have used their advantaged position to selectively benefit the Malays. The Malaysian version of power-sharing has helped to maintain stability and the observance of most democratic principles, but it has worked mainly because the Chinese and Indian communities have been willing to accept their subordinate roles. If the Malay-dominated government were to impose more restrictions on the communal minorities—which is possible but unlikely in present circumstances—a situation like that described here as containment would result. The general point is that power-sharing among unequal partners can lead to exploitation and repression of the weaker parties. The less advantaged groups may be tempted to defect, even to rebel. Lebanon's power-sharing political system degenerated into civil war in this kind of circumstance.

In conclusion, the policies of regional autonomy, assimilation, pluralism, and power-sharing can be used in creative combination to accommodate the essential interests of most disadvantaged and politically active communal groups. To make such policies work, however, compromises among groups and an enduring commitment by leaders of all groups to adhere to agreements reached are necessary. If policies of accommodation are to be effective in any type of political system, they must be pursued cautiously but persistently over the long run—slowly enough that they do not stimulate a political backlash from other groups, persistently enough so disadvantaged minorities do not become disillusioned and mobilize for rebellion.

TABLE 6.1 Summary of Internal Factors in Ethnic Mobilization for Four Groups Since the 1970s

Variables	Chinese in Malaysia			Turks in Germany		
	Kurds in Iraq	Miskitos	Chinese in Malaysia	Turks in Germany		
Discrimination						
Economic	Deliberate destruction of rural economy	Some loss of opportunities	Restrictions on corporate ownership, education	Minor discrimination because of social practices		
Political	Denial of autonomy demands, forcible relocation	Denial of autonomy demands, forcible relocation	Minor restrictions on civil service recruitment	Limited citizenship, right-wing attacks		
Group identity	Medium to strong, strengthened by conflict with regime	Strong, strengthened by conflict with regime	Low to medium, reinforced by perceived discrimination	Weakened by assimilation, strengthened by attacks		
Group cohesion	Weakened by clan and political divisions	High, but weakened by political divisions during war	Low to medium, weakened by partisan political divisions	Weak to none		
Type of political environment	Authoritarian	Socialist	Democratic with restrictions	Democratic		
Severity of governmental force	Escalating from severe to genocidal	Escalating from arrests to forcible relocation	Occasional arrests	None except to restrain protesters		
Effects on ethnic mobilization and conflict	Recurring rebellions	Protest escalating to rebellion	Conventional political participation since 1960s, limited protest	Limited participation, limited protest		

The Miskitos' conflict with the Nicaraguan state has largely been settled. By 1993 armed conflict had long since ended, although the regional councils of autonomous Yapti Tasba were still at odds with the Nicaraguan government over the control of resource development. What they need most is money, from either the government or international donors. The flood of international support that was supplied to the government, the contras, and the Miskitos during the 1980s has virtually dried up. Neither the Managua government nor the Yapti Tasba councils have attracted sufficient public or private aid to meet the needs of the region.

The German government is not free to deal with its Turkish and other immigrant minorities as it wishes. The country's high economic performance is dependent upon a dense network of commercial and financial ties with other states; it has a high volume of foreign trade with a multitude of customers, and its economy is closely linked to the economies of the other EC states. Moreover, Germany depends heavily on imports of oil and other raw materials, which means it must maintain good relations with the oil-producing countries of the Middle East and with Third World sources of other primary products. Evidence of this sensitivity is seen in the fact that Germany ranks third among the world's foreign aid donors and allots 24 percent of its aid to the least developed countries.

We documented in Chapter 4 the existence in Germany of widespread negative attitudes toward immigrants and refugees. If these attitudes were translated directly into public policy, the status and prospects of the Turks and other visible minorities would not be good. There are two main guarantees of improved status for minorities in Germany. First are the political and civil rights provided for all citizens in Germany's Basic Law (the equivalent of a constitution). Second are the international scrutiny and pressures focused on Germany, described previously, to which its policymakers are highly susceptible.

EIGHT



Ethnic Groups in the International System: State Sovereignty Versus Group Rights to Self-Determination

Ethnic groups have become recognized independent actors in international politics. Some groups claim rights that negate other groups' rights, which leads to communal conflict or state repression. In some cases ethnic conflicts spill over to adjacent territories or contenders become embroiled in hegemonic struggles between external powers. Protracted communal conflicts pose a real threat to international security, often result in major humanitarian crises, and sometimes can be solved only through a resort to military force. Yet despite these dangers, ethnic groups have no special international legal status, and few are represented in the United Nations. We argue that legal recognition of ethnic groups allows for disputes to be settled in an orderly and civilized fashion. Mechanisms at the disposal of mediators in crisis situations between states could also be applied in dealing with ethnic strife. States and, to a lesser degree, individuals are subjects of international law. In this chapter we argue that it is necessary to recognize group rights under international law.

SEPARATISTS, PLURALISTS, AND ACTIVISTS

Ethnic groups can be divided into three distinct categories, based on and extending a distinction made in Chapter 2. *Separatists* include all groups that aspire to separate nationhood, in the form of either internal autonomy or independence. *Pluralists* are minorities who seek equal treatment under the law of an existing state plus other ascriptive and political groups that are targets of discrimination and persecution. This category includes some of the groups that are victims of genocide as well as all

those who are treated differentially by their governments but who do not seek autonomy. *Activists* are functional groups that have specific grievances against their governments. Membership in functional groups is not determined by ethnicity or political affiliation but is based on specific sets of grievances; thus, it usually cuts across ethnic, religious, and political lines.

Activists rarely threaten internal or international security, nor do they mobilize to the extent of pluralists and separatists. Their demands can more easily be satisfied by local or national authorities. Group members may withdraw support at any time and typically do so when their demands are met or when leadership fails to get results. Such groups do not require special international or legal attention. In contrast, both pluralists and separatists require special status under international law as well as special protection under municipal law, the domestic law of the states in which they live.

Why have groups been largely overlooked as important and independent actors in international relations? And what accounts for their neglect in international law? Persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities who reside within sovereign states have always been subjects of municipal law. Thus, when communal groups fought each other without crossing state boundaries, they were engaged by definition in internal conflicts not subject to international law. Once conflict spilled over boundaries, however, the rules of war and peace could be applied to the warring factions. Only with the emergence of laws that granted individuals rights vis-à-vis their states (discussed in subsequent sections) has this invisible threshold of inviolable national boundaries been crossed to allow for third-party intervention. Simultaneously, the emergence of these laws has given rise to claims that groups seeking independence from existing states should be given special legal recognition.

Traditional international principles that deal with the right of secession or self-determination are inadequate to address the avalanche of new group claims to self-determination. In the past new states have come into existence through many routes: **formal recognition** (one of several indicators of statehood), the granting of independence from colonial powers, the dissolution of an empire, mutual consent of two independent states, seizure of independence, or de facto control of a territory. Self-declaration of independence does not automatically carry the right to statehood. One may argue that in such cases rebels could have been offered combatant or belligerent status, but, as Alexis Heraclides pointed out, "even though a number of insurgents have met the test, none have been accorded such status during the present century." Thus, in situations in which groups have ambitions to secede or to establish internal autonomy, few legal principles exist that could help them bolster their claims vis-à-vis a legally

recognized state or, in the case of civil war, bolster one group's claim against that of another.¹

In civil wars the situation is complicated by the absence of effective, legitimate authorities. These situations require outside observers to seek solutions that resolve competing group claims. The situations in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia may help to illustrate the emerging issues. In both cases the former state ceased to exist as a functioning, effective, legitimate, and legally recognized political entity.

Ethnic groups that we define as pluralist typically advance claims that do not include autonomy but that request the right to exercise their communal rights without discrimination. Such requests are habitually treated in international and municipal law as claims of individuals vis-à-vis the state; thus, group rights are not separately recognized. The collective rights are dealt with summarily as part of the principles that address self-determination of peoples and in the human rights **conventions**, which also stipulate obligations for states. These conventions give states the responsibility to uphold principles of equal treatment under the law and to guarantee bodily integrity, human dignity, freedom from persecution, and similar rights. Violations of such norms enable the international community to punish offenders.

However, at the forty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on February 21, 1992, the commission approved a draft declaration on the "Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities," which for the first time attempts to give special status to groups under international law. The problem, however, is that the declaration only strengthens the role of the state, insofar as the state is the legal "person" responsible for protecting the rights of minorities. The declaration urges states to fulfill "the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties." The treaties specifically named are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. States that are not signatories to these conventions theoretically could treat their citizens as they wish without fear of outside intervention. Minority groups, in turn, have few avenues by which to seek redress of their claims and can do so only as individuals seeking protection under existing human rights conventions.

THE UNITED NATIONS AS LAWMAKER

Although the United Nations is not officially endowed with the authority to make laws, as are national legislative authorities, it can convert **customary law** into **statutory law** through its ability to propose **multilateral** treaties that are open to ratification by all member states. Once a majority of member states have ratified a treaty, the provisions of the treaty are likely to be treated as general principles—namely, law. The importance of treaties as a source of international law, and the UN ability to promulgate conventions that specify mutual rights and obligations, has effectively granted the United Nations the role of lawmaker. In this role the United Nations has added significantly to the growing body of international law as it affects states in their relations with one another and has included in its **sphere of obligation** the protection of individual rights vis-à-vis the state. The UN Charter, which is essentially the constitution of the United Nations, has also prompted missions and activities that have set precedents that have added to international law. For example, the charter forbids the use of force as a means by which to settle disputes and emphasizes the obligation to settle disputes through peaceful means, such as negotiation, mediation, and similar methods. Although wars have not been abolished by declaring them to be illegal, warring states have sought to justify their actions in legal terms.

The United Nations has created new laws regarding the use of outer space, the oceans, and national waters; has made genocide a crime under international law; and has dealt with the rights of individuals vis-à-vis their states in the covenants on human rights cited previously. But UN efforts to promote international standards of human dignity and to define specific categories of rights have been significantly hampered by the existence of different legal systems that emphasize different rights. The cultural and ideological differences among the Communist-socialist states, non-Western states, and Western democracies in particular have blocked UN efforts to establish mutually acceptable human rights categories. For example, under Islamic law, in contrast to the **common law** tradition of the United States and Britain, women are treated differently. Muslim women have been granted extensive property rights at times when women in most Western societies had no such rights, but they have been denied the extensive civil and political rights granted as a matter of course to women in most twentieth-century democracies. Whereas socialist legal systems gave priority to economic and social rights, democracies have traditionally favored civil and political rights.

We may argue that at present only minimum standards of individual rights exist and are widely accepted—that is, have the character of law. Specific rights and obligations are spelled out in the treaties and cove-

nants cited in the previous section. Although the language of the treaties is often vague, leaving some room for interpretation, this vagueness does not take away from the essential legal character of the documents. The essence of the treaties has been incorporated into many national legal documents, and violations of rights have prompted court decisions by national and international courts that have further amplified the stated principles. International law commissions and legal authorities have worked to eliminate ambiguities by offering legal opinions; moreover, writings on a variety of precedent-setting actions have helped to clarify the meaning of legal provisions.

What has emerged is a fairly specific body of norms that deal with the rights and obligations of individuals vis-à-vis existing states under international law. The real problem is determining how to deal with rights violations. There is no formal enforcement mechanism, and no punishments are attached to crimes committed against humanity. Recent efforts by UN policymakers have concentrated on addressing and remedying these glaring omissions. Since 1992 UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has sought to extend the organization's traditional role as arbiter and mediator by adding policing and enforcement functions. UN actions in Cambodia, the peacekeeping and peace enforcement actions in Somalia, and the UN-sponsored **collective intervention** in the Gulf War may set the precedents necessary to provide the mechanisms by which minimum standards of human dignity can be guaranteed.

RECOGNIZING ETHNIC IDENTITY AND MINORITY RIGHTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

We have previously pointed out that states are the traditional subjects of international law and that individuals enjoy some special rights but that, in contrast, groups are largely ignored and are more typically treated as extensions of the individual. Group rights are thus the aggregate of individual rights. The relationship that exists among individual consciousness, group identity, national identity, nationalism, and state-building has been explored to some degree by anthropologists and social scientists. But the literature tells us little about the nature of ethnic groups or the changes in their social organizations over time, which in some instances led to state-building or in others to ethnic disintegration or assimilation.

The Genocide Convention is one of the few international documents that specifically addresses group rights yet specifies their violations largely through reference to individuals. For example, in the original text, genocide includes the following: killing *members* of the group and causing serious bodily harm to *members* of the group. Another example of groups as subjects of international law is seen in the internationally recognized

prohibition of terrorism, which identifies terrorists as members of identifiable groups.

None of the human rights conventions elaborates on group membership, with the notable exception of the UN draft declaration named in the section "Separatist, Pluralists, and Activists." Part of the problem undoubtedly lies in the identification of groups as a separate entity. Is group membership inherently fluid, and can it be changed at will? Or are groups coherent entities that exist in largely unaltered form for extended time periods? What really constitutes a group?

The Genocide Convention specifies four types of groups—national, racial, ethnic, and religious—but avoids any reference to political or gender groups. The UN draft declaration identifies national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities and again avoids reference to gender and political groups. Of course, political groups typically have cross-cutting memberships and are more fluid than any of the other groups; thus, they are of lesser concern here for the reasons mentioned in the discussion of activist groups and because of the protection they enjoy under the covenant that deals with the protection of civil and political rights. By our definition, ethnic groups may share language, culture, religion, and race; nations are politicized ethnic groups. We conclude that existing conventions and the new draft declaration are inadequate in solving the problem of group rights vis-à-vis the rights of states to conduct their internal affairs without outside interference. The new declaration essentially endorses the sovereign rights of states and leaves it up to the conscience of respective policymakers to uphold obligations regarding their citizens.

THE CASE OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF GENOCIDAL COMMUNAL CONFLICT

The Bosnian case is an example of groups violating other groups' rights within contested national territories. Lack of international legal provisions that deal with group conflict during civil war make it difficult to respond effectively.

There are unquestionably major violations of human rights in Bosnia that constitute crimes under international law. The perpetrators are neither the legitimate authority nor the governing authority of a clearly specified territory. Essentially, the United Nations is asked to respond to an internal communal conflict that (1) has important international security implications because of its potential spillover or ripple effects, (2) is morally despicable in that it violates human rights laws, and (3) can probably be solved only by a resort to military force.

For their part, Bosnian Serbs claim they cannot live in a Muslim-dominated territory for fear of potential discrimination. Cynical nationalists have played on that fear to incite groups to commit the murder and ethnic cleansing of those "conspiring" to discriminate against Serbs. Of course, such claims are absurd in the absence of any evidence that gives us clues as to the intentions or potential behavior of the Muslim leadership. But UN authorities and national policymakers within this situation must deal essentially with one group's *claim rights*, which negate another group's rights. The Bosnian Serbs claim they can only live in a homogeneous territorial unit, whereas the Muslims are willing to share the national domain.

What we are witnessing in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina may be only the beginning of an avalanche of similar claims and counterclaims that have been precipitated by the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia into a multitude of national and subnational units. Given the tendency toward fragmentation of national units in the aftermath of the Cold War, ethnic group protection or the guarantee of rights to persons who belong to identifiable groups requires special attention. This is not to argue that the modern state will cease to function but instead is to suggest that other forms of social organization, such as the ethnic group, in some instances supersede, precede, or fragment state cohesion (this argument is more fully developed in the following section).

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS: INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND THE STATE

From a theoretical perspective one may argue that states have no independent existence beyond that of individuals; states exist for the express purpose of safeguarding the rights of individuals who have united under the banner of a common heritage, namely, the nation or ethnic group. Such reasoning ignores the role of the modern state, which, through an elaborate network of groups, institutions, and roles, protects its continued existence regardless of the wishes of individual citizens or a national people.

State leaders have frequently dealt with ethnic group demands through accommodation or, if that failed, through coercion. Many contemporary minority groups are gaining a higher level of group consciousness. They are less likely to accept assimilation with the dominant group, they seek special status simultaneously with nondiscriminatory treatment under the law, and in some cases they want to secede from the territorial state. Such demands are often incompatible with the idea of the nation-state as a heterogeneous social unit that promises equal protection for all its citizens under the law. The essential issue is that minority rights poten-

tially conflict with the cohesion and continued existence of the multiethnic nation-state.

CONCLUSION

We have shown that the United Nations as lawmaker and supranational entity only implicitly recognizes specific group rights. Groups, thus, have no independent status apart from individuals or states, although there are some exceptions, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Of course, we know that groups exist and take political actions that can lead to civil wars and humanitarian disasters on the scale of Bosnia-Herzegovina, events that affect the international community. Groups that seek independence or ask for internal autonomy from a sovereign state often come into conflict with other groups or with those who represent the legal authority of a sovereign state. When such groups commit atrocities against members of competing groups, we confront crises that require special legal attention and challenge policymakers. Groups that fight legal or de facto recognized authorities challenge the established world order. They have no legally recognized status apart from the nation-state, but they are responsible for many of the world's most protracted conflicts and are perpetrators and victims of many episodes of genocide and politicide that have occurred in the twentieth century. If such groups could attain legal status that details their rights as well as states' obligations to them, this would provide the objective basis on which policy decisions could be reached by outside actors.

NINE



Responding to International Crises

In this concluding chapter we are concerned with how the international system can and should respond to ethnic conflicts, especially those that result in the loss of many lives. We deliberately become advocates rather than remaining objective observers, for we believe that giving national and ethnic groups "the right to determine their own destinies captures the essence of the argument for implementing basic human rights over and above the rights of states to conduct their own affairs"¹—especially when a state chooses genocide or political mass murder to preserve its existing structure.

The new world order should emphasize collective responsibility and mutual cooperation and should lay the groundwork for an objective basis on which potential ethnopolitical conflicts can be settled in a manner that would satisfy the great majority of international actors.

EVOLVING DOCTRINES FOR ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS: LEGAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES

We showed in Chapter 1 that violent ethnic conflicts have increased steadily in frequency and intensity since the 1960s, sometimes accompanied by political mass murder and genocide. Episodes of politicides and genocides since 1945 have caused greater loss of life than all of the wars fought between states during the period between 1945 and the Iran-Iraq War. We think it is essential to demonstrate that such mass abuses violate the moral standards of global society and must lead with some certainty to sanctions that are proportional to the crime. From a strategic perspective, it is clear that the diffusion of future episodes of ethnic hatred, passion, and rebellion will eventually call for greater measures than a maximum collective show of force with a minimum use of weapons could have accomplished in Somalia. We know that serious ethnopolitical conflicts