Creating Peace

An Examination of Peace and Conflict in Diverse Societies

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Integrative Exercise
Montero
The prime focus of ethnic conflict has been through an explanation of basic group motivations playing out against certain institutional designs. This paper asserts that institutional designs, while important structures that set the rules for ethnic bargaining, are not the cause of ethnic stability. The existence and acceptance of power sharing agreement is not possible unless the collective society is willing to allow them to succeed. This paper argues the combination of economic dependency, extent and nature of resource distribution, class structure, and cultural patterns all must be addressed by new institutional frameworks if the society is to achieve peace.
Puzzle:

Ethnic and religious wars and conflicts have become a common topic in today’s world. Ethnic groups have been fighting for independence from a dominant, often repressive, ethnic group since the concept of nation-states existed. The current geography of the world with many ethnic-nations compared to the early days of colonization and early days of colonial independence are a testament to the seeming incompatibility of ethnic and religious groups to coexist under the same government (Ross, 1997: 271). Ethnic conflicts are usually described as an attempt to secure more power or access more resources, but many cases exist today of peaceful multicultural societies with a broad range of institutional designs that result in stability. Institutional design has been the main focus when it comes to avoiding ethnic violence, yet many seemingly good designs fail and poor designs can succeed.

Although many countries contain a heterogeneous mix of ethnic groups and religions that tolerate and in some cases thrive together, many have had trouble finding lasting stability. What differentiates these cases? The literature on the ethnic conflict within multinational states explores state structures and the role of elite in encouraging or inflaming ethnic violence. Designs that allow of the majority of elites within a minority to eschew violence usually have an element of power sharing or autonomy that allow for the coexistence of people within the same political regime. However when looking at the results, national government design is not a reliable predictor of whether a state is likely to experience ethnic violence. This paper instead identifies the underlying conditions that enable or retard ethnic violence within a diverse society. Rather than the cause of peace, institutional design is merely an indicator of a society that has reached a “critical mass” in terms of societal integration; the groups become unable to benefit from ethnic violence. Current scholarship on the subject separates politics from society and 1
underlying demographic pressures to focus on institutional design. My research focuses on the effects of economic dependency, the extent and nature of resource distribution, cultural patterns, and shared values. The fusing of these disparate tendencies within an optimal band is necessary in order to lay the groundwork for consociational institutional designs promoted by Lijphart (Lijphart, 1999:162). For the sake of clarity I will differentiate between national political structures, such as parliaments, which I will label national institutions, and government entities like the police, real estate registrars, and business registrars that I will define as retail institutions.

The cases we will compare all have had varying degrees of success in reducing ethnic violence; we will focus on Nigeria, South Africa and Lebanon as our cases studies and finally conclude with an analysis of Iraq. These cases all have a recent history of ethnic conflict as well as changes in their national political institutions within the last 30 years. The goal is to analyze each case while focusing on the various nexuses that connect ethnic groups within a society. The analysis of each case will determine how each variable can affect the political logic of the collective group bargaining.

**Main Argument**

The argument put forth in this paper is that an array of social factors present within multicultural societies affects its ability to live and cooperate in the political arena. While the literature has shown that power sharing agreements are important institutional mechanisms that encourage ethnic peace, this explanation is not complete. There are many instances of power sharing agreements that meet the definition and are implemented sufficiently to expect peaceful outcomes, but yet the agreement falls apart.

A political matrix involving previous societal patterns of cooperation and integration, the nature of national resource endowment, extent and nature of collective interests, and shared
value systems are important in determining whether a country is likely to experience ethnic conflict. States that enjoy stable and sustainable balances among these variables in ways that do not incentivize violence for ethnic groups are not likely to engage in conflict even if they harbor deep animosity and distrust. However some societies have developed in ways that make the normal institutional solutions to ethnic conflict insufficient. The conflicts in these cases are not fundamentally intractable; rather need to address the imbalances of these variables with modified institutional solutions.

The logic behind my exploration is parallel to the logic of what societies need to enable economic growth. In economics, the focus is largely on expanding the trust and cooperation of individuals through economic institutions, like banks and markets, that reduce the ability and incentive and ability to cheat. The creation of these institutions encourages and alters the behavior of the populace gradually and eventually allows humans to depart from the “normal” patterns of human economic interaction of previous centuries. However focusing on solely institutions as the driving force behind cooperation is missing the main event. Underlying all institutions must be people who have the desire and psychology to be able interact in this increasingly cooperative way. Departing from economics and into political science is not a far leap. The underlying nature of economic growth is strongly tied to political cooperation. The desire and psychology of the collective ethnic groups to cooperate with, or at least tolerate each other, is present and the expectation of better outcomes for themselves through cooperation exists(Lake, 1996:20).

In order to recognize states that are likely to experience ethnic violence, identifying the social variables that determine the likelihood of groups cooperating is important. The economic dependency, extent and nature of resource distribution, class structure, and cultural patterns of a
society, while not an exhaustive list, are all variables that affect the overall terrain and rationale in ethnic politics. The social composition and characteristics that define how societies operate can be thought of much like an economy itself. Society is characterized as a complicated network of social interactions and norms that create the aggregate society and determine its overall shape. The combination of economic dependency, extent and nature of resource distribution, class structure, and cultural patterns all will have different degrees of relevance in different cases.

The importance of economic dependency in shaping group incentives is very important. I extend the work of Robin M. Williams Jr. and Sumon K. Bhaumik in identifying its effects. Economic dependency can be construed very broadly, but for the purposes of this paper it will represent the extent that different ethnic groups are dependant on cooperation from other groups within society. Economic dependency can be in the form of internal markets and also shared external markets which both or a particular group may have interests in. When a society is characterized by wide economic integration the incentives for political violence will decrease. In maintaining and assuring the collective economic security within a society, intergroup violence becomes undesirable to large segments of the population (Williams, 1994:45). When both groups’ actions have positively affected each other, the barriers between “them and us” are reduced and gradually will coalesce into an “us”. The integration of an economy is a complicated phenomenon that involves both infrastructure and educational system to be homogenous.

When unpacking the idea of economic dependency and its relation to ethnic conflict it is important to understand that a simple dichotomy of a high degree of economic integration versus no integration does not necessarily produce a dichotomous result. In fact there are three possibilities that can exist within a given society, each with different affects on an ethnic group’s incentive matrix. Codependence, where both groups mutually rely on each other to create and
sustain prosperity, are the most conducive to eliminating violent incentives since all parties would suffer from disruptions and the decreased economic activity of the other. If we think of the society and economy as a pie, groups looking for a bigger piece of the pie would see the overall size decrease enough where any gains still represent a net loss.

Another possibility for a society includes total economic autonomy between groups. While this option may seem like it would be a favorable condition to enable ethnic violence, those outcomes are not always the case. While the negative incentives do not exist if one particular group chooses to use violence, neither do positive incentives for agitating groups. Most cases of economic isolation from another group are due to geography and with that economic separation autonomy from the state is likely to be the case as well. Cases of economic isolation among different ethnic groups in a state can happen when a region practices agrarian autarky or is dependent on neighboring states for most of their trade and migration. The Kurdish region in Iraq provides a good example. While trade exists between Kurdistan and the lower 15 provinces of Iraq, most commerce happens with fellow Kurds along the Turkish and Iranian border. Assuming there is no resource competition where one group holds important assets or restricts access to important markets for the other group, violence will not occur in situations where there is no grievance.

The third type of economic dependency, perceived unilateral benefit by one group, is the most unfavorable condition when it comes to reducing incentives for ethnic violence. This situation occurs when one group is benefiting from the presence of another group disproportionally to the utility perceived as gained by the other party. The group that receives the most benefits without returning them in kind is likely to generate enmity, and the incentive for
ethnic groups to correct this situation is high (Lake, 1996:15). Since gains are not proportional and power in relation to another ethnic group is a zero sum proposition, conflict is incentivized.

The next important variable in determining whether a society is likely to experience ethnic violence is the extent of resource scarcity. The abundance or scarcity of resources decides the direction a society will take in development. Imbalances, not only of scarcity but of abundance, may distort environmental and socioeconomic policies and lead to friction if ethnic groups have incongruent needs. If correcting or helping your own ethnic group is perceived as disadvantaging others conflict is likely and tensions raise among both ethnic groups. However, a homogenous set of needs can foster cooperation in order to overcome these obstacles, complimentary surplus and the needs of the other group can facilitate economic integration.

It can be said that the nature of resource scarcity affects the nexus between ethnic groups and that distribution affects group interests. This is especially true for basic commodities needed to live, such as resources related to food and food production, heating oil, and building materials. Demographic bubbles can give groups no option but to encroach on what was previously a peaceful coexistence, but can also eventually reduce sources of friction in situations that are experiencing conflict and have demographic pressures ease.

The best examples of unilateral gain occurring due to resource distribution take place around “lootable resources” that can be a lucrative source of finance for any ethnic group according to Päivil Lujala (Lujala, 2005:121). These lootable resources are relatively high value and low weight resources that easily find buyers on the international market. Diamonds, gold, platinum, and opium are good examples while low value commodities like coal and oil which require extensive control of transportation networks do not fall into this category. However, coal and oil can become involved if there is strong state control over the industry and its revenue is
diverted specifically to one ethnic group. Unilateral gain can also occur when groups take over key ministries or dominate the government procurement process. The perceived unevenness can inspire major tensions among the disaffected groups.

The first two variables focus on the aggregate economic interests of a collective group, yet the distribution within a group can also be noted as having effects on whether a society is likely to engage in ethnic violence. The collective economic interest of a group is greatly influenced by the distribution of resources within the country. In societies with vast resource inequality where a couple of families control most of the resources within the society, violence will be more probable than more evenly distributed incomes. Highly uneven distributions of incomes adversely affect the incentive system for an ethnic population as a whole. If groups are codependent on each other for economic prosperity the generally populace will not be influenced by this since only a few within the group actually reap the benefits. The even distribution of resources in a group with a solid middle and upper-class, however, encourage stakeholders to maintain a peaceful status quo. Evenly distributed income increases the number of members who are benefiting from interethnic association and cooperation and shifts the balance of power within an ethnic group. The resulting dispersal of interests makes collective action against another ethnic group more difficult by creating more stakeholders that would be negatively affected by economic distributions. The incentive for societies with highly unequal income distribution does not affect most members and therefore creates more favorable conditions for conflict.

The variables identified so far all have consequences on the perception of the collective ethnic groups, yet none of them address prior held beliefs and the psychology of the group and how those factors affect the ability to relate and cooperate with others. The connection of
enduring social structures and the relation between popular mentality and the potential of a group to cooperate and build mutually beneficial relationships cannot be understated. Collective group psychology can either severely limit or strongly encourage cooperation and economic rationality within a ethnic group. Conservative cultures that are preoccupied with maintaining their culture and current way of life will not necessarily be induced by the promise of economic gain from cooperation and integration. This can be contrasted to groups who value capitalist ideals and are willing to tolerate practices that many seem unfamiliar or even threatening in some cases for economic rewards.

Ethnic groups that share similar value systems are less likely to threaten the other group and increase the chances for cooperation. When these value systems conflict however, cooperation is unlikely as one group is likely to resist. Value systems between groups can conflict or integrate along lines of economic theory, religion, and day-to-day traditions and practices. Differences in value systems and educational concepts and practices result in increased likelihood of conflict, since rigid opposing views on certain subjects force some degree of divergence between groups. Homogenous value systems can also lead to group integration through the creation of overlapping memberships or cultural identities. Seymour Martin Lipset in his work on cross cutting identities identifies that the psychological cross pressures resulting from membership in different groups with diverse interests and outlooks leads to moderated attitudes. Societies without these overlaps are divided by sharp differences and can become intractably fragmented.

Overlapping membership also plays a role in how individuals interpret events. Marc Ross in his research describes the effect. He describes how the frameworks of interest are those marked by relatively high in-group homogeneity because they are learned within the ethnic
community and socially reinforced through the relatively homogenous ethnic networks in which many people spend much of their lives (Ross, 1997:86). The interactions within this group act as a positive feedback loop for their interest, as members constantly receive reinforcement from other group members.

The effects these variables have on whether a particular group and the causal strength of each variable is dependent on the circumstances of a particular society. The effects of one can be amplified or muted by a variety of factors. National and retail institutional design and exogenous influences on the polity matter a great deal in how a particular scenario plays out. A strong external actor with interests in maintaining or destroying stability can do so by manipulating the incentives that come with any particular ethnic action to skew the results in their favor. National and retail institutional state designs which stabilize the nexus and nature of interaction between groups are also important in determining the outcome; however the variables I have outlined play the central role in generating conflict. Since institutional designs are set up to handle conflict and disagreement, a perfect set of conditions where conflict is minimal between groups can make them irrelevant.

**Accessing the Literature:**

When exploring cases of ethnic conflict it’s important to understand the literature surrounding ethnic conflict and its causes in order posit solutions. The political issues that involve governing multi-ethnic societies existed since governance evolved beyond the tribe. Prior to the conception of multi-ethnic society humans generally either killed or enslaved populations that were too weak to defend the territory themselves. The choice to eliminate rather than tolerate a minority or government exists in almost every case, yet it does not always happen.
Many different schools and focuses exist when discussing ethnic conflict and why it happens in societies today and throughout history. They vary from looking at the relations of ethnic groups as a whole throughout history, the nature of the state structure and its effects on political events, and resource distribution within specific cases.

The literature around ethnic violence strongly argues that state demographics and the national institutions that arise play a larger role in shaping whether it is possible to arrive at political solutions before ethnic violence occurs. The rules that ethnic groups within a particular area abide by, and their ability to mobilize resources and opinion against other groups is important. The make-up of these retail institutions in a functioning state are important in determining how groups interact with each other.

While each case has a wide range of variables that could be considered important, Gurr and Harff try to boil the cases down the most basic goals sought when ethnic violence erupts “the desire for ‘exit’ or independence from the state, the demand for greater autonomy within the state, or the recognition and protection of minority interests within a plural society” (Gurr and Harff, 1994: 111). These desires can be rooted in structural, political, socioeconomic, and cultural factors according Gurr and Harff.

In states where resources are not plentiful or distributed fairly enough to keep everyone happy, yet self-governing autonomy is not present, groups will often find grievance with the state as the benefits bestowed are not proportional to the disruption caused by national governments. While examples throughout history do not always involve ethnic groups in violence committed against the state, it overwhelmingly is the dividing line among ethnicities in heterogeneous countries.
This divide is certainly due to historic tensions present between groups within a society. It is impossible not to examine the historical relationship of groups that in many cases have been fighting for centuries for land, political influence or domination within an area. In many societies identity is defined in relation to, or rather historical opposition of, opposing ethnic groups. This makes political oppression an enticing reward when any particular group gains power over a region. Even in cases where outright suppression in not the goal, groups can still harbor deep suspicions that are not easily overcome. Without external guarantees by regional hegemony or common interests in repelling a group that both groups distrust even more than internal ethnic rivals tensions can rise.

In Gurr and Harff’s analysis the situation described above is likely to arise when economic integration has not occurred and is not seen as probable. The decision matrix that drives groups will show little leverage over the dominate group to keep them in check. Economic factors have been identified as one of the major causes of conflict between ethnicities. Competition for scarce resources is a common factor in almost all ethnic conflicts, but can become amplified in regions or areas with extreme resource deprivation. In countries like Nigeria and South Africa, different ethnic communities violently compete for property, rights, jobs, education, language, social amenities and good health care facilities. In his study, Okwudiba Nnoli (1980) produced empirical examples linking socio-economic factors to ethnic conflict in Nigeria. According to J.S. Furnival, cited in Nnoli (1980:72-3), "the working of economic forces makes for tension between groups with competing interests." Both countries suffered low levels of economic integration due to their colonial pasts; different ethnicities competed within the same market with a high variance in skills and education level. The groups with higher human capital would then outperform rival ethnic groups, who would in turn become threatened.
Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation theory offers an explanation based on an ethnic groups' access to power and economic resources. This is closely related to Horowitz (1985) who wrote that a group’s worth is based on the results of economic and political competitions. While I believe Gurr is correct to isolate perceived deprivation as important motivation, his theory does not sufficiently explain many cases where groups do live together peaceful despite a high degree of economic disparity between them. Gurr’s theory is not helpful in explaining violence perpetrated by the dominate group. However the theory itself is an important underlying foundation in asserting the magnitude and relevance of the variables I am looking at since it articulates the underlying incentive structure for groups.

The cases I examine in this discussion are all states that have seen upheavals in their national power structures and have moved towards democratic federalism. The cases are the divided societies of South Africa, Nigeria, Lebanon and Iraq. This paper will analyze the antecedent and intervening conditions that are present in each case that affect the establishment of effective democracy. I will also try to shed light on structures that can cause divided democracies to mute tensions and potentially strengthen unions. The framing of national and retail institutions is central to outcomes since they govern exactly how ethnic groups interact in particular conflicts. Perhaps even more important since institutions are a very good indicator of how ethnic groups are linked to each other in any particular society.

In modern divided societies the role of the elite leadership in influencing the public discourse has always been a salient feature of political regimes. The segment of the population that comprises the elite can vary from society to society, but are usually comprised of government and party officials, business and farm interests, or tribal and religious elites in varying combinations. The interests and aims of these goals vary but the means of influence they
have on society generally do not. In the democratic context elites play an important role in creating and defining identity. They also shape the issues facing the populace and/or interest groups.

The logic follows that the context and interaction of these rival elite interests will play a big part in determining the final shape and success of democracy since identity does not exist in isolation. It is always related to other processes (including the state and specific state policies) that give it meaning and/or salience. And while ethnicity may well be harnessed to promote more effective state-building and foster accountability, history is littered with examples of the use of ethnicity in negative ways (Kaplan, Steve:4).

The incentive and calculus for elites are affected by whether the groups are openly competing for power in an all-or-nothing structure or whether the democracy incorporates consociationalism or confessionalism along ethnic or religious lines. Consociationalism or confessionalism both describe a power sharing agreement between the resident ethnic or religious factions that constitutes a constant power sharing agreement. These regimes have in principle the following features if not exactly to the letter

- **Grand coalitions:** Elites of each group come together to rule in the interests of society because they recognize the dangers of non-cooperation.

- **Mutual veto:** Consensus among the groups is required to confirm the majority rule. Mutuality means that the minority is unlikely to successfully block the majority. If one group blocks another on some matter, the latter are likely to block the former in return.

- **Proportional representation based on population:** If one pillar accounts for 30% of the overall society, then they occupy 30% of the positions on the police force, in civil service, and in other national and civic segments of society.

- **Segmental autonomy:** Creates a sense of individuality and allows for different culturally-based community laws.
An alternative to this kind of agreement with outright group competition with no offices guaranteed or reserved. It encourages elites and ethnic groups to take divisive intractable stances as a loss in political power could equate to the loss of group identity and culture in the worst cases. The resulting discourse devolves into an us versus them mentality that often leads to the minority ethnic or religious groups challenging state power. The resulting situation shifts the emphasis of the democratic process away from deliberation to a proxy for ethnic domination or repression of the opponent’s identity or agenda.

Lijphart is correct that in many cases this kind of government can be beneficial when groups are ready to bargain, but this design has also failed in many cases where the country was not ready for its implementation. The reasons for consociationalism’s failure in the cases where it did, like Nigeria in the 1960’s, is due to not addressing the variables that I am putting forward. The disparities and motivation for ethnic groups to be peaceful in Nigeria were not fully addressed as resources competition and heterogeneous state goals and values among elites lead to civil war (Jinadu, 1985:74). Lijphart is right in the general theory, however fails to develop his theory fully enough to useful by itself.

The national institutions can differ greatly in form and function depending on which course is chosen by the governing elites. I will now examine each case study and elite interaction within this context. Whether local masses are swayed by ethnic or religious elites when in the minority should not be taken for granted by the virtue of their presence. Their individual interactions with the state are the most salient and important variable in determining if an individual in a divided polity feels included or alienated within its structure.

Rigid structures with power concentrated in the hands of one minority not only make nonviolent and mutually pragmatic solutions more difficult to achieve, but they point to a society
that is not strongly bonded together. Besides causing cooperation in politics to be hamstrung, governments designed in this way can create centrifugal forces by the nature of the union alone (Beach 1977:23). In systems, forged by one group who remains firmly in charge, political actors find it more difficult to make decisions that may benefit the entire country, and not their own ethnic constituency. These leaders bear the full political brunt from everyone since they are fully in control of the political levers of a society. This is opposed to consociational designs that allow leaders to compromise, yet blame the other side for not getting exactly what they want.

Douglas C. North in his work “Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History” agrees that institutions are important. However, he goes farther and identifies that there are underlying conditions which these institutions rest on that Lijphart fails to recognize. He develops a framework to understand the operation of the political, economic, and other social systems that affect violence, institutions, and organizations in a society.

The book identifies three social orders in human history that he claims have had different dynamics on human interaction throughout history. He differentiates between limited order access and open order access which have characterized civil interaction since the creation of civilization. The limited access order is characterized by the political system manipulating the economic system. Economic relationships are largely personal with average people having limited access to organizations and privileges in limited access orders. This creates rents on civic interaction that can be exploited by the elites. Control over violence is dispersed between elites and is not consolidated. These rents, created by the costs of accessing elite networks ultimately constrain civil society.
This is contrasted to open access societies in that all citizens have the ability to form contractual organizations and conduct business on an impersonal level. Violence is centralized and is underpinned by institutions which North claims are above politics and can ultimately stop disputes that become unwieldy. He views the transition between limited access and open access as fundamental to reducing violence in divided societies.

The North hypothesis gives relatively little weight to group incentives when examining ethnic conflict. The approach, while helpful in giving us an understanding of the differences in the ways societies do business and interact, gives us little guidance on how to get there. Similar to Lijphart, they have indentified the mechanisms through which groups interact matter but fail to indentify the variables that can cause a shift in how societies have interacted historically.

**Methods:**

This paper has identified the following as relevant independent variables economic dependency, the nature of national resource endowment, extent and nature of collective interests shared value systems, demographic pressure to explain the dependant variable, a stable state South Africa:

The cases examined by this paper are diverse in their histories and outcomes. There are good reasons why I have chosen Nigeria, South Africa, Lebanon, as case studies when examining Iraq. These countries possess a variety of ethnicities and races, an each are important players within there respective regions in both politics and trade.

In the case of South Africa, the country's over 40 million people have long been polarized along racial lines. The country is made up of whites, indigenous Africans, coloreds, and Indians. The blacks form the majority of the population with about 30 million people, the whites 5 million, and the coloreds and Indians number 3 million. The country has
about 11 linguistic groups, but English is the official language. The manner in which colonization unfolded in South Africa immediately and consistently made ethnic conflict and issue. In South Africa whites were already years ahead in modernization and racism made it impossible for the native Africans to enjoy the benefits. The white settlers who saw them as only a "thorn in their flesh" constantly discriminated against black ethnic groups.

Economically the black population suffered from a large deprivation compared to the white community that was enforced by the central government. Blacks were not allowed to run businesses or professional practices in those areas designated as white South Africa without a permit. Blacks could never acquire land in white areas. In the homelands, much of the land belonged to a tribe, where the local chieftain would decide how the land had to be utilized. This resulted in white people owning almost all the important industrial and agricultural lands and much of the prized residential land. In addition, each black homeland controlled its own separate education, health and police system (Mzala, 1987; Gerhard Mare`. 1993).

The inability of white settlers to pay black labor living wages created a self sustaining economic isolation among ethnic groups and white settlers. The apartheid system that was eventually adopted in the country served as a divide-and-rule strategy that limited black mobility and participation in socio-economic activities in the country, placing them at a structural disadvantage. The social structure of South Africa was also highly unbalanced. The money that trickled down to minorities was used to acquire patronage for the elite. For example the Zulu ruler, Chief Mongosuthu Buthelezi, misused resources for patronage networks in his KwaZulu homeland (Mzala, 1987; Gerhard Mare`. 1993). Distribution of the resources in this homeland was skewed to favor those loyal to the chief, while marginalizing members of other ethnic groups who lived in the area. According to Mare` (1993:41) this strategy, "aims to hide the class
interests of the cultural entrepreneurs, to paper over horizontal stratification such as those of class and gender, through a kind of ethnic popularism; and to advance the class interests of the mobilizers. The economic imbalances created a large portion of citizens within both black ethnic groups that had little to lose from the disenfranchisement of the other. While South Africa’s economy was large in aggregate terms, blacks saw little of the returns so the collapse of the system would have little effect on their day to day lives.

Our conceptual model, to explain how the potential for strife should be understood, includes not only economic linkages but demographic factors as well. The period leading up to the eventual change in South Africa was preceded by a population increase of about 33 percent, most among native black Africans. The huge demographic increase was concentrated mostly in rural areas away from main development zones located in the country. The result was a native population increasingly disconnected from other ethnic groups in terms of economic reliance. The incentive for agitation created by unilateral gain and control of resources by one group along with rising demographic pressures made ethnic conflict very likely.

Local leaders exacerbated this by influencing the activities of ethnic associations and clubs in the townships, Inkatha and Chief Buthelezi created conflict as blacks started to view their competition for scarce resources like jobs, social amenities and education, from the ethnic prism (Mzala, 1987; Gerhard Mare`. 1993). The immediate causes of the conflict could be linked to the high rate of poverty, unemployment, and the ethnic prism that political decisions were viewed through. Instead of fostering cooperation the underlying structure of society fostered division.

The government of South Africa realized in the late 80’s that the country was on an unsustainable course. The pressure exerted by the international community and unrest among the
black population was increasing each year. The decision was finally made to start negotiations on ending the apartheid system.

The effects of the variables indentified by me relating to ethnic conflict play a large role in South Africa’s case. While relatively little change took place in the relationship between whites and blacks over the 40+ years of apartheid the systemic economic disparity between the groups simmered. Negotiations for a new political system focused mostly on equal access to economic opportunity and to give blacks a say in government. The pressure exerted on the state by the outside world made white Africans more amenable to compromise as they increasingly saw the apartheid system as enormously costly and inefficient. Anton D. Lowenberg describes the problems which South Africa was facing. “Labor market regulation and industrial decentralization policy inhibited efficient resource utilization, especially as the manufacturing sector became dominant. Apartheid educational policies generated skill shortages. A mercantilistic development strategy distorted trade patterns, exacerbated dependence on foreign capital inflows, and created chronic balance of payments difficulties. The administrative and defense costs of implementing apartheid were onerous and rising.” In this case the economic benefits that could be realized from integration changed how groups came to view each other and ultimately created the possibility for political retrenchment that has proved effective in South Africa.

Nigeria:

With about 120 million people, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and has 250 linguistic groups. English is also Nigeria's official language. Although most of the ethnic groups are small, three ethnic groups constitute somewhere between 60 and 70 percent of the population. The Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups count for 30 percent of the population, the Yorubas
about 20 per cent and the Igbos about 18 percent. These three major ethnic groups are
differentiated not only by region, but also by religion and culture.

The lack of economic linkages even through the most basic of infrastructure with the
north severely impeded the economic interrogation of the country. Groups mostly saw income
from basic commodities and had no linkages or concerns about the progress of another group.
The problems associated with that are evident in the national bargaining between groups, rather
than agree on infrastructure improvements to develop the economy politicians mainly focus on
continuing and building patronage in their own area. The geography around Nigeria played a role
in affecting the incentives and motivations for internal ethnic groups.

The history of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria also traces back to
the colonial decisions that forced the ethnic groups of the northern and southern provinces to
become an entity called Nigeria in 1914 (Okonjo 1974). Instead of being designed to promote
unity the separate governments introduced in the North and the South were designed to
strengthen the colonial grip on Nigerian society and weaken the people's potential for resistance.
This era of provincial development, though relatively peaceful set the stage for a society that
experienced growing ethnocentrism instead of a national identity. The two political entities in the
North and South had great structural and economic differences. The northern region, which
relatively resources poor compared to the south, was characterized by a strong tribal and social
structure that was influenced by the predominate religion, Islam. The south which was heavily
Christian enjoyed greater natural resource deposits, through which the federal system of
government controlled distribution. The nature of the design rewarded politician for bringing
home resources for their group instead of finding solutions to intense intergroup competition for
resources.
The country of Nigeria was eventually separated into three regions where the biggest groups each got their own geographical zone. Ethnic minorities within each zone felt increasing pressure from the political domination of each group and began to rebel. The solution during most bouts of ethnic violence was to further partition the state, which eventually overturned the regional balance between the ethnic minorities within the country as a whole. The Igbos of eastern Nigeria (Biafrans) threatened to secede from the federation. The Igbos' grievances were caused by the denial of their basic human needs (Burton, 1992) of equality, citizenship, autonomy and freedom. However, in reality the creation of a new Midwestern state threatened the balance of their power with the west and north and caused them to succeed.

The incentives for local elites to maintain this system cannot be understated in their affect on the Nigeria society as a whole. The incentive to mobilize is great, yet the rewards for ethnic conflict resolution are small while the populations are largely self sustained within their own ethnic group. The lack of a middle class or educated population means very little emphasis is put on further linkages that could result in economic growth. The fact that surrounding nations also have sizable populations that empathize with one of the Nigeria ethnic groups further complicates matters. Increasing trade to one nation with historic ties to an opposing group could represent a threat, yet the stifling of relations between the countries only enrages the ethnic group whose opportunity is being denied. The underlying social fabric in Nigeria poses many elements that could causes divisive ethnic relationships throughout the country. While institutional design could help, the incentive among the populace to change the status quo is weak and makes to possibility for ethnic integration low.

Lebanon:
In 2007, approximately 28 percent of the population was Sunni Muslim, 28 percent Shi’a Muslim, 22 percent Maronite Christian, 8 percent Greek Orthodox, 5 percent Druze, 4 percent Greek Catholic. There are 18 state-recognized religious sects with a total population over just over 4.2 million. Lebanon unlike the other cases was not a British protectorate and instead was heavily influenced by the French during the colonial period. The ethnic groups within were Lebanon like the 2 other cases thus far where fairly isolated geographically from each other. The areas in the central part of the country, around the capital of Beirut saw an enormous amount of modernization in a relatively short time. With focuses on tourism and banking the region which was dominated by Christians saw great increases in amassed wealth during the petrodollar boom.

The areas to the north and south, which were inhabited by Muslims, were left behind to a large extent. The government influenced by the notion of free enterprise failed to reduce economic and social inequities in various communities. President Fuad Shihab made some effort to remedy these inequities by pursuing development projects in the traditionally neglected south and north. The traditional economic linkages between areas were being broken, demographic factors also influenced the politics of the region. Large amounts of Palestine refugees and indigenous population increases made the scarce resources of the rural country side even scarcer.

Many observers claim that the confessionalist political structure which had been bestowed on Lebanon when the French left in 1946 was out of balance. The change demographics and increase in Palestinian refugees helped to organize and radicalize the population against the Christians at the time. The extreme centralization and lack of dispersion of resources helped fuel Muslim enmity against the state. While Lebanon did have a much higher proportion of residences in the middle class, they were mostly Christians and received most of their income from foreign sources instead of within its own locality. The politics of Lebanon also
played out in a region going through wrenching ethnic conflict between states. Arabs versus Israelis certainly intensified the ethnic lenses which participants view the situation from. Cooperation and ethnic integration being a goal, the country was made into a battlefield for competing foreign interests in the region.

While the country’s economy was growing rapidly up until the war, the gains were not equal. With the influx of refugees from Palestine there were increasingly not enough resources to go around. Muslim factions sensing that Lebanon’s demographics had changed in their favor and demanded a new census to try to weaken the Christian politically. When the Christians balked at the proposal all sides started to form militias for self protection. The national government institution unwilling to recognize the changes became weak as it was clear they would cater to their Christian constituents.

The demographic shift served to be a sufficient to destabilize the country and weaken the state politically. The relative geographic dispersion of different sects made it difficult to form strong economic and cultural linkages between the belligerents. As resources and opportunities became scarce the Muslim population became unsettled and both sides turned to ethnic conflict. The violence continued until retail government institutions were altered and decentralized towards Muslim control.

Iraq:

The other examples highlighted in this paper have a consistent theme that changing demographic pressures along with ethnic linkages are a good indicator of whether a region will experience ethnic violence. The case of Iraq however does not follow this pattern exactly for some unique reasons. During the initial invasion demographic pressure was actually lessened by a depletion of the human population through migration, ethnic groups that where involved early
on, Sunni’s and Shi’as, were also heavily integrated in major population centers. While separate geographic areas existed they were all dependant on government patronage to sustain their local political systems and were also all dependant on the same resource, oil, for income.

So while the societal matrix of Iraq would make violence seem unlikely between Sunni’s and Shi’as early on it’s important to keep in mind that the previous government had a large role in shaping those relations. Most Iraqi’s dealt heavily with the state for things in their daily life, so destroying that structure would have proven problematic in terms of Arab Iraqi’s in terms of disruptions to the economy. Importers sold good to the state, who in turn would deliver it to Arab Iraqi’s and since Iraq had weak relations with most neighboring states at that point most of the economy was nationally focused.

The destruction of the state changed the rules and provided the logic for ethnic mobilization. The relationship of groups in economic dependence and relation to resources saw changes between the time of Saddam and the new Iraqi government, and was caused by changing group social identities. Crime was increasingly an issue, so militias sprang up to ensure and ultimately decentralize local and religious interests. These new political organizations that were no longer statewide like the Baath party and put tools in the hands of leaders who were no longer economically tied to the other ethnic groups. The divide was especially acute in Iraq given the local control of most retail institutions. The federal government provided fair representation at the top, but could do little to change decisions of local retail institutions whom average Iraq’s dealt with most.

As the country became more and more violent these local real estate registrars, police, and courts seized up and ceased to function for members who did not belong to the sect of the local official. The economic relationship became derisive and caused many to relocate to areas
friendly to their sect. The isolation further solidified identities in terms of sect. This trend continued until local militias were driven out and replaced by American or Federal Iraqi troops.

The problem of sectarian controlled institutions negatively shifted all variables away ones considered positive for civil peace. The civic identity of Iraq was fractured between Sunni and Shia, the economic relationship suffered and the group economies became isolated, while competition and suspicion grew concerning the nations vital national resources which shifted from Sunni to Shia control. All the variables had to be addressed by the government.

The offensive against local militia’s was a big step in allowing free association between different sects to happen in localities. The resulting security fostered reintegration of the economy, while competition over resources was smoothed by temporary agreements on oil revenue distribution.

The case of Iraq is a perfect example of how Consociationalism by itself is not enough. The national government in Iraq is the same today as it was in 2006 at the height of civil conflict. The underlying incentive for conflict is not fixed by simply having a proportional number of people who think like you sitting in the capital. Rather it is the relationship of groups on these issues that gives right to taking up violence against your neighbor. The economic reality and cultural values are constantly evolving and thus the group relations are continuously negotiated. States with integrated retail and national institutions that provide fair opportunities are able to handle changes without dissolving, where static structures that don’t incorporate changes are pushed until they fail.

In the case of Nigeria the historical development and strong negative incentives among groups to cooperate makes it unlikely that ethnic conflict stop. All of the cases could be characterized as limited access societies during their periods of ethnic violence. Iraq, South
Africa, and Lebanon have agreeably made strides in laying down individual institutions that are helping them transition to more vibrant civil societies. Nigeria however, has languished to align political institutions in a way that can create sustainable peace.
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