PATTERNS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION: IDENTIFYING SEQUENCES AND COMPARING PROCESSES OF PEACEMAKING

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PATTERNS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION: IDENTIFYING SEQUENCES AND COMPARING PROCESSES OF PEACE MAKING

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ABSTRACT

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This article introduces and justifies the research method followed in the case studies discussed below, which form part of a collective research project. In contrast to dominant approaches to the study of conflict and settlement which narrow the parameters of study to particular levels of violent conflict and to short-term criteria of settlement, this study takes a longer time frame and a diachronic approach. It works with in-case over-time comparisons of the processes which led to relative failure and success in settlement initiatives in each case study and then compares those processes across cases. This article explains and justifies the approach.
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Books on which the authors have collaborated include: *The dynamics of conflict in Northern Ireland: power, conflict and emancipation* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); *After the Good Friday agreement: analysing political change in Northern Ireland* (UCD Press, 1999); *Europe’s Old States in a New World Order: The Politics of Transition in Britain, France and Spain.* (UCD Press, 2003); *Ethnicity and Religion: Intersections and Comparisons* (Routledge, 2010).
PATTERNS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION: IDENTIFYING SEQUENCES AND COMPARING PROCESSES OF PEACEMAKING

INTRODUCTION

Can we identify patterns of conflict resolution? Can a systematic historical-comparativist approach reveal structural and geo-historical processes predisposing towards settlement in different types of cases? The authors of each case study collected here were asked to look at sequences of settlement attempts, and to explain what made the difference between relative failure and relative success in their case. In particular, they were asked to look at the structural relations and distribution of resources—socio-economic, state resources, international resources—and the role they played in transforming populations and parties into belligerent actors, and—on occasion—changing them back into peaceful participants in political institutions. This volume explores what comparative lessons can be extracted from a carefully designed set of such studies. This approach lets us use insights from particular (albeit exceptional) cases to throw into relief processes at work in different sequences and with different priorities in other cases.

The dominant approach to the study of conflict and settlement is to narrow the parameters of study to particular levels of violent conflict, to short-term criteria of settlement and to clear-cut independent variables that may explain violence/peace across all cases.¹ Peace research equally looks at immediate forms of mediation, negotiation and guarantees of security.² Given the multiplicity of interacting variables in every conflict and settlement, and the wide variety of conflicts, it is perhaps little surprise that relatively few significant results have been found. One response has been to strip down the object of study to processes of violence, explained not by the particular socio-political or socio-cultural cultural relations in the society and region, but by the opportunities for insurrection and the security guarantees for demobilisation (Laitin, 2007; Walter, 1997). From this perspective, we can draw no lessons from the particularities of a few striking instances of settlement—South Africa or Northern Ireland—precisely because they are “outliers” in the larger database.

More recent work has begun to focus on complexly defined variables including structural “horizontal” inequalities (Stewart, 2008), ethnic politicisation and the role of the state in ethnic exclusion (Cederman et al, 2010). From a theoretical and comparative perspective, it is highly plausible that the impact of particular variables—from economic development to insurrection opportunities, from international mediation, equality of representation, guarantees of security and participation to external impacts—depends on their sequencing and combination within a conflict (Brown, 1996; Wimmer, 2008). It is, for example, common in the case studies presented in this volume that the form of possible settlement is known from an early stage but is successfully implemented only later when resources and incentives have become available or transformed. Equally, the role of these factors

¹ See for example, Laitin, 2007; Stedman et al, 2002; Brown, 1996; David, 1997
² Crocker, 1996; Crocker et al, 1996; Zartman, 1989; Touval and Zartman, 1989c
may vary considerably in different sorts of conflict depending, for example, on the historically given configuration of populations, the form and stability of the state and the relation of populace, parties and militants. A longer historical frame is therefore required, to allow us to trace changing relations between different levels of processes, to show their interrelation, and, by situating particular types of event within these processes to show why they may have very different consequences at different times (Pierson, 2004; Ruane and Todd, 2007; Coakley, 2010).

Such a historically grounded approach to conflict, settlement and comparisons reaches beneath conventional variables to look at the processes that make them important, for example

- **Spoilers**: Spoilers are of course significant in preventing or destroying peace agreements, but these actors need resources to be effective. These resources are typically given by the state-society configuration, including the institutions of law and order, and relations between militants, parties and populations. Our study looks below the fact of spoilers to the underlying conditions which give them power (Stedman, 1997).

- **Leadership**: The role of leadership is undoubtedly essential in mediation, negotiation and in the process of transition from violence to peace. (Brown, 1996; Lipjhart, 1977) If one-time insurrectionaries are to turn to participation within democratic political institutions, they need leaders who legitimate this transformation (King et al, 2005). However, effective leadership may be less to do with the character of individuals than with the opportunities on offer that give the rationale for peace and that make these legitimations plausible and rational to followers whose critical faculties have been honed by violent conflict. Our focus is not on the psychology of leadership but rather on the institutional opportunities that encourage it.

- **Effective representative institutions**: These institutions, often consociational, sometimes quasi-federal- are central in negotiating a settlement. A sense of equitable participation by the different parties and populations underpins the sense of legitimacy necessary to allow peace (O'Leary and McGarry, 1996; Coakley, 2010). However the functionality of representative institutions depends crucially on other structural relations, the relative power resources of the different actors, group expectation, wider institutional configuration (Hall and Thelen, 2009). Our study situates particular institutions in this wider context and thus explains their functioning.

- **External shocks**: State and imperial collapse, refugee influx, falling commodity prices, changing international alliances and norms often provoke conflict and sometimes less explicitly, pave the way to settlement. Why these have the impact that they do is in part dependent on deeper expectations of the populace and parties, and wider linkages between populations. This study situates geopolitics in geohistory, asking for the relevance of the events to the long term expectations of different populations.
Security dilemmas: Security concerns often prevent demilitarisation and upset settlements, and equally prevent demobilisation (Posen, 1993; Walter, 1997). Conversely it is also clear that focus simply on arms and disarmament in the short-term, given that rearmament is always an option for organised groups is naïve. More important is the will to work peacefully and to transform longue durée strategy. This is a much more complex and long term “game”, involving predictions of changing opportunities and shifting aims. This of course feeds back to the expectations, institutional transformations and changing structural and geopolitical conditions that underlie processes of conflict and settlement, and that are the object of this study.

This proposed special issue takes the hypothesis that historically embedded patterns of conflict are likely to be breakable by a limited range of processes. These can be found by overtime in-case comparisons, and then compared between cases. This special issue, based on a funded collective project and close collaboration on research questions and approach between authors and editors – gives six sets of experts on widely diverse cases identical research questions: having characterised the character of conflict in the region, indicate what processes made the difference between more or less successful initiatives at conflict resolution. This allows us to look below immediate factors of institutional design or “spoilers” to the wider relations of populations, parties and paramilitaries, historically given matrices of institutions and networks (not only within, but also between states) and their effects on institutional functioning and both popular and party expectations. By situating particular events within longer processes we can see why superficially similar events and proposals have very different consequences at different times in one case. The second step is to compare the processes predisposing to conflict and settlement across very different cases. This is the topic of the final comparative chapter.

CONCEPTS, LEVELS OF ANALYSIS, METHOD

Ethnicity, violence, conflict: case selection

The literature shows the arbitrary nature of any definition of what is an “internal conflict” or even more an “ethnic conflict” (Coakley, 2010; Carter and Fenton, 2009; Chandra, 2006). Some data sets pick a mark of 1,000 deaths per year, but if we wish to capture the intuitive concept of a conflict which undermines political stability and which is popularly based and recurrent, any number is arbitrary (Coakley, 2003, 2010): at the margins, the categorisation of a “conflict”—rather than simply a set of endemic tensions typical of all plural societies—has to be made substantively, in terms of the forces present and the ways in which stability is ensured (Coakley, 2010 ). It remains useful to distinguish “internal” from inter-state conflicts, but with the proviso that no conflict is purely “internal”, given inputs from neighbour-states, refugees, international actors and global economic processes. For our purposes, “ethnic” conflicts can be described as multiply-constituted conflicts, whose distinction from class, economic, or ideological conflict lies in the convergence of a multiplicity of elements to create the predisposition for recurring
conflict based on popular, everyday divisions usually involving descent-narratives (Ruane and Todd, 2004; Jenkins, 2008; Carter and Fenton, 2009): it remains an open question whether the precise character of conflict (ethno-national, religious, territorial) affects its course and the prospects of settlement (Ruane and Todd, 2010).

In this project we have selected a set of very different conflicts. Four involve significant levels of violence between politically- and militarily-organised populations defined by multiplex cultural distinctions and embedded in relations of state-guaranteed inequality: Rwanda, Northern Ireland, the Côte d'Ivoire and Mindanao. We include two conflicts—Zanzibar and Macedonia—with minimal violence but with many of the same elements as the other conflicts: descent based narratives, territorially-based cultural as well as economic distinction, political organisation of the competing groups, horizontal inequalities upheld by the form of the state, in one case in an unstable region. In two cases—Côte D'Ivoire and Zanzibar—a precise definition of the warring groups is still in process of formation and we can see a process of ethnicisation at work. In each case, groups in conflict were formed in the process of imperial expansion and withdrawal. We pick these different situations, with very different sets of actors, state resources and degrees of violence\(^3\) to see if there are patterns in the ways these elements are interrelated that may open the way to settlement and to explore what makes some so much more difficult to settle than others.

**Success and failure, what is to be explained?**

What makes the difference between success and failure in settlement attempts? If we were attempting to compare the conditions that lead to successful settlements across cases, we would require a definition of success applicable to all the cases. Minimally, we might, with Stedman (Stedman & Rothchild, 2002) take the simple "ending civil wars", i.e. the radical reduction of violence in the immediate post-agreement period, as the measure. More substantively, we might take the implementation of peace accords as the measure of settlement although here we would have far fewer cases in our comparison, and we would also need to distinguish between accords that are only partially implemented and those fully implemented, those where implementation is stalled and those where it is simply slow. Maximally, we might take the undermining of divisions (communal, cultural, and structurally-defined conflicts of interest) as the end-goal and attempt to assess how far settlement had advanced towards this.\(^4\)

Of course, as Darby & MacGinty (2008) point out, settlements are processes, moving from minimalist truces through towards social transformation, it would be

\(^3\) For example, Mindanao experienced 120,000 deaths in 40 years of intermittent violence, with 2 million displaced; in the Côte D'Ivoire, several thousand died in less than 10 years, 700,000 displaced; In Northern Ireland, there were nearly 3,500 deaths in thirty years; in Macedonia, over 200 were killed in 2001, 170,000 displaced (of whom most returned); in Zanzibar 35 were killed in 2001 elections, and over 600 injured; more violence occurred in the 2005 elections.

\(^4\) Thanks to Catherine O'Rourke of the Institute of Transitional Justice, UU, for this formulation of concepts of success in settlement.
arbitrary to pick any one cut-off point as a mark of failure or success. It is possible however to think in terms of a continuum of settlement-initiatives which ranges from more to less failure, less to more success: from the monumental failure of an initiative which increases violence, through to the failure of settlement attempts that make no impact on violence, to the mild improvements of interim truces and reductions in violence, through the reaching of agreement, the implementation of agreement, to the diffusion of divisions and transformation of social relations.

Each case study starts at with a different level of violence, and successive initiatives move it up or down the settlement scale. The same conditions, for example uneasy enforced powersharing, may count as a movement up the settlement scale in one case (a relative success in maintaining stability in post-genocide Rwanda) and a movement down the scale in another (in Zanzibar, where violence has been intermittent and low-level, and the aim is to undermine emergent divisions). However relative success and failure is much more clearly identifiable within each case. Our research strategy is therefore two-fold: first, to identify the processes that produce movement up or down the failure-success scale in each case; second to compare these processes between cases.

Levels of analysis

The many factors which affect the relative success and failure of settlements can be categorised into four interacting levels of analysis, each with a different temporality and different geographical range (see Figure 1 below).

Each level is interconnected. Structural and geohistorical conditions underpin population divisions (cultural, power-relations, etc) which are politicised and institutionalised in different ways, depending to a large extent on the capacity of the state to produce actors in conflict, who provide the immediate dynamic of violent conflict in a context where geopolitical change gives new incentives to fight or settle. At the same time, the structural level undergoes change, either according to an internal dynamic, affected by global economic developments, and/or by state-implemented change. Indeed the only actor within the conflict region with the resources to make major changes in the conditions of conflict is the state, and thus the form of the state is crucial to the course of conflict and settlement. Whether the incentive to settle comes from inside or from outside actors, and whether the settlement itself affects not just the immediate interrelations of actors, including the state, but also the structural underpinnings of conflict, and who is available to implement such change, are crucial questions.

Figure (1)
Each case study looks at the interrelations between levels, asking if and how changing structural conditions, changing forms of the state, changing geo-political impacts, affected the provisions and commitments made in settlement initiatives and the relative success or failure of them. We began with the theoretically-developed hypotheses that structural conditions, including the form of the state, are significantly more important than many studies suppose, forming actors in quasi-systemic relations, and equally able to be broken by focussed interventions (Ruane & Todd, 2004; Carter and Fenton, 2009). This position was developed through empirical work on one of the case studies (Northern Ireland) and later elaborated in light of subsequent events (Ruane and Todd, this volume). The project set out to test how far it was true of other very different cases. Each of the other case studies proceeded empirically, so that the processes (if any) underlying relative success and failure, the directions of influence and causal patterns were the conclusions of research. Thus the project and comparison provides a test of how far such a structural-systemic approach to conflict and settlement is generalisable. It allows us
to assess what sorts of lessons, if any, can be learned from the relative success of the Northern Ireland case, even given the exceptional nature of that case (the strength and resources of the British state and the stability of the regional environment).

**PROCESSES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS**

*The accords: forms and processes of settlement*

Many studies explain the success or failure of settlement attempts in terms of the processes of mediation, negotiation, implementation: the timing of settlement initiatives, the inclusiveness, the role of international actors and guarantors, the process of negotiation, the quality of leadership; the provisions of settlement; the implementation of settlement and the existence and mode of dealing with spoilers (Crocker, 1996; Stedman, 1997; Zartman, 1989). Without understating the importance of these proximate factors, we want to explore if wider processes may be important in their effects.

For example, given skilled mediators and negotiators, it is probably true that institutional arrangements can be found which (*if properly worked in practice*), can accommodate most sets of interests (*assuming accommodation is wanted*). While this requires experienced mediators and well-structured negotiation, the really serious problems lie in the qualifications.

Indeed what is striking in several of these case studies is that the basic political form of agreement was acknowledged by most parties from early in the conflict: Mindanao, Northern Ireland, Macedonia are examples in this study. There are two reasons why success in settlement did not follow: first, because some parties believed that they might not need to accommodate their opponents; second, because the political institutions did not function as expected. It is a truism of “new institutionalism” that how institutions function depends not just on the formal rules (the formal agreement, and the institutions it proposes) but on the expectations and power relations and coordination patterns of the actors, and on the wider institutional matrix in which they are situated (which provides both resources and opportunities to the actors). How the political institutions of a settlement function depends on structural preconditions: sometimes (as in Rwanda in 1994, or in Northern Ireland in 1974) these give very strong incentives and resources to those who want to destroy the settlement. In such circumstances, the successful functioning of new institutions depends upon structural change, which at the same time changes the incentives for the actors.

In all but two of the cases in this volume the proposed settlement structures are consociational, or consociational plus autonomy. (In Timor Leste and Mindanao, the settlement structure involves respectively independence and autonomy). The contemporary importance of consociational models is clear—sharing power is the accepted answer to ethnic power struggle. Of course there are different models of powersharing, more or less corporatist, more or less liberal, more or less favouring

5 See Hall and Thelen, 2009; Streeck and Thelen, 2005
extreme or middle ground parties (Horowitz, Taylor). The precise model is important, but it is not the focus of this study. What is evident is the very radical differences of functioning of similar models in different societies, again pointing to the need to situate institutional analysis (and institutional design) in the political and popular dynamics of the society (Storey, Ramadhani, Ruane and Todd this volume).

Equally, the current debates on how “inclusive” a set of negotiations should be misidentifies the problems of settlement (Wilson, 2010). Of course it is preferable to provide avenues for participation for all significant groups, including those “extremes” with popular support, but inclusion neither has to be immediate (a settlement can provide avenues for future participation for those groups who do not presently wish to participate) nor does it guarantee success. All the relatively successful settlements discussed in this volume “build up” support—political and popular—over time, in different sequences. What is necessary is a realistic programme of attaining increasing support, rather than an immediate inclusivity in negotiations.

Thus the papers to follow explore the following questions:

- How formal settlement provisions take on different significance with changes at the structural/geo-political/political levels.

- How formal provisions themselves induce changes at these other levels—beginning a process of structural reform, changing the form of state, agreeing/guaranteeing clear constitutional constraints on future change.

- If and how the success of an agreement depends on its capacity to open up avenues of structural and institutional change.

Geohistorical patterns, geopolitical impacts and populations in conflict

Groups-in-conflict may present themselves as simple “ethnic” groups, but are typically made from a multiplicity of elements. All of the cases with which we are concerned involve several overlapping cultural distinctions (ethnicity, religion, territorial origin, language, national loyalties) embedded in structurally given inequalities and power relations, typically set in place in the process of colonisation and imperial administration, and their salience reinforced in the struggles of decolonisation. If this is common to the cases in this volume, however, the precise modes of self- and other-understanding differ markedly, with some cases showing strong national and nationalist oppositions, and others much more fluid, territorially delimitied with a politicising and ethnicising process still underway. The cases thus provide a wealth of data to see how and if different distinctions (ethno-national vs religio-territorial) with different totalising powers and different degrees of fluidity or fixedness of boundaries affect conflict (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998). They also allow us to assess the effects of different forms of structurally-based inequalities. For example, do conflicts differ if horizontal inequalities are—or are seen to be—the product of (a) natural resource allocation (b) the colonial inheritance (c) state
structures and institutions? Can change in the state’s role outweigh the continuing effects of other inequalities?

In at least some cases, long-run patterns of the increase/decrease of “ethnic” power resources can be discerned, which take on a certain dynamic of their own. They may be the product of geo-political change—imperial withdrawal, state fragmentation—which creates different resources and different allies for the different linguistic and religious groups in the territory. A once-favoured population, with significant resources in the territory, may be challenged as its past champions leave. When this takes place in tandem with imperial withdrawal, the repertoires of colonial resentment and imperial status may be called upon. Even more important, and particularly where the process is a long one, the populations themselves may come to believe that there is a “direction” of history leading to their redemption, or their defeat.

Subsequent articles will ask if such popular perceptions of directionality are common or uncommon in situations of conflict. Once a population becomes a declining minority even in “its own” territory (as with the Moro in Mindanao), or a population senses a long-term advance (as with Northern Ireland Catholics), how does it affect their sense of conflict and their strategies? And how are these perceptions interrelated with contemporary geopolitical processes: regional instability, cross-border incursions of arms and refugees, violence and political crisis in neighbouring countries, international interests and presence? It is well known that such processes may have major effects on conflict (Lake & Rothchild, 1998). But when do such contemporary events reinforce, disconfirm, or even constitute the perceptions of long-term ethnic advance or decline? In what ways can international action and regional institutions positively affect popular and militant perceptions of the future and of the best ways to prepare for it?

**States, populations and structural conditions**

States (through their officials in government, the judiciary, the military, the police) are actors in conflict situations. They are often the only internal actors with the resources to develop and implement complex settlement plans. Even more importantly, they are complex, interconnected institutional arenas in which different actors are situated. As has often been emphasised, there are no “controllers” of the state: it is a matrix of “fiefs, clans and factions” (Poulantzas, 1978), which always functions differently than leaders expect (Thelen and streeck 2005). At the limit, some states appear as instruments of ruling ethnic groups but even then some institutional arenas and some actors work on universalistic rather than ethnic rules (for the Northern Ireland case, see Bew et al, 1995, pp 56-63). More often, states act in ethnically-biased ways not primarily because they are under the control of one ethnic group but for contingent, historically-determined reasons: pockets of

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6 On occasion, there are patterns (demographic, territorial, geopolitical, the cultural strengthening of one language) which increase the resources of one at the expense of another group. One can make sense of the seeming “direction” of history in terms of a path-dependent process whereby the initial stages of the process—the movement towards one language, the demographic diminution of a minority—make it significantly more likely that the process will continue.
ethnic allies in key parts of the state, entrenched practices and rules which unintentionally produce ethnically biased outcomes. Some states attempt to implement policies of reform even while some of their institutional rules (embodied in the security forces, judiciary, the constitution itself, property law) systematically reproduce horizontal inequalities. Defence of these institutions and rules need not be on ethnic grounds: the judiciary is notoriously conservative and may defend its stance for reasons unrelated to the ethnic-effects of its decisions.

In such cases, reform of the state to make it a more neutral arena for participation of all sectors of the population, and a fairer policy maker between them, is in principle possible. In effect, the universalistic rules and pluralist institutions can be drawn on as resources to change the ethnically biased ones. Even when the incentives for undertaking such reform may not be evident to state elites, it is nonetheless important in analysis to deconstruct the idea of the state into its component parts rather than assuming either neutrality or ethnocra

From this perspective, different “internal” or “ethnic” conflicts can be distinguished in terms of the role of the state in them (Coakley 2003; O’Leary, Lustick et al, 2001). We can begin with three schematic possibilities.

1: Is the state stable, and only one region problematic? A region may be problematic because of internal conflict within it, and/or because it has a regionally concentrated culturally distinct population with secessionist politics. Rokkan (Flora,1999) has outlined the historical processes by which such regions emerged in Europe and the range of potential issues in conflict, and a range of other authors have shown how colonial expansion left states with similarly problematic regions (see Lustick, 1995). Our case studies show how they emerged in parts of Africa and Asia. In principle, in such circumstances, the state has considerable leeway to resolve the problem, either by granting some form of autonomy and/or by restructuring the problematic region. In practice, many internal obstacles—norms, entrenched practices, vested interests in positions to veto change—may prevent this.

2: Is the state stable, and the problem lies not with one region but with one minority dispersed throughout it? A major question lies in the character of the minority (religious, national, indigenous, immigrant and the extent of its demands (see Coakley, 2010). In principle, even where minorities would prefer a different drawing of state boundaries, reform of the state to ensure full minority participation should be possible. Often, however, this is a significantly more difficult process than it may appear for it means quite radical change in state values and constitutive norms (for Protestant minorities in Europe, see Ruane and Todd, 2009).

3: Is the state inherently unstable, subject to armed coups, such that all the rules of the game are in question. In this case there are no agents, other than the warring parties and international actors, to undertake restructuring.7

7 While it may seem a simple matter to assign a state to a category, some states start as A and progress to C, some start by being defined (by the state itself) as B, and later redefined as A.
Of course even in the seemingly easier cases 1 and 2, the state itself may not be neutral in the conflict. It might be, for example, in most or all of its institutions, a state of the ethnic majority (O’Leary and McGarry, 1996) or a state “in hock” to one of the regional warring parties (see Lustick, 1995). In these cases it will be all but impossible to find agents within the state able and willing to undertake reform. It is also possible that for geopolitical reasons, the minority or regional problem endangers the stability of the state, for example by encouraging neighbours to claim a part of the state’s territory. In such cases, state freedom of manoeuvre would be constrained not so much by communal bias but by inherent state interests (stability, continuity).

Whether or not a state is able to undertake conflict resolution in its territory depends on the extent of necessary restructuring and the agents available to undertake it. Where it requires close to total reconstruction with the related confrontation of veto powers, ethnic conflict is likely to be resolved only in times of major transformation. in Spain for example, after the death of Franco, democratisation went hand in hand with the process of creating autonomous communities, because of the mutual need of support by democrats and regional nationalists (Comas, 2003). Where the necessary restructuring is partial and confined to the problematic region, as arguably in Zanzibar, there are likely to be considerably more resources and agents capable of taking on the task. In other cases, it requires outside agencies to guide restructuring. One important issue is how key actors and units within the state can be incentivised to find and work a settlement. When do states make the costly effort to resolve a conflict? Why do they not make this effort more frequently? What costs are they willing to pay, and when?

**Politcisation, the political actors, the paramilitary actors**

A central factor that transforms ethnic division into ethnic conflict is politicisation (Wimmer, 2008). Does variation in cleavage structure (cultural differences, degrees and range of inequality) affect political organisation and demands? Once conflict begins, how relevant are these structural-cultural divisions? The answer depends crucially on the interrelations between militants, party and public. The actual involvement of the mass populace varies dramatically across our cases, as does the ways activists are interspersed throughout the wider populace and integrated into it. Parties’ and militants’ resources depend to a crucial degree on their relation with the public as on their relations with the state (in particular the armed forces). The degree of political mobilisation of the populace and their support of militants varies enormously, giving differing constraints on both violence and on compromise. As the relationship varies, so too do the interests in settlement: whether political participation by elites or social equalisation for the populace as a whole is prioritised ((see Stewart et al, 2008) and what sorts of institutional opportunities incline violent insurrectionaries to become participants in the political process. Of course no level of institutional restructuration will remove security dilemmas or do away with spoilers, and of course international guarantors are necessary when the neutrality or strength of the state is in question. But to focus

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8 Wimmer et al (2009) devise a data base in which they count only politicised ethnic actors.
soley on this is to neglect the other resources necessary for settlement: the impetus to overcome security dilemmas and the resources that spoilers have at hand depend on the relations of populace and parties and the ways it is reconfigured through the institutional changes involved in settlement (see Storey, this volume).

THE CASE STUDIES

These cases have been chosen to highlight both similarities and differences. All of these conflicts were formed in the context of imperial rule and its withdrawal, although the timing of this and the “age” of the conflict varies markedly between Northern Ireland, on the one hand, and the African states, on the other. All are politicised “ethnic” conflicts involving multiple partially coinciding cultural distinctions, ascribed as well as assumed identities and a descent orientation, although the form that “ethnicity” takes varies very considerably: in Macedonia, there are clear, exclusive ethno-national distinctions, while in Zanzibar distinction is much more fluid and inchoate with strong historical and officially unspoken racial resonances. In four cases (Northern Ireland, Mindanao, Zanzibar and East Timor) the conflict-region is a defined and culturally distinct part of a larger state, in others (Cote D'Ivoire, Macedonia, Rwanda and the other Great Lakes states) the conflict has to do with minorities and majorities within the state and affects the structure of the state itself, at the limit (Rwanda in the past, Cote D'Ivoire in the present) leading to the breakdown of the state as an actor independent of the warring parties. As noted above, there is wide variation in the intensity and extent of violence.

The timing of conflict and settlement also varies. Some conflicts—as in Zanzibar—are resolved before violence becomes extensive and others, like Macedonia, are settled before whole populations are mobilised. Others involve extensive but far from total mobilisation: so for example, Côte D’Ivoire is like Rwanda before the Burundi genocide of 1993, which spread fear through the whole population. Some have roots in violent dispossession, population movements and massacre and are settled after resources have changed radically: resolving the legacies of conflict in Northern Ireland some four centuries after dispossession is akin to returning to the Great Lakes after economic development, regional institution-building and state stabilisation and using these resources to get a better settlement of difficult conflicts.

These differences coexist with very similar models of settlement—almost all of the cases use a consociational model—but these in turn function very differently in each case. Thus the importance of comparing the processes that lead to relative success/failure of settlements in each case, rather than the settlements themselves. The volume begins with an overview of the comparative literature on the importance of structural conditions to conflict and settlement. It moves on to case studies. We begin with a case where violent conflict has been endemic for centuries and where almost all possible models of settlement have been attempted (with most failing abysmally), which has arrived finally at a relatively successful settlement about which there is already an extensive literature: Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is an outlier in the field of ethnic conflict, primarily because of the
strength, wealth and liberal democratic character of the British state of which it is a part. Yet this also highlights one of the important and unremarked aspects of this settlement: the ways in which the British state (guided, spurred on, and ideologically supported by its Irish neighbour) reconfigured its own institutions to allow settlement in Northern Ireland, and the major difficulties of this process even for a strong, rich and ethnically-detached state. We are thus reintroducing changing structure, institutions and geopolitics into the analysis of this settlement, asking how far, and under what conditions, and in what sequences, processes visible in Northern Ireland are also revealed as important in other cases.

In the following two cases—Cote D'Ivoire and Rwanda—it is the negative sequences that stand out. In the Côte d'Ivoire, state capacities and resources were insufficient to withstand conjunctural changes (fall in cocoa prices, democratisation, leadership change) and, once conflicting groups came to control the state itself, few agents existed to to implement settlement. In Rwanda, state capacities reinforced structural tendencies towards conflict, and together with ill-advised international interventions, made a settlement attempt tragically counterproductive. In four other cases—Macedonia, Mindanao, Timor Leste and Zanzibar—state capacity was greater and international intervention more positive in its effects. Even then, the difficulties of implementing what was early recognised as the form of a viable settlement, are themselves rooted in difficult structural conditions sometimes exacerbated and only sometimes helped by the geopolitical context.

The volume ends with a comparative analysis of the cases, answering some of the questions posed in this introduction.

REFERENCES


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