

**FROM CONFLICT TO VIOLENCE:  
WHY ETHNIC CONFLICTS BECOME VIOLENT**

**By**

**Yusuf N. Aydin**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

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## ABSTRACT

Ethnic conflict is common in all societies, which possess distinct ethnic groups. In these societies, conflict generally results from competition amongst ethnic groups for scarce resources in political, economic, and social areas. However, not all ethnic conflicts result in violence. In many cases, such as Canada, these conflicts are managed peacefully, even if they are not necessarily resolved.

This thesis critically examines the reasons, or factors identified in the literature related to ethnic conflict turning violent. In so doing, it looks critically at the meaning of conflict, the nature of ethnic conflict and the factors that transform ethnic conflict into a violent form. Specifically, the background or legacy of European colonialism sets the stage for ethnic struggle to turn violent. Although the literature clearly identifies colonialism as a pre-condition for ethnic conflict and violence, the exact linkage to the transition from conflict to violence is poorly articulated. Individuals speaking about ethnic conflicts tend to make three assumptions: first, ethnic identities are ancient; second, these identities motivate people to persecute; third, ethnic diversity leads to violence. These assumptions misrepresent the genesis of ethnic conflicts, because ethnic conflict is a product of modern politics.

As a function of colonialism, ethnic segregation or a segmented cultural division creates ethnic boundaries amongst ethnic groups. This situation leads to ethnic polarization that causes the transition from conflict to violence. Ethnic conflict peaks when different ethnic groups compete with each other within the same area. The results or outcomes of ethnic conflict are more important than people thought. Precisely, ethnic conflict is a major threat to the international and regional peace and security. Failure to prevent violence results in destructive outcomes such as civil wars and international peace operations (IPOs) are generally too late a response by the international community. Hundreds of thousands deaths and deaths are in many cases the result. There is no wonder prevention is much cheaper than peace operations to stop violence.

Chapter One provides an explanation and examination of the term conflict. Without knowing the meaning of conflict, the motives of ethnic conflict cannot be understood. This chapter examines various approaches developed by scholars to understand the meaning of conflict and its causes. In this regard, conflict is an unavoidable unpleasant fact of life. People at every level of inter-group relations experience conflicts. For instance, in the work place, a simple disagreement between team members, if unresolved, may escalate into avoidance, inability to work together, verbal assaults, and resentment. In the worst conditions, it may also lead to hostility and eventual separation from the organization.

Chapter Two examines core definitions of ethnic conflict. These various definitions demonstrate that ethnic conflicts often result in a higher level of violence than non-ethnic conflicts. This chapter not only concerns the precise linkage between the levels of violence and the forms of ethnic conflict, but also focuses on multivariate indices of violence to show the level of violence of ethnic conflict.

Chapter Three identifies the various reasons that ethnic conflicts transform into violence. Among these, one of the most significant factors is European Colonialism. It has had a profound and lasting impact on ethnic conflicts. The colonist legacy in Africa and the Middle East is the main factor that puts ethnic groups into violence. The Colonist Empires drew the borders in Africa and in the Middle East with minimum attention to the ethno-nationalistic structure of the societies. Before the colonial era, ethnic thinking in social life had not caused violent struggles. Competition over sources of water, farmland, or grazing rights was the main source of conflict. Paralleling the formation of colonial empires not only did “ethnic identity” determine one’s place within the colony, but also became the source of future ethnic violence. In the post-colonialism era, the policies of successor states continued the politics of “ethnic identity” in political, economic and social fields. Blocked opportunities for equal access to political, economic and social resources made violent ethnic conflicts inevitable.

Ethnic conflict is one of the major threats to international peace and security. However, not all ethnic conflicts result in violence. They can be managed peacefully. In this point, preventive diplomacy appears to be the most useful approach to prevent existing disputes from escalating into violence, if applied appropriately. Although preventive diplomacy is not directly addressed in this study, it is clear nonetheless that it deserves closer analytical attention and scrutiny from a practical policy perspective.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **The Nature of Domestic and International Conflicts**

In the post-Cold War era, the overwhelming majority of violent international conflicts have been the result of domestic or intra-state conflict. Violent domestic strife has also increased the likelihood of the initiation of international conflicts, largely entailing international intervention. As such, it is difficult to separate international and domestic conflicts. In order to understand the driving forces behind the outbreak of violence at the international and domestic level, the factors that contribute to the likelihood of conflict need to be examined.

Despite the fact that conflict is an unavoidable fact of human life, the problem is not only the existence of conflicts, but also the fact that some conflicts escalate into violence. In order to understand this phenomenon, it is necessary first to understand conflict and its major causes. Present-day areas of conflict include religion, politics, economy, ethics, race and gender. In these areas, a clash of interests and competition over incompatible goals contribute to the escalation of conflict to violence. Central to conflict is the existence of incompatibility and hostility towards each other. Incompatible goals lead to competition between the parties and contribute to the possibility of coercive actions.

Conceptual examinations of the causes of conflict have been characterized by diversity. Analyzing the causes contributes to identifying behavior that transforms a conflict into violence. Understanding the causes of conflicts is pre-requisite to understanding the steps that must be taken to prevent conflicts from becoming violent. This chapter describes the reasons that generate conflicts

such as competitive goals and provides insight into what structural condition make violent conflicts more likely. In so doing, the first part examines the literature on conflict. The next describes the key elements of conflict that have great importance in conflict analysis. The final presents two prominent theoretical approaches in international relations to describe the dynamics of international and domestic conflicts.

## **What is Conflict?**

There is still no widely accepted definition of conflict in the literature. The scientific definition of conflict is very complicated. Social scientists even differ in how to describe conflict. The meaning of conflict may also change from person to person. Nonetheless, conflict is an unsettling and inevitable fact of social life. The definition of conflict generally refers to relations amongst people whether individually or within groups. Conflict is an interactive process and humans interact with each other in every stage of social life to get their needs met.

Conflict is considered an ongoing struggle between two or more people or groups of people. It requires at least two sides whose goals and interests are mutually incompatible. Each party seeks to obtain dominance over the other in pursuit of mutually incompatible goals. Incompatible goals lie at the centre of the conflict literature and play a key role in the eruption of conflicts. Lederach (1995:9) sees conflict as an interactive process because conflict involves people's perceptions, interpretations, expressions, and intentions. These elements are the components of accumulated knowledge, which shapes people's mutually incompatible goals and interests over time. The implication is that conflict is rooted in people's perceptions, interpretation, and expressions and comes into existence through interaction.

For Bernard Mayer, conflict consists of three dimensions. First, he sees conflict as perception. He asserts that, “conflict is a belief or understanding that one’s own needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with someone else” (2000: 4). Perceptions affected by past experiences involve objective and subjective judgments and incompatible goals are the result of these judgments. As a practical matter, people usually engage in conflict in a condition of disagreement and their perceptions determine their actions towards each other. When people engage in conflict, they perceive their own interests and wants as incompatible with others.

Second, Mayer sees conflict as feeling because of the emotional reactions, including fear, sadness, and anger that are produced by an undesired situation. These emotions have great impact on human behavior. They alone can bring people into conflict in a situation of disagreement and fuel it. Disagreements can lead to people feeling angry, sad or hurt. People generally feel less in control when they experience these feelings towards each other and they move into conflict. As a result, emotions are often under the surface, but they are always in play.

Lastly, Mayer (2000:5) sees conflict as action. He believes that “conflict also consists of the actions that we take to express our feelings, articulate our perceptions, and get our needs met in a way that has the potential for interfering with someone else’s ability to get his or her needs met”. Actions are the concrete form of perceptions that produces a situation of great disagreement. Mack and Snyder (1998, p.218) also note that “conflict can not exist without action” and add that “the action-reaction-action sequence must embody the pursuit of exclusive or incompatible goals”. A conflict action may be either coercive or non-coercive. Coercive actions generally involve threats or acts of violence. Non-coercive actions involve cooperative acts such as mediation. People apply coercive or non-coercive actions in pursuit of mutually incompatible goals.

Doughtery and Pfaltzgraff (2001:189) note that “the term conflict usually refers to a condition in which one identifiable group of human beings (whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socioeconomic, political, or other) is engaged in conscious opposition to one or more identifiable human groups because these groups are pursuing what are or appear to be incompatible goals”. They emphasize that incompatible goals and conscious opposition are the two essential means for the eruption of conflict because incompatible goals lead to competition among humans. Although conflict is more than mere competition as discussed below, it is associated with competitive goals. People pursue their goals by competing with each other. Doughtery and Pfaltzgraff (2001:89) state that “competition shades off into conflict when the parties try to enhance their own position by reducing that of others, try to thwart others gaining their own ends, and try to put their competitors out of business or even to destroy them”.

Lewis A. Coser (1956:3) defines conflict as a “struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals.” In this respect, conflict is the act of competing against another opponent for the purpose of achieving goals and maximizing advantages. People may also compete with each other to improve their status and neutralize their opponents. They seek to improve their position by decreasing that of others. In effect, Coser draws attention to scarcity in the definition of conflict because he sees conflict as an extension of a competition over scarce resources.

Mack and Snyder (1957:217) assert that “competition is not regarded as conflict or a form of conflict, though it may be an important source of the latter. Competition involves striving for a scarce object (a prize or a resource usually “awarded” by third party.) according to established rules ... the chief objective is the scarce object, not the injury or destruction of an opponent per se. A football game played normally according to the rules is competition until one or more players begin

to assault one another in a manner forbidden by the rules; then it becomes a conflict". Mack and Snyder see competition as one of the causes of conflict instead of regarding it as conflict. The implication is that competition can lead to conflict, but cannot be a form of conflict. People can compete for anything with each other but conflict is more than mere competition. Competition is considered one of the causes of conflict. It might bring people into conflict in a situation of disagreement or it may cause a disagreement between people.

There is a very slender line between hostility and conflict that separates them as distinctive terms. Nonetheless, they are common in two points: goal incompatibility and competition. Generally, the conflict literature draws attention to incompatible goals that may lead to hostility. Many scholars concentrate on incompatible goals in the analysis of conflict, and this concentration leads to consideration of the fundamental elements of conflict.

### **The Elements of Conflict**

The elements of conflict are essential to the initiation of conflict. Interests and incompatible goals are two significant concepts. Interests determine incompatible goals, which motivate people's actions. When the interests of somebody else challenge someone's interest, conflict emerges between them because they inherently pursue incompatible goals. In other words, the divergence of interests or a clash of interests causes conflict among people. A clash of interests naturally reflects incompatible goals between people.

Incompatible goals or a clash of interests reinforce hostility among people and bring them into conflict. Bartos and Wehr (2001) assert that conflict is not only the consequence of incompatible goals but also the consequence of hostility. When people feel hostility toward each other, conflict is likely to occur. Incompatible goals may cause people to feel hostility toward each other in perceiving

that the others are an obstacle to reaching one's goals. Undoubtedly, hostility plays a key role in the escalation of conflict.

Bernard Mayer (2000) underlines some factors that reinforce hostility between people and leads to incompatible goals as well; these are communication, emotions, values, and history. Humans are imperfect communicators and this may prevent them from establishing effective communications with each other to reach a solution or mutually agreeable compromise. Humans need to communicate with each other in every stage of life to get their needs met. Communication is the way of sharing information, feelings, perceptions, and goals. People express their emotions, interests, and goals through communication. Sometimes imperfect communication leads to conflict amongst people even in a situation where no objective incompatibility of goals exists. In other words, communication problems may generate conflict between people, when there is no need for one.

In addition, perceptions of incompatibility may lead to communication problems between people. For instance, although there is no objective incompatibility between two people, imperfect communication can bring them immediately into conflict in the case of simple disagreement and a perception of incompatibility may escalate tension. In such circumstances, conflict is likely to escalate. When individuals are in conflict, communication gains importance in the establishment of mechanisms to settle the conflict. Perfect or better communication can enhance the possibility of a solution to the problem. For instance, Kennedy's approach to the Cuban missile crises of 1962 prevented a possible nuclear war between the USA and the Soviet Union. During the crises, Kennedy kept lines of communication open with the Soviet Union in order to settle the conflict. Diplomacy worked and the conflict did not escalate to a war.

Bernard Mayer (2000:10) depicts emotions as the energy that escalates conflict. Emotions can escalate conflict because people's acts are driven by emotions such as anger, fear and hopelessness. When people are angry, they are largely unable to take actions to de-escalate a conflict. Emotions control behavior. For instance, if people live in constant fear of each other, that emotion can bring them into conflict. In this situation, no one can be confident about his or her security. Their mutual fear drives them away from collaboration as a means to find a solution to the problem that has generated conflict. There is likely no escape from a potential conflict when people live in constant anger or fear of each other.

Emotions also may determine people's actions and thereby cause conflict between them. Mayer (2000) asserts that "if people could always stay perfectly rational and focused on how to best meet their needs and accommodate those of others, and if they could calmly work to establish effective communication, then many conflicts would either never arises or would quickly deescalate." Mayer sees acts driven by emotions such as anger as a significant factor that generates hostility among people. Moreover, not only do emotions cause hostility, but they also hinder people from reaching a compromise. In a conflict, hostility is one of the important emotions that motivate people to intensify conflict behavior. For instance, when people feel hostility toward each other, they are prone to inflict injury on each other. A personal animosity between Saddam Hussein and Ayatollah Khomeini that resulted from religious schism, border disputes, and political differences brought Iraq and Iran into war in 1980. Iraq launched the war in an effort to consolidate its power in the Arab world and to replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state. The war strained Iraqi and Iranian political and social life, and led to severe economic dislocations (Inat, 2003).

Mayer (2000) also sees values as an important source of conflict. He defines values as "the beliefs we have about what is important, what distinguishes right from wrong and good from evil,

and what principles should govern how we lead our lives.” Values are traits that considered worthwhile and represent people’s highest priorities. Thus, they are likely to create a more difficult type of conflict. People always stay alert to various events that constitute a threat to their values. When people feel their values under attack, they are inclined to be aggressive. Values also constitute a great obstacle to settling a conflict because people are reluctant to compromise values. Mayer (2000:6) underlines that “recognizing when values are in play in conflict is critical to moving the conflict in a constructive section. When individuals address values directly and express their beliefs affirmatively---that is, in terms of what they believe in rather than what they are against---they can address conflict more constructively.”

History is another significant factor that reinforces hostility and generates conflict between people. History refers to perceived past experiences of people. Past experiences shapes people’s perceptions toward each other and their experiences can move them towards conflict. As Mayer (2000:13) asserts, “conflict can not be understood independently of its historical context.” History has an important place in the analysis of conflict and certainly has a powerful influence on the perceptions and emotions of people. If two people have bad impressions of each other because of past disagreements, they are likely to feel hostility toward each other.

History is the accumulated experience of people that comprises perceptions, interpretations, expressions, and intentions. History thus provides an instrumental guideline to understand the causes behind the conflict. Conflict is always a possibility but cannot be understood without history. Past events are the basic guide of understanding the conflict behaviors (Mayer, 2000).

### **The Nature of International and Domestic Conflict**

In the post-Cold War era, the overwhelming majority of international conflicts that have become violent have been the result of domestic or intra-state conflict. Like inter-state conflicts,

intra-state conflicts occur when perceived incompatibility exists between the relevant actors. Individuals, societies and states engage in countless interactions, transactions, and exchanges in the international system. Sometimes they are in conflict and sometimes not. Two primary international relations (IR) perspectives have dominated the traditional literature on the causes of international conflict, the realist, and the liberal. Even as other theoretical approaches were developed, Realism and Liberalism have remained very important to the study of international relations due to they give a more detailed account of the nature of international and domestic conflict than other theoretical perspectives such as Marxism, Postmodernism and Constructivism.

Perhaps because of the complexity of conflict, IR scholars do not agree on a single set of theories to identify the causes of conflict at the domestic and international level. Nonetheless, Realism and Liberalism have sorted out the complexity of conflict by introducing a comprehensive systemic level approach that incorporates several distinct theories about the causes of international and domestic conflicts. The outbreak of international and/or domestic conflicts can be reduced to a single cause. For example, Marxists consider the capitalist economy or class inequality as the cause for international and domestic conflict. For Marxists, struggles between individuals, groups and states should be seen in the context of economic competition. However, this perspective is too narrow. Certainly, economic competition cannot be ignored in any explanation of conflict. But neither can political and social competition and in some cases these may be more significant than the economic arguments of the Marxist perspective. Realism and liberalism as the oldest IR paradigms contain multidimensional explanations of the nature of international and domestic conflict.

From the realist perspective, incompatible goals, and conflicts are one of the distinctive characteristics of world politics. The classical realist tradition in international relations presents a pessimistic view of human nature and holds that conflict is a function of human nature. Accordingly,

humans are selfish creatures and are preoccupied with their own well-being (Ari, 2003). In so doing, humans seek dominance over others by the means of power---including in relations with other countries. The uses of power and the goal of power are a central occupation of political activity. In so doing, realists portray domestic and international politics as power politics. This makes conflict an immutable reality of human life.

Sigmund Freud the early twentieth-century psychiatrist agrees with the assumption of realism about human nature (Ari, 2003) He claims that human aggression is the main cause of human conflict. The causes of incompatibilities are found in the nature and behavior of man. Each individual seeks one's own interest and is led by experience. In this connection, state leaders play key role in the eruption of international and domestic wars. The aggressive impulse of state leaders may lead to intra-state and civil wars. For instance, Saddam Hussein decided to invade Kuwait in pursuit of additional petroleum revenues after eight-year war with Iran. His aggressive behavior delivered a shock to the world and brought economic and social destruction to Iraq. Offensive strategies led by state leaders can lead to international crises. Adolph Hitler, for example, devised an expansionist strategy after coming into power in 1933 to recover lost territories. He engaged in territorial revisionism to make Germany more powerful than before. Hitler's offensive strategy resulted in the World War II.

Hobbes claims that humans are highly unequal in their power and that inequality is inevitable and natural. A distinctive feature of Hobbes' brand of realism is its naturalistic character. Humans are unequal in their capabilities to dominate others. This condition makes conflict a natural part of human life. Hobbes employs the concept the 'state of nature' to illustrate his argument. People in this state live in constant fear of each other. Every individual is endangered by everyone else. His or her lives are constantly at risk and nobody can be confident about his or her security. This natural

condition leads to a security dilemma, which refers to a condition of living in constant fear. People do not feel confident about their security when they live in constant fear of each other. The constant fear of each other leads individuals to perceive the others' existence as an imminent threat to their security (Ari, 2003).

Internationally, this idea is translated into relations amongst states forming a security dilemma under the condition of international anarchy. There is an escape from the personal security dilemma but there is no escape from the international security dilemma, because there is no possibility for now of forming a world government. Individual men and women give up their independence for the sake of domestic security. A sovereign state ensures domestic peace and provides security to its citizens relative to relations amongst them. Although international law can moderate the international state of nature by encouraging states to undertake contracts or treaties with each other, it cannot ensure permanent security. States will violate international law when conflict threatens their survival (Ari, 2003).

Thucydides (1972:400) emphasizes that states are unequal in their powers and must accept the natural reality of unequal power if they want to survive: "the strong do what they have the power to do, and the weak accept what they have to accept". Accordingly, international relations are about knowing your proper place by adapting to the natural reality of unequal power. Sovereign states should pay attention to their proper place in the international system and they should devise foreign policies in accordance with their power. The conduct of foreign policy is an intelligent calculation of one's power and an understanding of one's own needs and interests relative to other states.

Translating the pessimistic view of individuals into conflicts between states places survival at the center of the realist tradition. This value is considered essential in the conduct of foreign policy. All states pursue their own national interest and are preoccupied with their own well-being like

individual people. The national interest and national security are the most prominent values in judging foreign policy. National security and state survival drives realist doctrine and realist foreign and domestic policy. In so doing, international relations are understood by realists as a struggle for power in pursuit of national security and state survival (Ari, 2003).

Morgenthau (1946), one of the most prominent voices of the classical realist tradition, sees domestic and international politics as a struggle for power because 'political man' is an inherently selfish and aggressive creature. According to Morgenthau, 'political man' perceives power as the immediate goal in all politics because incompatible goals lead political man to seek domination over others. He characterizes human behavior as the 'will to power' because of unchanging human nature. As a result, all politics is a competition for power and political man needs power to defend and advance his interests.

For this reason, Morgenthau defines international politics as an arena of conflicting state interests. All states seek power to defend and advance their national interests, national survival, and national security. Like Machiavelli, Morgenthau acknowledges that the political ethic takes precedence over private ethics. A responsible state leader must not operate in accordance with private ethics or morality that reflects general expectations of any person within society, including preventing harm. The individual has a moral right to sacrifice himself in defense of such a moral principle, but the state must not operate in accordance with the principles of moral ethics. Cunning, cheating and spying, for example, are some of the many activities that would be considered unethical by the standards of private morality. However, these activities are to be considered normal or ethical in the conduct of foreign policy. A state leader has the heavy responsibility for the welfare of the country and its people. The first priority of a responsible state leader is to defend the interests of the state and to ensure the security of its citizens. A state leader must anticipate possible threats and

manage them. A responsible state leader must alone exploit the opportunities and seek the advantages for national security and survival purposes (Morgenthau, 1948).

The leading contemporary neorealist thinker, Kenneth Waltz, provides a systemic explanation in understanding the causes of international conflict or war. *In Man, the State and War*, Waltz (1959) identifies three major explanations for war: the individual, state, and the international system. With regard to the individual Waltz looks at classical realism and identifies the aggressive behavior of individuals as one of the causes of war. Accordingly, war is rooted in man's aggressive nature and his nature cannot be changed. Man is preoccupied with his own well-being. His selfishness and aggressive impulses increase the likelihood of wars as they decrease the chances of peace.

Waltz finishes his first image with a critical evaluation of the imperfect nature of man. Clearly, first image pessimists, such as Morgenthau, Hobbes, and Spinoza, agree that the root of all evil is man and he must prepare himself for war, whether he likes or not. Waltz (1959:30) emphasizes that "if human nature is the cause of war and if, as in the systems of the first image pessimists, human nature fixed then we can never hope for peace". However, he believes that human nature cannot be defined as the basic cause of war. Waltz clearly makes the point that individuals' behaviors are not inherently the same. They behave differently under different conditions. In short, Waltz underlines that human nature cannot be considered as the basic cause of war.

According to Waltz (1959), explanations for international wars are also found at the level of the state or the second image. Wars occur among states not because humans are inherently aggressive but also because despotic states are selfish and self-interested. For Waltz, World War II was the result of the rise of aggressive totalitarian regimes in Germany and Italy. The militarist and authoritarian character of the German state under the rule of Adolf Hitler prompted Germany to seek a World Empire.

Waltz (1959:81) also asserts that international wars can be explained by the unjust policies of states to promote internal unity. He claims “war most often promotes the internal unity of each state involved. The state plagued by internal strife may then, instead of waiting for the accidental attack, seek the war that will bring internal peace”. For instance, Romans, “who could find no better antidote to civil war, nor one more certain in its effects, than to oppose an enemy to the citizens”. Mikhail Skobelev, a Russian military commander, argued that the Russian Monarchy consolidated its rule through foreign military successes (Waltz, 1959).

Moreover, international wars occur when a perceived incompatibility and hostility exist between states. Often theorists underline that an international conflict involves the following elements: two or more actors, inconsistent goals, strict competition over tangible and intangible resources of the worlds, such as economic and political power, and mutually opposing actions. In competitive situations, states seek to improve their position by reducing the position of others. Obviously, the wants of states cannot easily be satisfied. When states are unable to reconcile their vital interests they resort to force. This condition brings states into violent conflict with each other.

For Waltz, inter-state wars can be the product of defects in states. The structure and internal defects of the state is the key to understanding the causes of war. Waltz’s second image, however, is also a critique of the liberal assumption that “through the reform of states wars can be reduced or forever eliminated” (1959:83). He casts doubt on the practicability of the liberal thought that peace and war are the products of democratic and non-democratic states and underlines that the categorization of states, bad and good or democracies and non-democracies, is an extremely doubtful proposition, and cannot bring permanent peace to international relations. There are numerous states in the international system and peace cannot be associated with just the acts of democratic states. Waltz (1959:123) notes that “the influence to be assigned to the internal structure of states in

attempting to solve the war-peace equation can not be determined until the significance of the international environment has been reconsidered”.

For Waltz, war is most usefully understood at the level of the international system or third image. In the third image, he focuses on the structure of the international system and analyzes the concept of international anarchy. Waltz (1959:159) defines international anarchy as a condition “with many sovereign states, with no system of law enforceable among them, with each state judging its grievances and ambitions according to the dictates of its own reason or desire—conflict, sometimes leading to war, is bound to occur”. Individuals institute states to escape from the fearful state of nature, and the constant fear of each other. However, the act of instituting a sovereign state causes another state of nature between states. Waltz (1959:163) claims “states in the world are like individuals in the state of nature”. The civil state guarantees the rights of individuals, but nobody is responsible enough to protect the rights of the state.

Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* (1979) draws more attention to the third image through relative distribution of power and the structure of the system. Security and survival, the fundamental concern of states, are the center of attention. According to Waltz, the structure of the system compels states to act in certain ways. Thus, in anarchy, states confront a situation of self-help, pursue power and seek to enjoy the fruits of power. War is always a possibility in an anarchical system because states seek to reach their goals by the means of power and there is no ultimate authority to prevent it. However, states are highly unequal in their powers and capabilities to dominate others. For Waltz (1979:88), all states are formally equal; “none is entitled to command; none is required obey’. But, they differ in a substantive and material sense. The nature of the international hierarchy of power among states and the relative distribution of power may increase the

probability of war. For this reason, war always is a possibility in an anarchical system to project power and state interests.

Waltz (1979) emphasizes that a balance of power between states can be achieved, but war is always a possibility in an anarchical system. The Cold War was a good example of a balance of power between the great powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, that brought relative peace and stability to the international system. Both great powers did not directly challenge each other through war in the Cold War. Although they were indirectly engaged through proxy wars such as Vietnam and Afghanistan, they never fought a major war against each other. According to Waltz (1979), state leaders are prisoners of the international system. The structure of the international system determines the decisions of the state leaders and dictates what they should do in their conduct of foreign policy. Like state leaders, nation-states are prisoners of the structure of the international system. The structure shapes their behaviors and dictates what they should do in their conduct of foreign policy (Waltz, 1979). For instance, the bipolar system of the Cold War compelled nation-states either to align with either the United States or the Soviet Union or stay neutral.

The realist perspectives sharply contrast with the liberal tradition, which presents an optimistic view of the nature of conflict. Prominent classical liberals such as John Locke, Jeremy Bentham and Immanuel Kant do not reject the idea that humans are self interested and competitive. But they depart from realists by believing that humans can engage in collaborative and cooperative actions (Ari, 2003). Conflict may be inevitable but people or states can and do cooperate to manage conflict. Essentially, groups or states will cooperate to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. In this sense, conflict can be constructive. The implication is clear: people can live in peace without fighting each other.

Liberals emphasize that humans share common interests and thus engage in cooperative social action, domestically and internationally, that results in peace at home and abroad. Mutual cooperation in the long run leads to mutual gains and therefore promotes cooperative relationships. Modern states based on the rule of law are the result of cooperation. Individuals institute modern states based on the rule of law to protect their rights to life, liberty, and property, as argued by John Locke a seventeenth century English philosopher (Ari, 2003). This is the social contract idea. All members within a society can live in peace by forming a social contract that guarantees no one violates the rights of others, thus escaping from living in constant fear of each other. The constitutional state underwrites the natural rights of its citizens and leads to peace at home. Individuals no longer worry about their life and thus they feel confident about their security. Locke's argument was enlarged by Jeremy Bentham an eighteenth century English philosopher who developed the term "international law." Bentham believes that inter-state conflicts will not occur if states adhere to international law in the conduct foreign policy (Ari, 2003).

Kant in *Perpetual Peace* supplemented Bentham's argument. He argues that democratic countries do not go to war with each other. Undoubtedly, states are the main actors in the eruption of wars. Kant (1795) operates with the idea that republics or democratic countries are much less likely to fight each other. The argument is not that democracies never go to war. Rather, democracies do not fight democracies. Whereas non-democratic regimes, particularly autocratic and totalitarian regimes, are much more likely to go to war in case of disagreement, democratic countries tend to solve their problems through peaceful conflict resolution. The accumulation of consolidated democracies in the world will lead to peace at home and abroad. Peaceful ways of solving international and domestic conflicts will establish permanent peace in the world.

Totalitarian and autocratic states are more likely to cause international and domestic conflicts. Immanuel Kant believes that permanent peace will be achieved in international relations through the increase in number of consolidated democracies in the world. Democracies prefer negotiation and compromise rather than military coercion to solve their problems. Democracies are also more stable domestically, because they possess an efficient mechanism that provides a forum for negotiation and compromise between individuals: the rule of law. Peaceful ways of solving domestic conflicts strengthen the legitimacy of the government and promote peace within society. Consolidated liberal democracies, such as Canada, Australia and Sweden, are more stable and peaceful than weak democracies. For instance, weak governance in Rwanda led to bloody civil war in 1994. Similarly, weak governance in Nigeria led to a bloody civil war in 1967 and brought economic and social destruction to Nigeria; non-democratic actions by the Sri Lankan government against the minority Tamils has embroiled the country in a civil war which has become an international problem. Non-democratic states that involve culturally distinct ethnic groups tend always to suffer from separatist movements.

Michael Doyle (1986) supports Kant's thesis and concludes that democratic countries primarily deal with domestic and international conflicts in a civilized manner based on comprising negotiation and compromise, because they believe in peaceful conflict resolution. For this reason, republican liberals consider democratization as a significant factor that promotes international and domestic peace. Truly, the most peaceful countries in the world are those involving a democratic culture with norms of peaceful conflict resolution. Canada, for instance, has dealt with Quebec separatism in a peaceful manner.

Liberals also claim that intensifying cooperation in the end leads to a high degree of transnational relations and interdependency between states. This condition will decrease the

possibility of inter-state conflicts and will make international and domestic conflicts harder to distinguish. Transnational relations are considered by liberals to be an important factor that contributes to conflict management and resolution. James Rosenau (1980:1) defines transnationalism as “the process whereby international relations conducted by governments have been supplemented by relations among private individuals, groups, and societies that can and do have important consequences for the course of events”. In focusing on transnational relations, national governments are not the only actors that conduct international relations. The extent of communication and transactions between societies has reduced the hegemony of states in international relations.

John Burton (1972) in *World Society* constructed a map to show the complexity of international relations. He proposed a ‘cobweb model’ of transnational relations. The cobweb model demonstrates that a nation-state involves many different groups of people ranging from religious to business groups, which have different types of external ties and different types of interests. Whereas realists depict international relations as relations between nation-states, the cobweb model depicts the international system as transactions amongst various groups. Like Burton, Rosenau emphasizes the increasing influence of different groups of people in international relations. He argues that states’ capacity for control over global affairs is decreasing in an ever more complex world. In other words, the state centric international system is becoming more like a multi-centric system. A new multi-centric world makes conflicts hard to categorize as domestic or international conflict. The intensifying transactions in economic and social area have made people and governments more vulnerable to what happens elsewhere. A higher level of interdependence consequently causes the distinction between international and domestic politics to blur.

*Power and Interdependence* written by Keohane and Nye in 1977 studies the core assumptions of political realists about world politics. They argue that countless economic and social transactions

between individuals, societies and governments has led to a world of cooperation where military power is no longer important. Previously, the patterns of the classical tradition, national security and military power, controlled and managed world affairs. At present, the high level of flow of money, goods, people, and communication across international borders has crumbled old international patterns. The high politics of security and survival no longer have priority over the low politics of economics and social affairs (Keohane and Nye: 1977:23).

According to Keohane and Nye, the world has entered a new era. The high level of transaction between individual, societies, and governments has created the beginnings of a world without borders. International relations are not primarily relations amongst states any more and are being dominated by multinational corporations, transnational social movements, and international organizations. Transnational actors pursue their own goals free from state control. Therefore, a world of cooperation leads states to be preoccupied with the low politics of economics and social affairs and less concerned with the high politics of military power. Under conditions of complex interdependency that is most evident in North America and Europe, military force is not an effective instrument to influence other actors (Keohane and Nye: 1977).

According to liberals, trade is another important factor in the promotion peace between states. Adam Smith and David Ricardo argue that trade increases mutual dependence between states and thus decreases the possibility of military conflicts. High levels of economic interdependence generate peace by promoting economic advantages for states. Intensifying foreign trade between states influences state leaders' decisions and behaviors domestically and internationally. Domestic economic groups that are especially vulnerable to external developments affect the decisions of state leaders. State leaders will consider the likely economic consequences, bad or good, before the final decision is made (Ari, 2003).

According to liberals, international organizations also play a key role in promoting cooperation and peace amongst states. International organizations can help advance cooperation and promote peace by maintaining a set of rules that urge states to act in certain ways. The World Trade Organization (WTO), for instance, provides a forum or place for governments to negotiate and settle their trade disputes. The main focus of the WTO agreements, negotiated and ratified by national parliaments, is to advance economic cooperation between trading nations (Ari, 2003).

Similarly, the European Union (EU) has evolved from a trade body into a supranational and intergovernmental organization. The EU has brought stability and peace to Europe by establishing a regulatory framework for a single market. The EU has also promoted cooperation and peace between the European countries by maintaining an effective single market. This single market has led to harmonized standards in the economic and political area in Europe and these standards have made up for any lack of trust amongst European countries. The European Union has promoted peace in Europe by providing a forum for negotiation and compromise between European countries. The bodies of EU such as the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, and the European Parliament are the base of negotiation and compromise for European countries (Ari, 2003).

Overall, liberalism presents a positive view of human nature and international relations. Liberals maintain that humans and states can engage in collaborative and cooperative social action at domestic and social levels. The top priority of states might be to promote domestic and international peace through large scale cooperation in political, economic, and social area. Domestic peace can be promoted by democratic governments based upon the rule of law. International peace can be promoted by democracies that possess domestic political cultures based on peaceful conflict resolution. Moreover, international institutions contribute to international peace by providing a

forum for governments to negotiate and settle their disputes. They make up for lack of trust between states by reducing states' fear of each other.

## Conclusion

Although there is still no widely accepted definition of conflict in the literature, it is in essence primarily about relations amongst people individually or within groups. Conflict is an unavoidable fact and exists in all relationships experienced by humans. Efforts to remove conflicts from the world are fruitless. Rather, efforts to understand the causes of conflict are important to prevent conflicts from becoming violent. Any simple disagreement may escalate into conflict and reinforce hostility between individuals, societies and states.

Conflict is considered as an ongoing struggle between two or more people whose goals are mutually incompatible. Here a key element of all conflicts is the existence of competition for power. People pursue power in pursuit of their goals and competition amongst the parties can be understood within three main terms: incompatible goals, hostility, and violence. Parties engage in conflict, as they undermine the attempts of the others to reach their goals. Hostility refers to anger that drives the acts of individuals. Violence is the concrete expressions of hostilities.

The most common forms of violent conflicts are international and domestic wars. There are two preliminary traditions in International Relations-Realism and Liberalism. Whereas classical realist thought sees conflicts natural and considers aggressive human nature as the major cause of conflicts, liberal thought emphasizes that war is not inevitable and can be eliminated through cooperative initiations. Nonetheless, both paradigms consider incompatible goals as the major cause of conflicts between individuals, societies and states.

Incompatible goals are crucially important for understanding the root of violent conflict or war. Because of incompatible goals, individuals, societies, and states engage in international and domestic wars. In other words, states and relevant actors engage in wars when a real or perceived incompatibility exists. Social scientists generally agree that incompatible goals lead the relevant actors to seek power to dominate others. Power is the immediate goal for individuals and states to bring their rivals into line.

States may resort to force when they are unable to reconcile their goals. Like states, domestic actors rely on force when they are unable to reconcile their vital interests. In the post-Cold War era, the most violent international conflicts have resulted from intra-state wars and intra-state conflicts started to dominate crises around the globe. With the rise of global communications and worldwide interaction between individual, groups, societies and states, the distinction between inter-state and intra-state conflicts began to blur. Consequently, there is a conceptual linkage between inter-state and intra-state conflicts in the global system.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Roots of Ethic Conflict: Concepts and Indicators**

Classical realism and neo-realism see international relations primarily as relations amongst states. Undoubtedly, states remain the pre-eminent actors in the international system. They remain more important than the other actors in the system, such as international and non-governmental organizations. However, the growth of communication and transactions between societies has reduced states' capacity for control and regulation in international relations. In so doing, international relations has become more like domestic politics. Arguably, this is most evident in the emergence of intra-state conflicts as the dominant form of international conflicts.

In the post-Cold war era, irredentist, and secessionist movements have been important manifestations of international conflicts. Demands for national self-determination by ethnic groups to establish a homogeneous nation-state play a key role in the escalation of domestic violence with ethnic undertones. The quest for separate statehood by Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Slovenia resulted in significant violence and led to the international intervention of Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Similarly, the demand for separate statehood by Palestinians, Kurds, and Tamils has resulted in significant global tensions.

Domestic violence in the form of secessionist and irredentist movements represents efforts to unite ethnic kin under the roof of one state. Domestic violence is generally rooted in ethnic differences with the potential to spread across international borders. Accordingly, there were fifty-nine ethnically armed hostilities at the beginning of 1999 and eleven point five million internationally recognized

refugees as a result (Gurr, 2001). In the last decade, domestic violence caused states to divide into separate smaller states and led to millions of dead and displaced people.

Ethnic conflicts are relatively common throughout the world. To understand what makes ethnic conflicts violent this chapter sketches the main elements of ethnic conflict that have led to domestic violence or civil wars. The first part analyzes violence in ethnic conflict. The next describes the key actors of ethnic conflict. The final part examines the most violent forms of ethnic conflict, secessionist and irredentist movements.

### **Violence, Nationalism and Ethnicity**

Ethnic conflict is frequent and often deadly. One half of the world's states have experienced significant ethnic conflict since World War II (Inat, 2003). The persistence and resurgence of violent intra-state conflict has been one of the distinctive characteristics and the unfortunate results of the postwar era. The overwhelming presence of domestic violence rooted in the disputes over conflicting territorial claims, the demand for national self-determination, or increased political autonomy have led to millions of deaths.

Domestic violence became part of the norm of socio-political life in many countries located in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia in the Cold War era. During this era, domestic violence was a serious and widespread social and political problem. It manifested itself in various ways. Sometimes, it found expression in a political movement of oppressed ethnic groups, which vented their anger with a desire to create a new state, or sometimes in a desire of a group to reunite with their kin.

Moreover, the ideological contest between the United States and the Soviet Union also contributed to domestic or inter communal violence. The most protracted and deadly internal conflicts were often the result of an avoidance of direct military conflict between the two protagonists. The

struggle for political and military dominance led the superpowers to engage in proxy wars with their regional influence at stake. For example, the United States tried to halt the expansion of communism by supporting pro-Western governments against communist rebels or supporting anti-government forces against pro-Soviet governments. In contrast, the Soviet Union supported revolutionary movements to establish or maintain revolutionary regimes. These groups in many cases reflected ethnic or tribal differences.

The incompatibility of U.S. and Soviet ideologies dragged many countries into protracted civil wars, such as in Angola and Mozambique. In these countries, the superpowers used indigenous forces to challenge each other. For instance, the United States provided economic and military aid to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in its attempt to topple the Marxist-Leninist Party (MPLA) government supported by the Soviet Union. Civil war raged in Angola since independence from Portuguese in 1975. UNITA was largely a military force drawn from heavily from Angola's majority Ovimbundu ethnic group and became more aligned with the United States and supported by South African forces. The MPLA, however, was drawn from Angola's second largest ethnic group, the Mbundu, and became aligned with and supported by the Soviet Union. The struggle for power between these groups led to 500,000 deaths and 4 million displaced people in Angola (Messiant, 2004).

Similarly, a struggle for political and military dominance between the two powers led Mozambique into civil war. The Soviet Union provided military and economic aid to the ruling party of Mozambique, the Front for Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), whereas the US supported the Mozambique Resistance Movement (RENAMO). Civil war also raged in Mozambique practically since independence from Portuguese in 1975. FRELIMO was drawn from the minority Shangaan ethnic group living mainly in southern Mozambique and was aligned with the Soviet Union.

RENAMO, however, was sponsored by the white minority government of South Africa seeking a way to keep newly independent Mozambique from supporting the black guerillas trying to overthrow the white government and became aligned with the United States. The ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union contributed to high levels of domestic violence. The result was more than 900,000 deaths and five million displaced people (Inat, 2003).

Carment (1993) in *the International Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict* argues that ethnic conflict tends more towards violence than non-ethnic conflicts. His study presents instrumental variables such as an index of violence that monitors violence trends in terms of types of conflict to measure empirically violence in ethnic conflicts. Carment utilized the data set from International Crises Behavior Project (ICB) developed by members of the Department of Political Science at McGill University. The original data set consists of 698 cases for the period of 1928-85. However, Carment utilized only 460 cases drawing from period of 1945-81. Non-ethnic conflicts provided in Table 2.1 are the cases that evolved into inter-state wars. Ethnic conflicts, however, are the cases that evolved into violence within state. As seen in Table 2.1 the 460 instances of violence that were recorded over this time period were broken into two distinct categories based on the nature of the conflict. These two groups were then evaluated according to three levels of violence: high violence, low/moderate level of violence, and no violence. Of the 460 instances of conflict, a greater portion of them were discovered to be ethnic in nature; 258 instances versus 202. Within the row designated to ethnic conflict, the likelihood of high or extreme violence occurring within a conflict is greater; 40 percent versus 30 percent for non-ethnic occurrences. In addition, a lower percentage (29 percent) of conflicts that resulted in no violence was ethnic in nature. In contrast, in those conflicts that produced low/moderate violence, ethnic cases account for 31 percent and non-ethnic were 35 percent of the cases. What one can conclude from this table is that of situations of conflict recorded, ethnic conflicts tend to be

potentially more violent than non-ethnic conflicts.

**Table 2.1**  
**Violence in ethnic and Non-ethnic Conflicts**

	None	Low/Medium Level of Violence	High Level of Violence	Totals
Non-Ethnic Conflict Total: 202	71 (35%)	71 (35%)	60 (30%)	202
Ethnic Conflict Total: 258	75 (29%)	80 (31%)	103 (40%)	258

The crisis data illustrates that ethnic conflicts tend to involve higher levels of violence. Tragically, ethnic violence seems to be increasing around the world. Ethnic violence continues to impose high death tolls on countries where people are divided into separate ethnic groups that may have a racial and national basis. In this context, nationalism plays a key role in the eruption of violence through the politicization of human identities. This potent political force has shaped the borders of the modern world. The birth of nationalism is generally traced back to the French Revolution of 1789. The French people rallied around the idea of loyalty to the state as distinct from the monarchy on the basis of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The French revolution unintentionally established the idea of the ethnically homogenous nation-state. In so doing, nationalism claimed that each nation is entitled to its

own homogenous state (Ari, 2003).

Nation-states came into existence as a result of the extension of the ideology of nationalism across the world. Nationalism as an ideology aims to bring like individuals together under the roof of the state. In this respect, Smith (1993) sees nationalism as an ideological movement that seeks to increase, or retain the political autonomy of a particular nation. The individual members of a state give their primary loyalty to nation, whose foundation can be ethnic in nature.

In this respect, nationalism is the most unifying force and is the single most widespread ideology in the modern world. However, nationalism is also a central problem in many countries. Key Lawson (1994:150) sees nationalism as a disruptive and an explosive political movement that causes international and domestic conflicts. He considers nationalism as “a belief that the interest of one’s own nation must take precedence over those of any individual, group, other nation and indeed other entity”. Nationalism as a dynamic political movement aims to realize the interests of a particular nation on the basis of self-governance and self-determination. A nation collectively shares this common aspiration and this comes before other interests.

Lawson (1994:150) sees a nation as “a relatively large group of people who feel they belong together by virtue of sharing one or more traits of common race, a common language, a common culture, a common history, a common set of customs or traditions”. A nation is an aggregation of individuals sharing some, or all of these traits and its members give their primary loyalty to the nation representing them. Each of these traits, reflective in the dominant concepts of conflict, has significant influence on the formation of national identity that makes members of the society proud and different from others.

Nationalism is a powerful political movement that rallies members of the nation to create their own nation-state by referring to nationalistic sentiments. Smith in *Ethnic Origins of Nations* (1999)

holds that nations are in effect much older cultural groups or ethnic communities whereby the individual identifies with a nation and every nation requires its own nation-state. Smith sees nationalism as a powerful political force that binds the members of an ethnic community together by referring to a sense of solidarity. This sense of solidarity urges the individual members of the nation to be loyal their ethnic identity.

Nationalism and ethnicity are not identical. Like nationalism, ethnicity is considered a form of social identity that creates human groups for collective action and social mobilization. Their area of intersection and the zone of differentiation lie in the political claims for self-determination and self-governance (Young: 2003). The main difference is many ethnic groups see themselves as nations, but do not seek a state of their own. However, some ethnic minorities demand full sovereignty because of perceived shared values that set them apart from others.

Like ethnic groups, nations need identifying markers to distinguish themselves from others. Ethnicity can determine the identifying markers, such as cultural and linguistic, thereby making them a different nation from others. Anthony Giddens (1994:136) sees ethnicity as “the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from others”. Ethnic communities set themselves apart from others through distinct cultural practices and outlooks. Distinct language, history, ancestry, religion, and styles of dress are all important characteristics of ethnic communities. Ethnic communities thus are usually united by common cultural, behavioral, linguistic, and religious practices that contribute to ethnic nationalism. The shared traits amongst members of an ethnic community mobilize them for collective action. Milton Esman (1993:24) claims “ethnicity cannot be politicized unless an underlying core of memories, experience, or meaning moves people to collective action. This common foundation may include historical experiences, such as struggles against

outsiders for possession of homeland, or cultural markers, especially language, religion, and legal institutions that set one community apart from others”.

Like nations, ethnic groups are composed of individuals sharing common ancestry, religion, shared memories, and elements. An ethnic group is considered a nation especially when members of an ethnic group identify with each other on the basis of common origin and are united by common cultural practices. Every ethnic group possesses its own distinct culture, language, customs, and traditions and claim continuity over time as nations. Anthony Smith (1993) defines an ethnic community as “a named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, and cultural elements; a link with a historic territory or homeland, and a measure of solidarity” (p. 28). An ethnic community is distinguishable by outsiders in terms of religious, traditional, and cultural practices

Ethnicity married to nationalism is a powerful political force. It motivates ethnic communities to take collective action to establish their own nation-state especially where they feel an attachment to a specific piece of territory. It also reinforces an individual’s deepest attachments to their community (Smith, 2001). Ignatieff (1993:4) notes that an “individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen.” These attachments emerge from a sense of belonging and legitimize fighting for each other as members of a particular ethnic community under the roof of blood sacrifice and blood loyalty.

According to Ignatieff, ethnic nationalism is based on the idea that claims, “only trust your own blood.” This style of thinking is the result of an ethic of heroic sacrifice that justifies the use of violence in the defense of the interest of one group against another. This moral claim is likely to reinforce hostilities, antagonistic sentiments, and create prejudices amongst ethnic groups. It is a key reason to understand the sudden eruption of violence between ethnic communities.

Ethnic conflicts within multi-national countries are a product of ethnic nationalism. In this connection, ethnic conflict is a product of nationalist ideas calling for self-governance and self-determination. Politically, ethnic conflict is a struggle amongst ethnic groups within an existing state. Michael E. Brown (2001:211) defines ethnic conflict as “a dispute about political, economic, social,

cultural, or territorial issues between two or more ethnic communities". The unequal access to state resources, perceived or real generates the quest of ethnic communities for self-determination and self-governance. The Tamils, for instance, were initially alienated because of unequal access to employment and education in Sri Lanka. This unequal access to state resources led them to take up arms against the Sri Lankan government. As a result, strict ethnic divisions between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority escalated into violence and the Tamils are now pushing for an independent state.

In multi-ethnic societies, common cognitive biases contribute to ethnic polarization. This polarization reinforces ethnic divisions within society whereby ethnic minority groups become the subject of prejudice and discrimination. In so doing, ethnic groups begin to see themselves different from the rest of the society. The division between them and us strengthens ethnic ties between individuals and leads to the propensity to favor kin over non-kin. Menhaden claims, "Ethnic groups can be perceived as extended kin groups". He adds, "the members of ethnic groups tend to favor their group member over non-members because they are more related to their group members than to the remainder of the population" (1999:57). The propensity to favor kin over non-kin is likely to increase polarization between culturally distinct groups by creating inter-ethnic intolerance. This intolerance generates instability by creating an atmosphere or perception of constant fear of each other.

The security dilemma, the constant fear of each other or the lack of trust, operates within society under these conditions. Constant fear increases intolerance to distinct cultures and undermines the groups' sense of security. When a group feels insecure, it seeks to provide security by establishing its own defense capabilities or paramilitary forces. Violent conflicts are thus likely when groups seek to ensure their own security. Civil wars are generally the result of this security dilemma.

Civil wars are likely to break out when the security dilemma prevails. Civil wars usually end up with tragic and destructive consequences. For instance, Lebanon, a former colony of France, suffered a bloody civil war from 1975-1990. The political, economic and social struggle between the Sunnis, the Shies, the Druze and the Maronites embroiled the country into a bloody civil war and the lack of adequate access to state resources by the Shiites, the Sunnis and the Druze escalated the violence. The government could not act effectively to stop violence because of disagreement amongst its leaders. Although the exact cost of the war will never be known, deaths may have approached 44,000 with many thousands of others displaced or left homeless (Inat, 2003).

Ethnic conflicts, however, do not always result in massive deaths and displaced people. Ethnic conflict is not necessarily synonymous with violence. Ethnic conflict can be resolved or managed through peaceful negotiation and compromise. Peace can be promoted by relying upon negotiation and compromise over equal access to state resources. If ethnic communities rely on peaceful negotiation and compromise in pursuit of their incompatible political, economic and social goals, ethnic conflicts can be prevented from becoming violent. For instance, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. The 1989 bloodless velvet revolution resulted in the overthrow of the communist government and the establishment of a democratic country. Subsequently, the federal government decided to divide the country into separate states in 1992 as the means to manage the ethnic question (Brown, 1992).

As mentioned in the first chapter, liberal thinkers argue that peaceful conflict resolution based on democratic principles makes countries more peaceful and stable by encouraging peaceful ways of solving domestic conflicts, particularly ethnic conflict. Democracy encourages peaceful domestic relations between ethnic communities. The existence of domestic political cultures based on peaceful conflict resolution promotes peace within society. In democratic countries, ethnic communities seek to

meet their needs through democratic ways and they perceive democracy as an effective tool to the solution of problems. Democracy keeps ethnic groups away from violence by teaching them to be tolerant towards others. Tolerance decreases ethnic divisions between culturally distinct groups and paves the way for peaceful conflict resolution. Canada, for example, relied on policies to provide Francophone with equal access to state resources, and employed compromise and negotiation to deal with the secessionist Quebec movement (Strauss, 2003).

### **Types of Ethnopolitical Groups**

Ethno-political groups, whose ethnic identity is the basis for collective political action, play a key role in ethnic conflicts, including secessionist and irredentist movements. According to the Minorities at Risk project that monitors and analyzes the status and conflicts of politically active ethno-political groups in all over the world, ethnic conflicts rose sharply in the period of 1986 to 1999. This research documents the intensity of ethnic conflict across large parts of the world through the data set that consists of 275 politically active ethnic divided into five different categories: ethno-nationalists, national minorities, indigenous peoples, ethno-classes, and communal contenders. These are the most visible of ethno-political groups in ethnic conflicts in the twentieth and twenty first century.

The types of ethnopolitical groups employed by the Minorities at Risk project need to be clarified. According to Harff and Gurr (2004:23), *ethno-nationalists* are “relatively large and regionally concentrated ethnic groups that live within the boundaries of one state or of several states...their modern political movements are directed toward achieving greater autonomy or independence that are used to justify those contemporary demand”. The claims made by ethno-nationalists include political demands such as territory and increased political autonomy. This ethnic

group organizes around the issues of identity-based needs. Collectively, the members of ethno-nationalist group rises up against authority in order to create their own homeland. For example, a small proportion of the Kurds in Turkey seek to set up their own independent nation-state.

Similarly, national minorities whose ethnic identity is the basis for collective action are “segments of a trans-state people with a history of organized political autonomy whose kindred an adjacent state but who now constitute a minority in the state in which they reside” (Gurr, 2000:17). Thus, the political claims made by national minorities include separate state and increased political autonomy. Like ethno-nationalists, they tend to rise up against authority to reach their political goals. Ethno-nationalists and national minorities are very similar. The only difference being that national minorities have ethnic kin who are in control of an adjacent state.

The most crucial distinction between ethno-nationalists and national minorities and other types of ethnic groups listed below lies in the nature of the political claims advanced. Ethno-nationalists and national minorities with a history of organized political autonomy tend to seek full independence from, or political autonomy within existing political communities. The obstacles to obtaining political power within an existing state motivate them to rise up against the government. When they are unable to reach their goals, they tend to follow strategies of violence that lead to protracted civil wars. In democratic political systems, they usually apply non-violent strategies in pursuit of their goals.

Indigenous peoples are another type of ethnic group. The term indigenous peoples has no widely accepted definition. It is assumed that they have maintained their distinct linguistic, cultural, and social organizations. Indigenous peoples, as an ethnic group with historical continuity in parts of a region, have been exposed to the colonizing methods of other nations. Gurr define them as “conquered descendants of earlier inhabitants of a region who live in conformity with traditional social, economic, and cultural customs that are sharply distinct from those of dominant groups” (Gurr, 2000:17). Before

their conquest, they were largely isolated from the influence of the claimed governance by a colonial empire. Under colonial rule, they have lost their lands and resources, and in many cases have been exposed to ethnic genocide or cleansing.

Indigenous peoples like ethno-nationalists and national minorities may seek their own independent nation-state because “*national peoples* are regionally concentrated cultural groups, usually with a history of separate political existence, who want to protect or reestablish some degree of politically separate existence from the states that govern them” (Gurr, 2001:19) As such, they may also seek secession from the states that govern them. Gurr (2004:18) points out that “secessionist movements....result from three general condition: (1) the existence of a separate ethnic community or society with a territorial base, (2) a symbolic conception of the group as a nation or people, and (3) actual or perceived disadvantages in comparison with the dominant society”. Ethno-nationalists and indigenous peoples are the groups that threaten the territorial integrity of a state. The main difference between these two groups is that indigenous peoples had a durable state of their own prior to conquest, but ethnonationalists and national minorities, such as the Kurds did not.

Ethno-classes, which are ethnically and culturally distinct from the host society, are another type of ethnic group. They differ from the other three because they possess a special or unique position within society. Harff and Gurr (2005:19) define them as slaves or immigrants that migrate to different countries to improve their economic and social status such as the Turks in Germany or Koreans in Japan. Gurr (1993:23) argues, “In the advanced industrial societies they are situated at or near the bottom of the economic hierarchy-e.g., Maghrebins in France, people of color in Britain and the Americas, Koreans in Japan. In Third World societies they often are economically advantaged but politically restricted, like the overseas Chinese of Southeast Asia and the residual European and Asian minorities in post-colonial Africa”. According to Gurr, ethno-classes do not constitute a threat to the

integrity of territorial states, because their main goal is to improve their political and economic status, and to protect their cultural rights. If an ethno-class seeks a share in state power, it becomes a communal contender.

Communal contenders, who seek a share in state power, are another type of ethnic group. Generally, they do not constitute a threat to the integrity of territorial states, because they in fact compete for economic and political power. Whereas advantaged communal contenders are part of the political system, disadvantaged communal contenders are subject to some degree of political, economic, and social discrimination. Communal conflicts usually are of low intensity, as they rarely escalate into violence. However, they tend to apply violence, when they lose access to political and economic resources. Harff and Gurr (2004:19) summarizes as follows:

Communal contenders like the Druze in Lebanon and Chinese in Malaysia are among a number of culturally distinct groups that compete for a share of political power. The difference is that ethno-classes live in stratified societies, in which ethnic groups are hierarchically ranked in relationship to each other. Communal contenders are members of segmented societies in which roughly equal ethnic and religious groups compete for economic and political power.

### **The Salience of Ethnic Violence**

With the end of the Cold War, many ethnopolitical groups have been involved in violent conflicts and these violent internal conflicts have hastened the process of national disintegration. Intra-state conflicts have surpassed inter-state conflicts. According to Lindsay and Enterline (2000), there have been 80 civil wars compared to 24 inter-state conflicts in the last five decades. The demand for national self-determination by ethno-nationalists, national minorities, and indigenous peoples groups began to dominate the international agenda. Domestic violence ranging from Africa to south Asia resulted in significant global tensions and began to threaten international and peace security. However, the international community has conspicuously failed to undertake effective actions to stop violence.

**Table 2.2.**  
**Numbers of Ethnopolitical Groups Involved in Violent Conflicts by Region 1945-1998.**  
**(Gurr,2000)**

Period	Europe	Middle East	Asia	Africa	Latin America	Total
1945-49	7	6	12	1	0	26
1950-59	2	15	14	8	0	39
1960-69	3	4	15	20	0	42
1970-79	1	16	20	22	2	61
1980-89	10	13	28	19	6	76
1990-94	21	14	35	40	5	115
1995-98	16	10	31	31	7	95

According to *United Nations Report on Ethnicity and Development* (1987), there are 5.000 different ethnic groups in the world compared to 180 existing nation-states in the international system. According to Carment (1993), the most common types of ethnic conflict having an international dimension are irredentist and secessionist movements.

Irredentism represents “political movements to unite the territory of an ethnic group with the territories of other segments” (Saideman and Ayres, 2000:1126). Irredentist claims seek to unify people sharing common ancestry, origin, language, and religion under one roof. Irredentist claims based on common ethnicity play a key role in the eruption and the internationalization of ethnic conflict. Irredentist movements have also often resulted in significant global tensions. These movements advocate the annexation of territories ruled by another state on the grounds of common ethnicity, or national self-determination. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hitler’s irredentist claim on Czechoslovakia

and Poland, which possessed German-speaking minorities, led to World War II that resulted in the death of over sixty million people (Barash and Webel, 2002).

Saidemen and Ayres (2000) argue that the attempt to bring ethnic kin together in a single state caused a great degree of violence in the Balkans during the 1990's. After the dissolution Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, Slobodan Milosevic and his colleagues put their grand plan into practice to create Greater Serbia through annexation of areas where Serbs are merely a significant minority. Bosniaks, who are the ancient indigenous peoples of the Balkans, declared their independence in April 1992 following Croatia and Slovenia from the Yugoslavia Republic, Milosevic voiced his support for the Serbs living in Bosnia. Radovan Karadzic established a paramilitary force within Bosnia with the support of Milosevic. The Bosnia Serbian paramilitary groups applied a systemic policy of 'cleansing' large areas of Bosnia of non-Serbs" and lead to "the largest refugee movement in Europe since WW-II as Muslims fled to other parts of Europe" (Strauss, 2002:185). As a result, the desire for a Greater Serbia resulted in bloody massacres and the NATO intervention led by the United States ended the conflict in Bosnia. According to *the International Commission on Missing Persons*, 110,000 people were murdered and more than 1.8 million Bosnians were displaced (Inat, 2003).

Cyprus, one of the smoldering European conflicts, is another example of irredentism. Cyprus is located approximately 40 miles south of Turkey and 250 miles east of Greece. It became a part of Turkey in 1571 and fell to the British in 1876. British colonial rule lasted until 1960, when the island became an independent republic after uneasy negotiations amongst England, Turkey and Greece. Under British rule, the Greek Cypriot population began to call for union with Greece and an end to British rule. In response, the Turkish minority held the idea that the island should be divided into parts. "Under this plan, North Cyprus would house the Turks and South Cyprus would be Greek" (Strauss, 2002:220).

Three years after independence inter communal violence broke out because President Makarios called for Enosis or union with Greece and attempted to exclude the Turkish Cypriots from political, economic and social life. Strauss argues (2002:220) that “Cypriot Turks felt like second-class citizens in their own country and large-scale fighting between the Greeks and Turks erupted several times in the 1960s”. The desire for Enosis by the Greek Cypriots and Greece’s support for unification encouraged a Greek Cypriot terrorist organization (EOKA) to launch campaigns of ethnic cleansing or massacre against the Turkish Cypriots who were opposed to union with Greece. The violent campaigns of EOKA resulted in UN intervention in 1964 (Rudolph, 2003).

The coup on Cyprus in July 1974, which overthrew Archbishop Makarios, sparked further tensions on the island. Turkish-Cypriots feared the new Greek-backed leader, Nicos Sampson, would seek unification with Greece against their wishes. When talks between the two sides broke down and the hostile campaigns of the Greek Cypriots continued, Turkey intervened in the island under the treaty of guarantee signed by England, Turkey, and Greece in 1960. This treaty stated that the Greek Cypriots could not seek Enosis and the Turkish Cypriots would not demand partition. This treaty also allowed the signatories individually or collectively to intervene in Cyprus if the integrity of the republic was threatened. The intervention of Turkey split the island into the internationally recognized Greek Cypriot controlled south and Turkish Cypriot held north (Rudolph, 2003).

A secessionist movement is another type of ethnic conflict having an international dimension. Saideman and Ayres (2000:1128) note, “Secession is about claiming independence for a territory”. These movements are the products of the demand by a group to withdraw from a political entity to set up an independent state within the boundaries of an existing state. These movements usually result from the quest for national self-determination. In that respect, an ethnic minority may become secessionist, when it is not in the majority.

Sri Lanka, a colony of Britain in the past, is an example of a country that has sought to deal with a secessionist movement, rather than an irredentist movement, as Tamil ethno-nationalists have made no claim to unite with their Tamil kin in Tamil Nadu on the Indian sub-continent. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealem (LTTE) has been waging a secessionist campaign against the Sri Lankan government since the 1970s in order to create a separate state for the Tamil majority regions in the north and east of Sri Lanka. The LTTE is a proscribed terrorist organization by many Western countries in part because of their use suicide attacks against political, economic, and military targets. In return, the Sri Lankan government has employed paramilitary and regular forces to deal with Tamil secessionism (Inat, 2003).

In some cases, a secessionist conflict can transform into an irredentist one. For instance, the Kosovo Albanians have sought to secede from Serbia to establish their own state. The Ottoman Empire got control of Kosovo in 1389 through defeating Serbia and ruled it for 500 years. Serbia regained control of Kosovo in 1913 by defeating the Ottoman Empire. Later, the province was incorporated into the Yugoslav federation. Kosovo has been the backdrop to a strained relationship between its Serb and Albanian inhabitants. Ethnic Albanians number about 1.5 million whereas Serbs account for 100,000. The majority ethnic Albanians seek the state of their own whereas the Serb minority seeks to remain in Serbia. If the Albanians received independence, the minority Serbs would likely become irredentist. Serbians regard Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia and are fiercely opposed to an independent Kosovo. The demand for increased political autonomy led to a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Kosovar Albanians by Serbian forces in 1998. Thousands of people died in the conflict. Serbian forces were driven out in the summer of 1999 by the start of NATO air strikes against targets in Kosovo and Serbia (Strauss, 2002).

The Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey is currently a secessionist movement, but it is likely to transform into an irredentist movement in the near future. The Kurds are one of the largest ethnonationalist groups in the world that seek their own country. The Kurds claim territory from several existing numerous states: Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurdish Worker Party (PKK), an internationally recognized terrorist organization, symbolizes Kurdish secessionism in Turkey. The PKK was founded in 1978 on the basis of Marxist and Leninism revolution, and emphasized freedom from colonialism and class divisions. The PKK had significant support amongst the Kurdish People living in southern Turkey and sought to create an independent Kurdish state in a territory which it claims as Kurdistan; an area that comprises parts of southeast Turkey, north-eastern Iraq, north-eastern Syria and north-western Iran. The PKK has sought to destabilize the Turkish authority by killing and kidnapping military and civilians, suicide bombings, and the assassination of governmental officials in pursuant goals (Strauss, 2002). More recently, the PKK has lost its popularity in the predominantly Kurdish populated regions because of the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) moderate policies toward the Kurds.

Turkey has been very determined to defeat the guerillas of the PKK. From early 1979 to 1999, Syria had provided valuable safe havens to PKK in the region of the Begaa valley. In 1998, Turkey gave an ultimatum to Syria to end its sponsorship of the movement (Strauss, 2002). The PKK arrived in Northern Iraq after Syria ended its sponsorship. At present, the PKK has military bases in Northern Iraq and widespread support from the Kurdish Democrat Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which joined forces against the Iraqi government in the Operation Iraqi Freedom in Spring 2003. The Kurdish military force, Peshmerga, played a key role in the overthrow Saddam Hussein's government. After the invasion of Iraq, the law of

Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transnational Period granted autonomy to the Kurdistan provincial government. Both the KDP and PUK consider this government as a step towards independence. Turkey is deeply concerned that an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq would carry out efforts to bring together the Kurds living in multiple states and encourage its large Kurdish population to call for unification (Urban, 2006). As such, Turkey has deployed large numbers of troops on its border with Iraq, and Kurdish independence would likely result in war.

Secessionism and irredentism continue to impose a heavy toll on the countries where people are divided into separate ethnic groups. The world has seen an increase in the number of secessionist and irredentist movements since the end of the Cold War. According to Wallenstein and Axell (1994), in the period 1989-93, there were 90-armed conflicts across the world and 47 of them were internal and ethnic. In short, ethnic conflicts, specifically secessionist and irredentist movements, continue to plague many parts of the world.

Table 2.4 reveals the relationship between levels of violence and different types of conflict, including non-ethnic, secessionist and irredentist. Carment argues “there is a range of ranked conflicts corresponding to increases in the frequencies of violence such that non-ethnic conflicts will rank lowest, anti-colonial ethnic conflicts second, secessionist ethnic conflicts third and irredentist highest” (1993:142). As indicated, both secessionism and irredentist conflicts involve higher levels of violence (57 percent and 35 percent) respectively than non-ethnic conflicts (36 percent).

While some groups quest for national-self determination or seek to unite with the territories of other segments, others do not. Larger groups, like national minorities, ethno-nationalists and indigenous peoples, are more likely to be secessionist and irredentist, because their most common objective is union with kins elsewhere or independent statehood in a well-defined area. This can only

be achieved through collective action. Their deepest ethnic attachments include common descent, shared historical experiences and valued cultural traits motivate them for collective action. Secessionist and irredentist movements that cause large scale violence are the consequence of this collective action.

**Table 2.3**  
**Violence in Secessionist and Irredentist Conflicts**  
**(Carment, 1993)**

<b>VIOLENCE IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT</b>				
	No Violence	Low/Moderate Violence	High Violence	Totals
Type of Conflict	Non- Ethnic	71 (35%)	71 (35%)	60 (30%)
	Secessionist	41 (32%)	40 (32%)	72 (36%)
	Irredentist	11 (12%)	36 (31%)	58 (57%)

The other types of ethnic groups, ethno-classes and communal contenders are less likely to be irredentist or secessionist, because their primary concern is to become part of the system through greater access to political, social, and economic power. In some circumstances, communal contenders with political, economic and social advantages over other groups in their society can stimulate domestic violence. The case of Rwanda is indicative. Rwanda is located in east-central Africa and has been beset by ethnic tension associated with the traditionally unequal relationship between the dominant communal contender Tutsi minority and the majority Hutus.

Rwanda became a colony of Germany in 1890 and Belgium replaced Germany as a colonial power after World War I. Both colonial powers used the Tutsi minority to rule Rwanda. The key positions of the state such as military and governmental offices were held by the Tutsis and they became economically and politically advantaged over the Hutus. The Hutus were subject to political, economic, and cultural discrimination (Inat, 2003).

Colonial rule in Rwanda fostered enmity and distrust between the two groups and left behind a structurally weak state that experienced Africa's worst genocide in modern times. Ethnic tensions led to a civil war in 1959 and prompted many Tutsis to flee to neighboring countries such as Burundi. When Ruanda became the independent nation of Rwanda on July 1, 1962, it was under Hutu rule. In Oct. 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), Tutsi rebels in exile in Uganda, invaded in an attempt to overthrow the Hutu-led Rwandan government. Peace accords were signed in August 1993, calling for a coalition government. But after the downing of a plane in April 1994 that killed the presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi, the presidential guard immediately initiated a campaign of retribution. In response, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a military campaign to control the country. It achieved this by July, by which time at least 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus had been brutally massacred (Wrage, 2003)

## **Conclusion**

Ethnic conflict is a dispute over political, social, or territorial issues and is a dynamic process composed of a curve that descends towards violence and rises towards peace. There are many violent ethnic conflicts taking place around the world. The most violent forms of ethnic conflict are irredentist and secessionist movements. These movements usually lead to higher levels of violence and have the potential to spill over into the international arena. There are many stateless nations in the world and they seek to maintain their own independent nation-state.

Especially, ethno-nationalists, national minorities, and to a lesser degree indigenous peoples, sharing a persisting sense of common interest and identity are prone to secede from the state they live in. They generally claim continuity over time and their aspiration to establish an independent state results in higher levels of violence within the existing state. Their deepest attachment to a specific piece of territory or unequal access to state resources leads them to rise up against the authority. The Kurds in Turkey, for instance, were forbidden to speak their own language, to sing their songs and to have newspapers and magazines until two years ago. The start of accession negotiations with the EU encouraged the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK) to improve the cultural rights of the Kurdish minority. Constitutional and judicial reforms undertaken by the ruling AK party in recent years include the right to broadcast and educate in Kurdish, the right to learn Kurdish and have newspapers and magazines, decreased resentment among the Kurds. In the July 2007 elections, the AKP's moderate policies toward the Kurds had increased its support among the Kurds. AKP won 53.4 percent of the vote in the Kurdish majority regions in the southeastern of Turkey. The Kurdish Nationalist Party (DTP) considered

the political wing of the PKK, however, polled 24 percent that translated into 27 seats in the 550-member parliament.

Ethnic conflicts are common in multi-ethnic countries. The fault lines or ethnic divisions between ethnic groups make an ethnic conflict more likely within multi-ethnic societies. Ethnic conflicts in many multi-ethnic societies are rooted in European colonialism. European powers fertilized ethnic hatreds between ethnic groups to keep their colonies under control. They usually applied the divide and rule strategy. The next chapter analyzes the impact of the legacy of European colonialism on modern ethnic conflict taking place around the world. Most of the post-colonial states went into bloody civil wars after independence because of weak governance. Many of the states that carved out of colonial empires were born weak. For this reason, they have suffered from political legitimacy, politically insensible borders and ethnic hatreds.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Legacy of Colonialism: Ethnic Conflict**

Much recent discussion of international relations has been based on the main causes of ethnic conflicts. While the risk of interstate war has declined in salience, the reverse is true of intrastate war. The potential for greater conflict is especially salient in the Middle East and much of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The countries located in these regions have suffered from higher levels of domestic violence. Violence has become endemic to their political and social life.

The animosity between culturally distinct groups, as discussed in the previous chapter, is a key factor that leads to higher levels of domestic violence within multi-ethnic countries. It motivates ethnic groups to kill and persecute in pursuit of their political, economic and social goals. European colonialism has had a great impact on the formation of ethnic hatreds between ethnic groups. With the advent of colonialism, 'ethnic identity', which makes ethnic groups different from each other, began to determine one's place within society.

This chapter examines the legacy of European colonialism on the genesis of current violent ethnic conflicts. The first part provides an overview at European colonialism. The next analyzes the profound impact of the divide and rule strategy of the European powers on current ethnic conflicts. The last section examines the role of weak governance and ethnic nepotism that was spawned by colonialism relative to the escalation of ethnic conflict to violence.

#### **The Process of European Imperialism**

The world today is in many ways the consequence of Western imperial expansion. Domestic violence is very salient in the areas of colonial expansion, including the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. The process of European extension left behind structurally weak and ethnically

fragmented states in these regions. To understand the process and nature of European imperialism, the terms, imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, and colonization need to be understood.

One of the difficulties in defining imperialism is that it is difficult to distinguish it from colonialism. Both imperialism and colonialism were forms of conquest that were expected to benefit Europe economically and militarily. According to Hodgart (1977), imperialism is identified with an unfavorable foreign despotic government that maintained political and economic control over the less advanced regions of the world. In this connection, imperialism was regarded as a policy of extending national sovereignty over foreign entities through conquest. A nation can extend its control beyond its territories through territorial annexation, or indirect methods associated with economic and political influence. Some observers define imperialism as “the extension of sovereignty or control, whether direct or indirect, particularly economic, by one government, nation or society over another together with the ideas justifying or opposing this process” (Nadel and Curtis, 1969:35). For states, imperialism is a way of enhancing political domination over territories.

One significant aspect of European imperialism is colonialism, which refers to European economic and political domination. Colonialism took many forms. Like imperialism, colonialism involves political and economic control over less advanced regions. The historical imperial powers, such as the Great Britain and France, extended their economic and political control over the lands contributing to their economic growth. They saw colonies as markets for their growing manufactured goods and a resource for raw materials. As such, colonialism entails the exploitation indigenous peoples, as the mother countries economically and politically exploited colonies. Horvath (1977: 2) sees colonialism as “a form of domination---the control by individuals or groups over territory and/or behavior of other individuals or groups”.

European colonialism began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the age of exploration and discovery, led by Portuguese and Spanish exploration of the Americas, and the coasts of Africa, the Middle East, India and East Asia. The impetus for exploring new trading routes persuaded the Mediterranean states, Portuguese and Spain, to explore new routes and unknown lands. Nadel and Curtis (1969:80) point out, “without a number of innovations in cartography, astronomical observation, and ship building the search for a route to Indies would never have succeeded”. Portugal and Spain were the first trading empires that launched expeditions to the New World. They established significant colonies in the New World in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to exploit the raw materials of new discovered lands.

The French, Dutch and England explorers broke the monopoly of the Portuguese and Spanish. After a long period of considerable growth of Spain and Portugal, France, the Netherlands, and England managed to establish their overseas empires. Monetarists asserted that a severe shortage of bullions led to search for new lands to prevent economic recessions in Europe, as the European market was dependent on silver and gold currencies. New trade routes and markets were, for European powers, a significant prescription to enhance their economic and political influence (Nadel and Curtis, 1964).

For European colonial powers, colonies were also a source of prestige alongside economic benefit. The economic necessity of colonies led them to spread far and wide in many parts of the world. The figures given below refer to the estimated population of colonies and percentage of territories belonging to European colonial powers. European colonial powers, in twentieth century, managed to control 90.4 percent of Africa, 56.5 percent of Asia, all of Australia, and 27.2 percent of the Americas (Table 3.1). On the eve of the twentieth century, the British Empire, the largest empire covered more than 13 million square miles and roughly 400 million people lived directly

and indirectly under British rule (Table 3.2). France, the second largest European empire extended more than 4 million square miles and contained approximately 65 million people; Belgium roughly 940,000 square miles and 13 million people; the Netherlands extended roughly 790,000 square miles and 66 million people, and Germany, the latecomer to overseas empire, roughly 1 million square miles and 13 million people.

The second aspect of European imperialism is neo-colonialism, which refers to the indirect economic exploitation of post-colonial states by their former colonial powers. Neocolonialism differs from colonialism in that it does not involve direct military and political control. After the achievement of independence by the various Western colonies in Asia and Africa following World War II, former colonial powers sought to maintain control of the economies of post colonial states. Western political powers relied on indirect means such as economic, trade and aid policies to perpetuate their influence over them.

The dominance of the West over poor nations (former colonies) continues to persist through neocolonialism. Nkrumah (1965) denotes neocolonialism as a way that Western powers continued to control the affairs of postcolonial states by using economic and monetary tools. The neocolonists see them as the target markets for their manufactured goods. Nkrumah also sees postcolonial states as vulnerable to new actors, including the United States, or international financial and monetary organizations.

**Table 3.1**  
**Percentage Territories Held by European Colonial Powers**  
**(Gotha, 1906)**

Region	Percentage Controlled
<b>Africa</b>	90.4%
<b>Asia</b>	56.5%
<b>Australia</b>	100.0%
<b>Americas</b>	27.2%

**Table 3.2.**  
**Extent of Colonialism**  
**(Townsend, 1941)**

	Great Britain	France	Belgium	Netherlands	Germany
Areas of Colonies (square miles)	13,100,000	4,300,000	940,000	790,000	1,100,000
Indigenous Population	470,000,000	65,000,000	13,000,000	66,000,000	13,000,000

Robert Young (2001) emphasizes that neocolonialism led to cartels of states through such international organizations as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB) to control and exploit poor nations (postcolonial states). Poor nations are economically weak and need Western financial aid to be able to develop. They are in perpetual indebtedness and their debts are unaffordable. They need the money of the West to meet their needs. Increased economic dependence leads them to lose control over their economic and political life. In return, Western powers take advantage of this situation to control their affairs without the exercise of direct military and political power.

An inevitable consequence of neocolonialism is the North and South dispute, which is rooted in the significant economic disparities between rich nations (First and Second World) and poor nations (Third and Fourth World). Marxists developed the concept of neocolonialism and the primary dispute between the North and South has been the unequal distribution of economic resources. The First and Second World states are the industrial states in Europe and North America, and many of them are former colonial powers. The Third and Fourth World are the former colonies in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America. Young (2001) sees neocolonialism as a branch of dependency theory, Dependency theory, an approach based on neo-Marxist political economy; assumes that poverty and underdevelopment are an inevitable consequence of capitalism. According to the theory, the spread of capitalism allows the industrial nations to exploit the poor nations, thereby increasing poverty. The continued economic expansion of the developing nations contributed to the income gap between the North and South, and this gap is extremely wide. The increasing North and South income disparities is increasing poverty and exacerbating backwardness in the South (Ari, 2003).

Dependency theory posits that an inevitable consequence of the spread of capitalism is economic exploitation of the Third and Fourth Worlds. The Third and Fourth Worlds will remain backward and poor as long as the wealthy nations who have technological and industrial advantage ensure the rules of the games are in their own self-interest. The Third World countries export primary commodities to the rich countries, which then manufacture products out of those commodities and sell them back to the poor countries. Moreover, after a hastened decolonization process, the former imperial states sought to maintain a continuing economic presence in the economies of former colonies by fostering debt. When the economically underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America required financial assistance from the West to achieve economic growth, former colonial powers used this opportunity to exploit the poor nations' raw materials and cheap labor. Consequently, the economies of underdeveloped nations have been geared to the needs of the advanced nations and control over economic activities of former colonies has remained in the hands of the advanced nations (Ari, 2003).

The perpetual indebtedness of the Third World has led to increased economic dependence on the advanced countries; a condition of highly dependent economies devoted to producing primary products for the developed world and to provide markets for their finished goods. Third world governments have also had to give economic concessions to foreign corporations in return for debt cancellation or relief. Economic dependence is considered harmful because it leads to a host of economic problems, ranging from a high level of unemployment to rampant inflation. In this regard, increased economic dependence has brought economic stagnation and backwardness instead of economic growth to former colonies. Moreover, they have become unable to meet the social needs of their citizens in areas such as health, education, and basic needs, like drinking water. These economic problems provided the breeding ground for conflict by generating feelings

of resentment and levels of frustration prone to the generation of violence. Increasing poverty and unequal economic opportunities for ethnic groups became an endemic part of the political and social life of the former colonies. In this connection, the monopoly of a particular ethnic group over economic resources became the source of future tensions in former colonies (Ari, 2003).

A third aspect of European imperial expansion is colonization. Historically, colonialism and colonization are usually treated synonymously. Hodgart (1977) notes that these two concepts were used interchangeably in the nineteenth century to describe the extension of European powers. Nonetheless, colonization differs in that it entails the establishment of colonies through the transfer of a large scale of population from the imperial power to a country. It was the process whereby the citizens of colonial power migrated to a colony (Hodgart, 1977:20). The indigenous peoples of Canada, for example, became the minority in their homeland because of large-scale immigrations of Europeans. The transfer of large-scale emigrants to a new country ensured political allegiance to the mother country through conquering indigenous inhabitants of a region. In the New World, white European colonizers arrived and settled in that geographic space suddenly, with drastic results. The indigenous peoples were pushed aside and marginalized by the dominant descendants of Europeans, though they had states of their own prior to conquest. The colonial powers relied on the establishment of settler colonies, trading posts, and plantations to keep indigenous inhabitants under control. Millions of Europeans migrated abroad and indigenous peoples were forcibly separated from their lands. For instance, Algeria was one of the French colonies that became a destination for hundreds of thousands of European settlers. Despite intense popular resistance, France implemented a consistent and systemic policy intended to encourage French citizens to immigrate to Algeria.

Resettlement programmes were implemented by Great Britain, the most extensive empire in history, using land-owning incentives to draw British citizens to the new colony. Canada, which was a major battleground between England and France, became a destination for hundreds of thousands of British settlers. France established the first permanent French settlements in Canada in Quebec City. Great Britain defeated France and established permanent English-speaking control over Canada. (Strauss, 2002).

In contrast to colonization, colonialism, and its modern variant neo-colonialism, is essentially a type of imperial domination that seeks to exploit economically a colony's natural resources and create new markets for its goods. Colonialism differs from colonization in several respects: first, it is primarily concerned with economic expansion, not with the transfer of a large scale population to a new country; second, it is frequently used to describe the settlement of places that were not controlled by a large population of permanent European residents; third, it seeks to control the conquered population with minimum military expense through the policy of divide and rule; fourth, killing and genocide, or negative attitudes to the native culture and language is common. For example, India was a colony, but never became a home for permanent English settlements as Britain did not stimulate migration of its citizens. It followed a distinct colonialism process. Great Britain relied on the British East India Company to maintain economic and political control over India and the other Asian colonies such as Hong Kong and Singapore. The British government bureaucratized and Europeanized the company's administration in annexing territories possessing raw materials, such as in spices, and cotton, as well as opium (Inat, 2003).

The impact of colonization and colonialism on indigenous peoples took many forms. Colonization destroyed indigenous languages, cultures and communities because newcomers from a comparatively powerful and rich country had a negative attitude to native culture. Ethnic

genocide or cleansing was practiced particularly in North and South America. The Indigenous peoples were pushed aside and marginalized and forcibly separated from their lands by the European powers to open up the land for European settlement. “Modern estimates place the 15th century, or pre-Columbus, population of North America at 10 to 12 million. By the 1890s, it had been reduced to approximately 300,000” (World Conference Against Racism, 2001). Nadel summarizes the impact of colonization as follows:

The impact of colonization on native or indigenous peoples has taken many forms. The loss of life, the amount of suffering, and the irreparable damage done to native cultures—in sum the destructive elements of imperialism—can not be measured in figures alone. In the volatile area of race relations the expansion of Europe has had lasting repercussions. The smoldering resentment of non-white peoples throughout the world for having been instilled with a sense of inferiority based on pigmentation is part of the price white men must continue to pay for the ascendancy enjoyed by Western Europe since the age of discovery (1977:24).

## **Colonialism and Divide and Rule**

Competition for trade and superior military force led the European powers to acquire overseas dependencies. They established vast political empires, mainly in Africa, Asia, and the Americas and dominated the resources, market and labor of the colonial territory. As they began to establish significant colonies in various parts of the World, the concept and practice of ‘divide and rule’ gained prominence. European powers relied in great measure on divide and rule to maintain control of their colonies with minimal military expense. Fischer (1945:437) argues that “the problem is not very difficult for conqueror when the invaded territory is inhabited by one homogenous people. But when it is inhabited by different peoples, the leaders of empire have made the problem equally easy for themselves by the simple rule of “divide and conqueror”.

The policy of divide and rule in essence is aimed at dividing people along ethnic lines in order to control existing indigenous power structures. By dividing the local populations along different lines and playing one against the other, the colonial powers prevented them from becoming allying together against the colonial power. It was quite common for the colonial powers to play one group against another in colonies where colonizers did not arrive as part of mass emigration. Examples in this category include Sri-Lanka, Rwanda and Cyprus. European powers identified one group in these colonies to use it as a buffer against others. This resulting cultural division of labor followed by having people “assigned to specific types of occupations and other social roles on the basis of observable cultural traits or markers” (Hetcher, 1974:1154). While one group enjoyed the fruits of wealth and power, the others suffered from unequal access to state resources. This situation fostered distrust and enmity between local groups and led to future immense bloodshed, violence and the creation of different nations based on common ethnicity.

Ethnic violence is an inevitable consequence of the application of this policy. Specifically, domestic violence has been frequent and intense where this policy was effectively used. The application of divide and rule left behind structurally weak and ethnically fragmented modern states whose territorial boundaries were drawn with no consideration to the actual distribution of indigenous peoples, particularly postcolonial states. In many cases, these boundaries were a function of Europe political considerations, such as in the case of the Congress of Berlin and the resultant division of Africa. The arbitrary borders drawn by self-interested Europeans became a cause for future communal violence in post-colonial states as a function of divide and rule. They became torn by protracted secessionist revolts, and/or competition for the control of government.

In short, the legacy of the policy of divide and rule has had a profound and lasting impact on the development of modern ethnic conflicts.

The case of Rwanda is indicative. One of the bloodiest massacres of the 20<sup>th</sup> century took place in Rwanda as result of the Belgian and Germans application of divide and rule. The earliest inhabitants of the area were the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa. In 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Tutsi conquered the area and became the ruling power. Some researchers believe the Tutsi and the Hutu are the same people with no genetic difference between them (Bowen, 1996). For example, Bowen (1996:87) notes: "Many Tutsis are tall and many Hutus short, but Hutus and Tutsis had intermarried to such an extent that they were not easily distinguished physically (nor are they today), They spoke the same language and carried out the same religious practices." Although there were disagreements between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis before the colonial period, the animosity between them grew substantially as a function of the colonial period. Under German rule, tribal labels started to determine one's place within society. In 1895, Rwanda became a German colony (Inat, 2003).

After Germany's defeat in the First World War, Belgium took the control of Rwanda under a League of Nations' mandate. When the Belgian colonists arrived in Rwanda, they saw the two groups as distinct entities and used the Tutsi minority to rule Rwanda. The minority Tutsi became upper class and the majority Hutu became the lower class. The Belgian's strict domestic policies, including taxation were enforced by the Tutsi upper class. The Tutsis occupied the key positions of the state such as the military and excluded the Hutus from trade and commerce. The Tutsis were wealthy, the Hutus were poor (Inat, 2003).

Belgium used the minority Tutsi as buffers against Hutu anger. Due to the strict policies of the Belgians, many Hutus began to migrate to neighboring countries such as the Republic of the

Congo. Their unequal access to state resources, including political, social and economic, reinforced ethnic hostility and polarization between the Hutu and Tutsi. Resentment among the Hutus resulted in a series of riots in 1959 and more than 20,000 people were killed. After independence, the majority Hutu wrested political power from the Tutsi minority in 1961. After the Hutus took power, many Tutsis were exposed to violence and fled to the neighboring countries of Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. The First Republic, under President Gregoire Kayibanda, institutionalised discrimination against the Tutsis and periodically used massacres against this targeted population as a means of maintaining their power. Some Rwandese groups in the Tutsi diasporas attempted, without success, to restore their power through armed means.

In 1963, armed Tutsi groups launched an armed struggle against the Kigali regime. In response, the Hutu military attacked Tutsi civilians. In 1973, Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, toppled Gregoire Kayibanda, the President of the first republic, in a military coup. Habyarimana established the second republic and declared the Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour le Developpement (MRND) the sole political party in Rwanda and banned political parties as in the first Republic. In 1979, a group of Rwandese exiles in Kenya established the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU), which became the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1987. The RPF began an armed struggle to overthrow the Rwandan President Habyarimana in the early 1990's and Rwanda became embroiled in a civil war. Decades of violence reached its peak in 1994 with the death of the Rwanda President, when his plane was shot down over Kigali on 6 April 1994. The presidential guard immediately initiated a campaign of retribution. Leaders of the political opposition were murdered, and almost immediately, the slaughter of Tutsis and moderate Hutus began. It is estimated that the Hutus slaughtered 80,000 Tutsis (Inat, 2003).

A similar case is found in Sri Lanka, which is a diverse nation. Sinhalese make up 74 percent of the population and live in the more densely populated southwest. Tamils account for about 20 percent and live in the north and east. Sri Lankan Muslims, known as Moors, makes up only 8 percent of the island's population. The British colonial policy of divide and rule sowed the series of intermittent violence between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. Monarchs from South India ruled Sri Lanka from the 10th century to the 16th. The proximity of Sri Lanka to South India resulted in many Tamil invasions and parts of the island were controlled intermittently by the Chola dynasty, the Padya dynasty and the Chera dynasty which were ancient Tamil states ruling in South India.

Because of its strategic location as a naval link between West Asia and Southeast, it attracted the attention of European powers. The Portuguese and the Dutch arrived in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and established trading posts. The British took full control of the Island in 1815 and established a series of tea, coffee and sugar plantations (as known plantation economy). The British also brought a large number Tamil labors from the Southern Indian Peninsula to work in the plantation economy. (Inat, 2003).

The British introduced ethnic cleavage by bringing a new population of Tamil laborers to Sri Lanka. That was largely because the local inhabitants were unwilling to cooperate with the British in the exploitation of their own land. The British also created the English-speaking people who worked in the government. The majority Buddhist Sinhalese community resented what they saw as favoritism towards the mainly-Hindu Tamils under British administration (Inat, 2003).

After independence on 4 February 1948, the Sinhalese majority accused Tamils of having a disproportionate share of government employment and the growth of an assertive Sinhala nationalism led the English speaking Sinhalese elite to start to exclude the Tamils from political,

social and economic life, including the best schools, jobs, commerce and trade. In 1956, the Sri Lankan government declared Sinhala to be the country's official language. As Tamils became increasingly frustrated, they became more self-conscious about their own ethnic identity based upon customary behavior and dress, religious beliefs, language and supposed physical appearance. As a result, Tamils began to define themselves as a distinct ethnic community and sought to create their own state. In 1983, the country erupted into full scale communal violence after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealem (LTTE) carried out an ambush of Sri Lankan soldiers in the Tamil city of Jaffna (Inat, 2003).

Cyprus, a small island in the middle of the Mediterranean, is one of the smoldering conflicts of Europe. It is located 50 miles south of Turkey and 250 miles east of Greece. Cyprus became a part of Turkey in 1571. The Ottomans did not alter the ethnic composition of the island. Rudolph (2003:56) points out that, "the Greek religious and social foundations of the island largely survived under the administrative (millet) system applied by the Ottomans, which allowed non-Muslim peoples to be governed by their own religious institutions". In the millet system, non-Muslim communities were given a specific amount of political power to regulate their own affairs, including the allocation and collection of taxes, education in mother language, and internal legal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. This system worked very well until the European concepts of nationalism and ethnicity filtered into the Ottoman Empire. With the annexation of Cyprus by Great Britain in 1876, ethnic unrest replaced ethnic harmony on the island.

Cyprus was strategically important to British access to India through the Suez Canal. The British administration acted along ethnic lines and reinforced the development of two distinct nationalities. The British colonial administration played the two groups against each other

effectively. For instance, when Greek Cypriots rebelled in 1950s, the British established Turkish police forces to round up the rebels. Rudolph (2003:57) denotes, "...under British rule economic disparities were added to the reinforcing religious, ethnic, and linguistic separating dividing the Greek and Turkish Cypriots". Subsequently, people from the Turkish community were put under economic strain and consequently left for Turkey, which caused the demographic balance in Cyprus to alter in favor of Greek Cypriots. Rudolph (2003:57) denotes, "although the island remained largely agricultural and—by European standards at the time---poor, by the 1950s Greek Cypriots in general were visibly better off economically than the Turkish minority".

British colonial rule lasted until 1960, when the island became an independent republic after uneasy negotiations amongst England, Turkey and Greece. The new constitution guaranteed equal rights to the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Three years after independence inter communal violence broke out because of President Makarios' attempt to exclude the Turkish Cypriots from political life. "In November 1963 President Makarios proposed rewriting the constitution in order to curtail the political rights and influence of the Turkish Cypriots. Within a month, inter-communal violence had increased to the point where the British found it necessary to intervene to restore order" (Rudolph, 2003). In 1964, British forces were replaced by UN peacekeeping forces in order to maintain order. The 'green' line was drawn between Turkish and Greek communities and the UN appointed a negotiator between to solve the problem. Regardless, a Greek Cypriot irredentist organization, EOKA, continued to launch bloody campaigns against the Turkish Cypriots. The hostile campaigns of the Greek Cypriots led to the intervention of Turkey in 1974 to protect the Turkish minority. This intervention divided the island into the internationally recognized Greek Cypriot-controlled south and Turkish Cypriot-held north (Inat, 2003). As a result, the British colonial policies promoted ethnic polarization and fostered ethnic nationalism in the island.

Whereas the Greek Cypriots requested unification with Greece, the Turkish Cypriots desired to join with Turkey.

All the ethnic conflicts discussed above are rooted in the colonial expansion of Europe. Undoubtedly, the European colonial legacy has had a great impact on the modern ethnic conflicts. Specifically, post-colonial states, which were born weak, are the starting point for the analyses of many modern ethnic conflicts. Post-colonial states continue to suffer from the legacy of colonialism in political, economic and social terms.

### **Ethnic Nepotism**

Ethnic conflict seems to be common in almost all countries of the world where the legacy of European colonialism is still felt. As mentioned above, European colonial powers played local actors against each other to prevent them from allying together against their authority. They relied in great measure on divide and rule to maintain direct military and political rule over the colonies, which did not become the destination for millions of Europeans. After the achievement of independence by the various colonies following World War II, neocolonialism, which does not involve direct military and political control, succeeded colonialism. This new form of imperial rule and the legacy of divide and rule promoted ethnic polarization through fostering ethnic nationalism among ethnic communities that have racial, national and religious differences. Ethnic nationalism and racism are the inevitable flip sides of ethnic nepotism that follow from the divide and rule policies of the Europeans.

Ethnic nepotism refers to the tendency of ethnic groups to favor their racial group members over non-members. This tendency is an important part of the social and political life of post-colonial states, where people are divided into separate ethnic groups. The term “ethnic nepotism” was first introduced by Pierre L. van den Berghe’s to explain the impact of nepotistic motives on

ethnic conflicts by underscoring the importance of the core elements of ethnicity, including common descent, language, religion and history. He argues that ethnic and racial sentiments are an extension of kinship sentiments. Ethnocentrism and racism are thus extended forms of nepotism; the propensity to favor kin over non-kin. He believes there is a common behavioral tendency “to react favorably toward other organisms to the extent that these organisms are biologically related to the actor. The closer the relationship is the stronger, the preferential behavior” (Van den Berghe, 1981/1987: 217, 222).

Van den Berghe uses the idea of kin selection to describe ethnicity through a biological paradigm, mainly putting it in the context of an extended family. He draws from the late William D. Hamilton’s theory of inclusive fitness that refers to genes shared by kin. Inclusive fitness ensures “the survival of one’s own genes through one’s own offspring and through relatives who have the same genes” (Venhanen, 1999:56). This survival imperative leads kin groups to favor kin over non-kin.

Ethnic groups can be considered extended kin groups and perceived common descent leads them to achieve inclusive fitness by helping kin survive through altruistic behavior in which a member of ethnic group performs an action that helps another member with no apparent advantage to one’s self. Venhanen (1999:57) argues that “the crucial characteristic of an ethnic group is that its members are genetically more closely related to each other than to the members of other groups”. Ethnic groups need to preserve a sense of who they are and their place in the world. This is illustrated by the natural instinct to favor kin over nonkin and collective action for common social and political goals. For instance, the ideology of enosis, which is the political movement of the Greek Cypriots to join Greece, is a product of common cultural and biological markers. Their claim for the unification resulted in the establishment of the terrorist organization EOKA in 1955.

This organization launched its terrorist activities against the Turkish Cypriots until 1975 when the island officially divided into two sides. In addition, Greece's irredentist claim on Cyprus under the "Greater Greece policy" in the 1900s can be understood as the result of inclusive fitness (Strauss, 2002).

Hamilton's idea of inclusive fitness, also, overlaps with the interpretation of the realist tradition in international relations that emphasize the normative aspects of socio-biological theory that humans are living in a world scarcity and the struggle for scarce resource is inevitable. This stimulates individuals to ally themselves along ethnic lines in order to increase the likelihood of survival and influence within society. Pierre L. van den Berghe (1981/1987) argues that "whenever cooperation increases individual fitness, organisms are genetically selected to be nepotistic, in the sense of favoring kin over non-kin, and close distant kin". The case of Rwanda is indicative. Nepotistic treatments in Rwanda led the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis to ally along ethnic lines, thereby exacerbating ethnic polarization. Frank (2001) argues, "when Belgium granted independence to Rwanda in the late 1950's and a democratic system was installed, Tutsi rule faced a legitimacy crisis, in van den Berghe's view because the ethnic kinship basis of monarchical authority did not extend to the Hutu masses" (2001:59). The Hutus with instincts of self-preservation and promotion gathered around the common mission aimed to overthrow Tutsis dominance. They resorted to force in 1959 to put an end to Tutsis dominance granted by Germany and its successor, Belgium.

Not surprisingly, Hutus dominance could not bring peace to their homeland. Inter-communal violence continued and caused devastation across Rwanda. The worst occurred in 1994. Frank (2001:59) points out, "the physical difference between Tutsi and Hutus and widespread knowledge of their different origins worsened hostilities by strengthening the impression of unrelatedness".

The tendency to favor kin leads to political, social and economic discrimination, where people are divided along ethnic lines. First, an inevitable consequence of ethnic nepotism is political discrimination against non-members in post-colonial states. Many scholars argue that the unequal distribution of political power among ethnic groups is one of the key reasons in the escalation of social tension. If an ethnic group is not represented adequately in political institutions such as parliament and government, it is likely to resort force in order to increase the likelihood of survival and influence within society. If the institutions of the state, such as the courts, the army, the universities and the municipalities, are not built to ensure the harmonious development of all ethnic groups, then violence is likely to result. For instance, until 1961 the Tutsis occupied the key positions of the state and excluded the Hutus from political life. The Hutus were vulnerable and weak, while the Tutsis were rich and strong. This situation promoted ethnic polarization between the two groups.

Kmylicka (2001:20) argues that “full and equal participant rights such as access to education, politics, technology, literacy, and mass communication are important factors to integrate ethno-cultural groups to the political process”. Otherwise, ethnic groups become vulnerable to the imposition of the will of the majority in the political, economic and social area. The disaffected ethnic group then responds with violence to obtain its interests as in Sri Lanka. Once the Sinhalese majority held sway, its politicians employed populist but discriminatory policies against Tamils. Official positions in the government were given to the Sinhalese. Resentment amongst Tamils resulted in revolt and full-scale civil war.

A second aspect of ethnic nepotism is cultural discrimination. States purportedly exist to promote the welfare of its citizens and to maintain social order. If its citizens are not able to access the same advantages and opportunities, the likely consequence is social tension. If a country and its

government wish to have a healthy society with little antagonistic sentiment between groups, they need to provide social equality to people living under their rule. Constraints on the inherent rights of culturally distinct groups, including the right to use and teach their mother language, religious freedom, and access to education and literacy, is one of the key factors that cause internal disorders like secessionist movements (Brown, 2001).

Arguably, a state should be culturally neutral and provide a fertile ground for distinct cultures to be sustained. Nepotistic motives lead a government to promote a particular culture and this generates feelings of resentment and encourages ethno-cultural groups to seek self-governance or secessionism. Ethnic groups tend to seek their own homeland in order to ensure the survival of their ethnic identity, including common descent, religion, language and culture. The survival of these markers is a common value to all culturally distinct groups who define ethnic markers as part of their inclusive fitness and worth fighting. In Canada, for instance, the French and English cultures live together in relative harmony. Canada dealt with secessionist aspirations in the predominantly French-speaking Quebec through guaranteeing the political, economic and social survival of the Francophones. Especially, the recognition of French as a second official language in 1982 in the repatriated constitution decreased the vulnerability felt by the Francophone minority from the Anglophone majority. In contrast, cultural discrimination by the Sri Lankan government, for example, against the Tamils minority, including constraints on the use and teaching of mother language, was one of the significant factors that led to inter-communal violence. In 1956 the Sri Lankan government passed the Sinhala Only Act that defined English as the official language and prohibited the use of the Tamil Language in the civil service. This led to the deterioration of relations between Sinhalese and Tamil and strengthened the demand for secession by the Tamils (Inat, 2003).

A third aspect of ethnic nepotism is economic discrimination. Economic discrimination against culturally distinct groups has attracted considerable attention in the analysis of ethnic conflict. Discriminatory economic systems provide a ground for domestic conflict through the unequal distribution of economic resources. Brown (2001:217) argues that “unequal economic opportunities, unequal access to resources such as land and capital, and vast differences in standards of living are all signs of economic systems that disadvantaged members of society will see as unfair and perhaps illegitimate”.

Ethnic groups, who are the subject of economic discrimination, are prone to apply violence to improve their economic position and increase the likelihood of group survival within society. Frustration from the lack of access to economic resources mobilizes them for collective action to defend their economic rights and ensure their survival. As a result, violence is likely to break out when one ethnopolitical group becomes economically disadvantaged compared to the dominant group within society. Nepotistic motives can prevent the government from providing equal economic opportunities to all ethnic groups within society. For instance, Tamil public servants, deprived of the rights of increments and promotions, were forced to learn English or leave employment. Employment opportunities in the public service were practically closed to Tamils. Tamil areas were isolated from all national development projects and Tamils were excluded from commerce and the best jobs. Nepotistic motives led the Sinhalese employers to hire people of Sinhalese origins. Similarly, in the sphere of education, the government demanded higher marks from the Tamil students for university admissions, whereas the Sinhalese students were admitted with lower grades (Inat, 2003).

As a result, the impact of nepotism on modern ethnic conflicts cannot be ignored. It can be considered an ideology in its own right that imposes the idea of favoring one's kin. This tendency

seems to be common in societies where people are divided along ethnic lines. The application of divide and rule by the Europeans divided people in colonies into small ethnic groups and fostered antagonistic sentiments within society. Distrust and enmity led the groups to favor kin over non-kin and became the source of future tensions.

## Conclusion

European colonialism has had a profound impact on the current ethnic conflicts taking place around the world. These ethnic conflicts extending from Asia to North America are the consequence of colonial expansion led by the European powers. The European colonial empires such as France, England and Spain took the advantage of existing ethnic diversity of colonies, and in some senses created diversity in order to control the local populations.

The European colonial powers generally applied a strategy of divide and rule to maintain control of their colonies with a minimal of military expense. The strategy of divide and rule led to antagonistic sentiments within society by dividing people along ethnic markers consisting of common religion, language and origin. These antagonistic sentiments caused constant fear of each other and lead to an ethnic security dilemma between groups.

Weak states and intrastate insecurity are the inevitable consequences of colonialism. These states are invariably born weak. Many states carved out of colonial empires have suffered from a set of internal problems, such as domestic violence, power struggle and ethnic hatreds. For this reason, structurally weak states have attracted attention in scholarly analysis of ethnic conflict. When states are structurally weak, ethno-cultural groups are able to control the state or create a new state. The problem is that ethnic groups within these states see other groups as a threat to their political, economic and physical security. Ethnic nepotism is the result of that view.

The idea of “only trust your own blood” underpins the foundation of ethnic nepotism. This tendency is very common in societies where people are divided along lines of ethnicity. The instincts of self-preservation and promotion are the two significant components of ethnic nepotism. These instincts convince ethnic groups to trust only their own blood brothers. This tendency can bring groups into conflict by contributing to discriminatory treatments in political, social and economic life.

Discriminatory implications have attracted attention in scholarly analysis of ethnic conflict. They are considered as potential driving forces behind ethnic conflicts because they are able to escalate the violence of conflict. For instance, constraints on political representation, religious freedom and the teaching and use of mother language generate feelings of resentment and levels of frustration. Ethno-cultural groups are prone to apply violence when they are unable to exploit the same opportunities with the host society.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Conclusions**

Throughout this thesis, some of the key forces behind the outbreak of ethnic violence stretching from Asia to Africa have been examined. The world has seen an increase in the number of civil wars since the end of the Cold War. While the risk of inter-state war has declined in salience, the reverse is true of intra-state conflict. Armed conflicts resulting from the quest for national self-determination and increased political autonomy have contributed to higher levels of domestic violence throughout the world. The demand for increased political autonomy by Kurds and Tamils, for example, continues to impose a heavy toll on the countries where they are situated.

Specifically, ethnic violence has become an endemic part of the political and social life of many post-colonial states. They have been mired in poverty and have suffered from ineffective governments and sharp communal polarities since they became independent following World War II. The failure to recognize and extend basic human rights to other culturally distinct ethnic groups, such as the right to speak and teach their mother language, increases the likelihood of conflict spiraling into violence. Moreover, postcolonial states with ineffective governments are ill-equipped to handle communal violence and sometimes stimulate violence with their own attempts at political, economic and social reform. Violent domestic strife is very common where people have no equal rights to access political, economic and social resources.

There is no doubt ethnic conflicts pose a great threat to state, group and individual security today. This is true of Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, Tamils in Sri Lanka and equally true of the Kosovar Albanians. Their conflicts took a dramatic and deadly turn with the end of the Cold War. It is also true that ethnic violence resulted in the breakup of states and the formation of new states in the

early 1990s. As a result, the search for, and application of ethnic conflict management strategies within the international community in general, and amongst the Western states in particular gained in prominence. It remains to be seen whether those actions undertaken with some modicum of success will produce peace, security and stability in the long run.

Since the end of the Cold War, conflicts within states have been the most important cause of violence. Much effort has been placed on working to prevent the outbreak of such violent conflict, or its spread. Initially, the UN was placed centre stage of these efforts to reduce or eliminate the immediate manifestations of violence, alongside growing demands for international intervention. In so doing, the UN made the prevention of the outbreak of intra-state violence, which invariably threatens international and regional peace and security, one of its conflict management priorities. Former UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali argued that the escalation of conflict to violence can be avoided through preventive diplomacy; the actions of an external nation, group of nations or international organization to prevent internal conflicts from turning violent. Although theoretically and potentially effective, states have been generally reluctant to intervene in the internal affairs until it is too late, as happened in the case of the Former Yugoslavia. The international community was too late to prevent the violence following the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, and its late response with peacekeeping forces (UNPROFOR I) was unable to stop the outbreak of ethnic violence in Bosnia, even with the establishment of UNPROFOR II. Only when Serbian irredentism led to public outrage at the genocide underway did the international community respond through a sustained military campaign led by the NATO. It was through the presence of NATO forces and the recent memory of Bosnia that led to early military intervention into Kosovo, and even here, it was somewhat too late.

A fundamental assumption of Preventive Diplomacy is that some conflicts are likely to be unavoidable, but it is easier to manage them before violence has occurred, rather than respond after

the fact. In this regard, the management of conflict depends upon the actions, and initiatives of an outside, ‘neutral’ third party. An outsider, acceptable to all sides of the conflict can assist in the prevention of violence by conciliation, mediation, and even in some cases arbitration. In conciliation, the neutral third party gathers facts, identifies issues in the dispute, and seeks to encourage the parties to reach an agreement. In mediation, the third party has the added task of proposing a solution to facilitate an agreement, without imposing a solution. In arbitration, the parties entrust the settlement of a dispute to an arbitrator whose decision is binding on both sides; this is the most difficult approach because in essentially imposing a settlement, the result may not be accepted by one or any of the parties to the conflict as legitimate.

The essential role of the third party in the successful resolution or management of conflict is to facilitate productive confrontations between the parties, that is, the direct discussion of contentious issues. The third party can encourage mutual positive motivations to reduce the conflict by treating issues with confidentiality. If the parties have no respect for the mediator’s integrity, impartiality, and ability, the third party cannot assist in the prevention of violence or in the escalation of conflict. Fischer (1997) argues that the third party should be impartial to encourage the parties to reach an agreement. Otherwise, the parties do not put their best foot forward and try hard to resolve issues. The necessary attributes of the third party, including neutrality, integrity, high control over the process and moderate knowledge of the conflict need to be examined in future studies to contribute to a better understanding of the role third parties can play in preventing and mitigating violent conflict.

While the logic or theory of preventive diplomacy as an effective conflict management tool is self-evident, as noted above states are reluctant to act for a variety of reasons. First intervening in civil conflicts is a risky business. It can result in high numbers of combat casualties as happened in the case of Somalia in 1992. In reaction to the continued violence and the humanitarian disaster, the

United States under UN auspices organised a military coalition with the purpose of creating a secure environment in southern Somalia for the conduct of humanitarian operation. The United Task Force (UNITAF) with personnel contributions from several nations, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Turkey was forged with the finest of humanitarian intentions but it ended in death and disaster.

Second, interventions generally take place when clear national interests are at stake. Often nations chose to act only in defense of their vital national security interests. Somalia was, by in large, a purely humanitarian mission possessing no vital interest to the United States and others at that time. Most of the outcry for intervention came from the UN Secretary-General and terrifying media reports. Somalia was no threat to America's security nor its economic wellbeing. Third, often nations suggest that diplomacy and sanctions are the only road to peace and getting involved will either fail or longer term deteriorate into further violence (Inat, 2003).

If preventive diplomacy fails or is not attempted, the international community can take other steps to manage conflict: peace enforcement, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building. Peace enforcement is military action undertaken by the international community in order to head off violence, or bring an end to violence through the use of military force in order to re-establish negotiations and bargaining between the parties. Peacemaking employs diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and negotiate a peaceful settlement of their dispute. Peacekeeping is the attempt to facilitate a negotiated resolution by interposing 'neutral' military forces between the parties after a ceasefire (and in recent examples even in the absence of a ceasefire). Finally, building peace is an extensive menu of possible actions in the political, economic and social fields to prevent the renewal of violence.

All these of these conflict management and resolution strategies contain elements or components that can be used for preventive purposes and share the following characteristics: they all depend on early warning that the risk of violent conflict exists; they require information about the causes and likely nature of the potential violence so that the appropriate preventive action can be identified; and they prefer, if not require the consent of the party or parties within whose jurisdiction the preventive action is to take place. Regardless of the elements chosen by the international community, timing is crucial. The prevention of violence in an ethnic conflict is like the prevention of a disease from becoming fatal. If the prescribed treatment occurs at the wrong moment in the evolution of a disease, the patient does not improve, and the credibility of both the treatment and the physician who prescribed it is compromised. When preventive actions are applied early, the threat or the outbreak of violence can be prevented. The late intervention of the international community to head off violence in Rwanda, for example, led to one of the bloodiest massacre of civilians in modern times. Although the international community, mainly the governments of Belgium, the United States and the UN political headquarters, realized preparations were underway for a full-scale genocide, no actions were taken to prevent it (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996).

In every conflict, it is possible to define the source of incompatibilities between different groups whose nature will significantly determine whether the dispute will be settled peacefully or will escalate to violence. In this regard, understanding the origins of a conflict is essential in choosing the most appropriate prevention tools by the international community. Although this study has not examined the relationship between origins and appropriate prevention tools, it has looked directly at the nature of conflict, the factors underlying the shift from peaceful to violent conflict and the specific impact of the colonial experience, it has set the stage for further research on the most appropriate prevention tools. In this context, emphasis appears to be directed to peace building approaches not as

they are generally seen as a post-violence approach, but as a preventive approach. In the cases of the colonial legacy of ethnic nepotism, the international community if it truly seeks to prevent violent conflict must build effective states with effective human rights institutions, measures and practices. Of course, this carries numerous political, economic and social implications that need to be examined in future studies. Nonetheless, if such steps are not taken, then violent ethnic conflicts are likely to remain a prominent feature of the international landscape, with all the attendant threats to international peace and security.

In undertaking this future research, it is useful to conclude by highlighting the findings of this study. In reviewing scholarly thinking about the causes of conflict between individuals, groups, and societies, four main arguments emerged; first, conflict is an unsettling and inevitable fact of social life. It is an interactive process and intrinsic to human society. There is no way to eliminate conflict per se. Second, the causes of conflict must be identified, by understanding the elements of conflict, which consist of communication, emotions, values and history. These elements have a potential to affect and shape perceptions and feelings of people that have a great impact on the escalation of conflict to violence.

Third, the most common form of violent conflicts that result from perceived incompatibilities are international and domestic wars. Domestic and international conflicts occur when perceived incompatibility exists between relevant actors. Finally, conflict is an unavoidable fact and exists in all relationships experienced by humans. Efforts to remove conflicts from the world are fruitless. Rather, efforts to understand the causes of conflict are important to prevent conflicts from becoming violent. In this regard, preventive actions that seek to ease tensions before violence breaks out gain prominence in handling conflicts. The efficient employment of preventive diplomacy and peace building can contribute to compromise on the issues fostering distrust and hostility between parties

in which participants accomplish their goals by reaching an agreement. In cases where violence is likely to occur, parties must bear in mind that actions to identify and create support structures to strengthen and solidify peace. That will, in turn, enhance the maintenance of international peace and security.

Alongside these initial conclusions, this study has shown that ethnic violence is frequent and deadly. With the end of the Cold War, the world has seen an increase in the number of intra-state conflicts that have hastened the process of national disintegration and resulted in millions of dead and displaced people. Accordingly, there were fifty-nine ethnically armed hostilities at the beginning of 1999 and 11.5 million internationally recognized refugees as a result (Gurr, 2001). The severity of violent confrontations between security forces and minority groups made ethnic conflicts a serious and widespread social, economic and political problem. The most common forms of ethnic violence are secessionist and irredentist movements that represent an effort to unite ethnic kin under the root of one state. There is the potential for violence whenever an ethnic group seeks to withdraw from a political identity to set up an independent state within the boundaries of an existing state.

In this regard, ethnic conflicts within multi-national countries are a product of nationalism. While nationalism affirms the principle of the territorial integrity of states, it provides a ground for territorial disputes. Many states are truly nations, but many nations are not sovereign states. The demand for self-determination and self-governance driven by feelings and beliefs of ethnic solidarity emerging from common shared valued motivates decisions to undertake violent acts against state authority. When ethnic groups are unable to reconcile their differences when one rules, the result is to weaken the government through violent insurgent activities.

In light of these conclusions, the efficient employment of preventive diplomacy that seeks to manage social and political conflict peacefully can ease tensions before they result in violence. This

diplomacy can be performed directly by each side to the dispute, but in most cases requires some form of ‘neutral’ third party involvement. Such efforts to foster regular dialog and cooperation between the parties certainly strengthen and solidify domestic and international peace.

The study emphasizes the legacy of European colonialism on the genesis of current violent ethnic conflicts. Domestic violence continues to be a prominent feature in the areas exposed to European colonial expansion, including the Middle East, Africa, parts of Central and Latin America, South Asia. The countries located in these regions have become weaker over time. In the aftermath of decolonization following World War II, postcolonial states failed economically, socially and politically. Impoverishment and political instability created and deepened ethnic violence that resulted from distrust and deep-seated animosities between communal groups fostered by European imperialism.

In seeking to exploit their colonies and their inhabitants for economic and political gain, the European powers employed the strategy of divide and rule to maintain control of their colonies with minimal military expense. As mentioned in the study. This strategy and resulting policies aimed at dividing people along ethnic lines in order to control existing indigenous structures. By dividing people along ethnic lines and playing one against each other, the colonial powers prevented them from allying themselves together against the colonial power.

Today’s ethnic violence in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Asia is the heritage of the application of divide and rule. Ethnic segregation or a segmented cultural division created ethnic boundaries and fostered distrust and deep-seated animosities amongst ethnic groups. The application of divide and rule by European powers left behind structurally weak states and provided a fertile ground for the eruption of modern ethnic conflicts.

Following World War II, nepotistic treatments emerged from the tendency to favor kin over non-kin associated with the political, economic and social life of postcolonial states and led culturally distinct groups to ally along ethnic lines, thereby increasing ethnic polarization within society. This reinforced ethnic divisions within society and provoked domestic violence within many post-colonial states such as Rwanda and Sri Lanka.

As a result, the world today is the consequence of Western imperial expansion, which has had a great impact on the formation of ethnic hatreds stimulating the outbreak of modern violent ethnic conflicts. European colonialism left behind structurally weak states lacking political legitimacy and politically sensible borders. They have been weakened by internal problems such as an inability to promote economic development and to reform unequal political structures and processes. The destructive consequences of ethnic violence in large parts of the world raise grave doubts about the future of the international system of states and the security of their citizens. Preventive actions are essential to prevent the intensification of violence or territorial spread of existing ethnopolitical conflicts.

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