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Linking Ethnic Conflict & Democratization
An Assessment of Four Troubled Regions

Judith Vorrath, Lutz Krebs and Dominic Senn

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Judith Vorrath, PhD student, ETH Zurich
judith.vorrath@sipo.gess.ethz.ch

Lutz Krebs, PhD student, ETH Zurich
lutz.krebs@icr.gess.ethz.ch

Dominic Senn, PhD student, ETH Zurich
dominic.senn@icr.gess.ethz.ch

NCCR Democracy
Stampfenbachstrasse 63
8006 Zurich, Switzerland
Tel.: + 41 44 634 52 -16/ -17
Fax: + 41 44 634 52 00

Abstract

Ethnic divisions have long been linked to civil war and recent history seems full of examples. However, the mechanisms that lead a society down the path of ethnic conflict are not yet fully understood. This working paper presents the results of a series of workshops discussing the link between ethnicity and conflict under the condition of regime change.

Based on contributions of area experts for four regions - the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Great Lakes of Africa and the Middle East – this paper tries to answer four guiding questions: Is there a link between ethnicity and conflict? Are there transnational spillover effects? Does democratization contribute to ethnic violence? And are there institutional solutions for divided societies?

Keywords: African Great Lakes; Balkans; Caucasus; civil war; conflict spread; democratization; ethnic violence; Middle East; politicized ethnicity; political institutions

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Introduction¹

With the work of Mansfield & Snyder,² the discussion of the link between regime type and war has moved beyond the perception of democracy as a peaceful end point.³ Once democratization is discerned as a dynamic process that sees unstable times before leading to a more robust, less conflict-prone society, it becomes necessary to study the linkages between regime-type transition and conflict. While stable democracies are unlikely to wage war with other democracies, a country that is on the uncertain path towards a new social order may very well see conflict between groups with opposing interests.⁴ A number of theoretical models have been put forward, ranging from conflict theories driven by economic opportunity with a claim to universal validity,⁵ to localized analyses focussing on specific regions, countries or communities that are based on historical links and social settings unique to the conflict location.⁶

This report presents the first results of the project “Democratizing Divided Societies in Bad Neighbourhoods” (henceforth IP3), which is part of a broader research effort into the challenges facing democracy in the 21st century.⁷ A series of workshops were held to study ethnic conflict in several crisis regions in order to test the theoretical assumptions of the IP3 project and to identify conflict patterns and causal mechanisms valid beyond the individual regions.⁸ The workshops were not limited to particular countries or conflicts, deliberately allowing the discussion to focus on the relevant political level (local, national or regional) and avoiding a premature classification into broad categories.

Four regions were selected for the occurrence of (ethnic) violent conflict during periods of political restructuring: the Balkans, the Caucasus, the African Great Lakes region and the Middle East. Political scientists with expertise in the regions’ politics, social dynamics and conflict histories were invited to classify past and ongoing conflicts and highlight their links to ethnicity, regional factors, democratization and political institutions. The discussions then proceeded in two stages: initially, the workshops analyzed whether conflicts are linked to an ethnic dynamic and whether this dynamic is regional in nature. In a second step, the debate focused on the link between regime-type change—in particular democratization—and the occurrence of ethnic conflict.

¹ This paper is based on research done in the project “Democratizing Divided Societies in Bad Neighborhoods” by the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research “Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century” (NCCR Democracy) funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), see <http://www.nccr-democracy.uzh.ch/>. Financial support by the SNSF is gratefully acknowledged.

² Mansfield & Snyder 1995.

³ See e.g. Cederman 2001.

⁴ See e.g. Wimmer 1997.

⁵ Fearon & Laitin 1997; Collier & Hoeffler 2004, among others.

⁶ Davis 2005; Lemarchand 1994; MacFarlane et. al. 1996; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers 2004; Woodward 1995.

⁷ See <http://www.nccr-democracy.uzh.ch/> for more information about all participating projects.

⁸ We would like to thank Arman Grigorian, Jochen Hippler, Cord Jakobeit, Dimitris Keridis, René Lemarchand, Elham Manea, Jeronim Perović and Christoph Zürcher for their participation in the workshops. See Appendix A for short bios of all attending experts.

The present report aims to integrate the results of the workshops with relevant insights from the literature. The structure follows the chronology of the workshop discussions described above.

1) *Presence of Ethnic Factors*

A necessary step for the analysis of ethno-political linkages is the verification that ethnic divisions exist and shape conflict in the four focus regions. The recognition of ethnic dynamics as a strong conflict motor was unanimous, but all experts went to great length to stress that the presence of ethnic differences by itself is insufficient to trigger conflict—an assessment mirrored in the literature.⁹ Ethnic heterogeneity was seen as a characteristic shared by most countries and regions worldwide, which of course forces the question why ethnic conflict is comparatively rare. Moreover, ethnically mixed societies can prosper on their diversity.¹⁰ As such, ethnic heterogeneity does not breed war,¹¹ and its absence does not ensure peace.¹²

For a society to fragment along ethnic lines, a mechanism must be at work that accentuates an ethnic dimension or dimensions out of the multiple, overlapping layers of identity found in all societies and makes it politically relevant.¹³ There was general support for a constructivist model of identity that considers ethnic identities as flexible and changeable, promoted and demoted by political actors or shared events. “Imagined communities” were argued to have the power of uniting people despite strong internal divisions and over considerable geographic distances,¹⁴ as is demonstrated by the Kurdish people.¹⁵

A number of conditions that favour identity-driven social fragmentation were proposed for the focus regions. These range from socio-economic changes that simply draw attention to perceived differences, to conscious attempts of leaders to generate loyalty by appealing to shared identities.¹⁶ While numerous mechanisms that highlight ethnic identity were recognized, there was unanimous agreement that only conscious promotion of a polarizing dimension by political actors would be sufficient to lead to conflict. Actively pursued fragmentation of society can be traced back to different causes such as grievance-driven political activation of suppressed minorities or rent seeking of leaders. See Table 1 below for a survey of the dimensions of diversity and the link to conflict for the four regions.

⁹ Wimmer 1997.

¹⁰ As was the case with the Ottoman Empire at its height.

¹¹ Bulgaria and Romania are two cases of countries that successfully deal with their heterogeneity.

¹² Somalia shows a case of horrific violence in the absence of sharp ethnic differences.

¹³ Wimmer 1997.

¹⁴ As argued by Anderson 1983.

¹⁵ The Kurds are perceived both by themselves and by outside observers as one people despite the fact that they are not united by one common language, religion or even history.

¹⁶ An example of the former would be the process of demographic change and urbanization underway in Yugoslavia after the Second World War, which brought members of different groups into close proximity. The latter mechanism was illustrated with Saddam Hussein’s appeal to Sunni Arabs in general, and citizens of Tikrit in particular, as a way of generating a loyal power base.

Once a society has started to polarize along an ethnic identity dimension, ethnicity is seen as inseparable from conflict. Primordial rhetoric by political actors denies the constructed nature of the dominant identity dimension and thereby undermines efforts to analyze underlying reasons and driving forces. Once violence breaks out, the imagined communities become entrenched—polarizing divisions become deeper and gain relevance for other social, economic or political dimensions, leading to further separation of the conflict groups.

| | Balkans | Caucasus | Great Lakes | Middle East |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <i>Dimensions of diversity</i> | Politicization of diversity dating back to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, continued by Tito after an abandoned attempt at the creation of a uniting, Yugoslav identity. | Linguistic and religious divisions supported/maintained by USSR. Autonomy granted by the Soviet ethno-federalist system. | Constructed ethnicity based on occupation and appearance. Linguistic divisions. Rigid, rank-ordered societies, mainly in Rwanda and Burundi. | Clear, but shifting divisions along religious/sectarian, tribal, national and linguistic lines. Unequal distribution of wealth. Divisive pre-modern power relationships. |
| <i>Link between ethnic diversity and conflict</i> | Diversity highlighted and bridged by socio-economic trends such as modernization, urbanization, secularization and inter-ethnic marriage. Neither these trends, nor federal policies bridged the gap between Kosovar Albanians and others. | Mobilization depended on access to SU institutional frameworks. Occurrence of conflict not proportional to level of diversity. Fragmented elites and unbalanced outside support enabled escalation. | State failure and ethnic divisions form mutually reinforcing dynamic Elites driven by personal incentives or experiences of group persecution politicize identity divisions with a high mobilization potential. | (Purposefully) uneven treatment of groups in economic and political matters furthers the politicization of identity dimension defining these groups. |

Table 1: Diversity in the conflict regions

As all focus regions feature porous borders that were—often deliberately—drawn to be incongruent with the geographic spread of ethnic groups, there are strong transnational linkages. The following section will discuss to what extent such linkages can lead to the spread of violent conflict across international borders.

2) Transnational Linkages & Spread of Violent Conflict

Research on the transnational spread of violent (ethnic) conflict was for a long time lacking studies on the reasons for onset and duration of international and internal conflicts. After the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, as well as newly emerging conflicts in African states in the 1990s, it became increasingly clear that the probability of conflict in any given country might not only depend on its individual attributes and great power politics, but also on the regional setting. Beyond the influence of global factors, the impact of a country's neighbourhood came to the fore as a significant force. A whole series of studies has shown

that violent conflict tends to cluster in space as well as in time, and that countries surrounded by conflictual neighbours face a higher risk of instability and even civil war.¹⁷ Both findings do not automatically imply that transnational factors and conflict spill-over are at work. One could argue that conflict-relevant attributes of countries are also regionally clustered, and therefore conflict onset, in one country neighbouring already destabilized states is simply due to similar characteristics, such as low GDP per capita. However, empirical evidence¹⁸ has shown that there are verifiable neighbourhood and contagion effects. What are the causes of these effects and what mechanisms drive the spread of conflict?

When it comes to the causes of spread, the theoretical literature is quite coherent, naming similar factors such as the division of ethnic groups by international boundaries, refugee flows, transnational arms trafficking, state weakness of “infected” neighbour states and porous boundaries.¹⁹ However, few studies focus on explaining the dynamics of the actual processes leading to the spread of conflict. This strand of literature differentiates certain effects driving the dispersal of (ethnic) conflict—e.g. chain reactions and demonstration effects.²⁰ The most systematic account is probably the categorization by Lake and Rothchild, which introduces the two main forms of spread: diffusion and escalation.²¹ Diffusion refers to conflict in one area altering the likelihood of conflict elsewhere. Escalation then marks spread through the involvement of new actors—usually foreign participants entering an otherwise internal conflict. Thus, intra-state violence develops into inter-state conflict.

Lake and Rothchild stress that diffusion processes mainly take place through the direct change in the ethnic balance of one country by ethnic conflict in a neighbouring country. Besides such contagion, demonstration effects might operate behind conflict diffusion. This more indirect effect refers to the change in beliefs and repertoire of groups in one country due to the demonstration of ethnic conflict in another country. The onset and course of violent conflict in one state can change a group’s belief on the likely behaviour of certain actors in other states and bring about learning processes of elites regarding promising strategies and tactics.²² The factors supposed to be driving the escalation of conflicts seem to be more concrete and direct in their influence as escalation is normally based on the decision of one or several actors to enter a conflict. Besides the occurrence of unintentional spill-over, alliances between transnational ethnic groups, irredentist demands, the strategy of diverting attention from domestic problems and predatory behaviour of states seeking (economic) advantage in others’ weakness during internal conflict are specified as furthering escalation.²³ The overall problem of all these dynamics is that they cannot work in only one direction. Chain reactions and demonstration effects can have destabilizing as well as stabilizing effects.²⁴ To explain the direction of neighbourhood processes, the same strategic dilemmas (information failures, commitment problems or security dilemmas) that take hold in

¹⁷ Esty et al. 1995; Goldstone et al. 2003; Ward & Gleditsch 2002.

¹⁸ See e.g. Buhaug & Gleditsch 2005.

¹⁹ Weiner 1996 and Lambach 2007.

²⁰ Fearon 1998.

²¹ Lake & Rothchild 1998.

²² *ibidem*; Fearon 1998.

²³ Lake & Rothchild 1998.

²⁴ Fearon 1998.

the original conflict situation are identified as significant for its spread. Overall, conflict in one locale is supposed to generate or worsen dilemmas in another locale.²⁵

While research on the spread of violent internal conflict has increased in the last decade, systematic empirical findings beyond general causal relations or single cases are rare. In addition, there has been the trend to focus on one specific neighbourhood effect (e.g. refugee flows or transnational arms trade) to gain new insights into the spread of violence.

In order to broaden the knowledge and consolidate or challenge certain assumptions on the spread of ethnic conflict, the IP3 project directly addresses the question of underlying mechanisms. As a starting point, the area experts taking part in the workshop series were asked about transnational linkages and conflict spread in their region of expertise. The project chose these two general terms (“linkages” and “spread”) as they are not linked with particular theories and thus give room for different views. Generally, spread comprises the extension of violence to new locales (diffusion) as well as new actors (escalation).

Naturally, the strength of transnational linkages and the danger of spreading internal conflict differed among the four regions. The most frequently named linkages of importance were ethnic ties across borders, strategic alliances and the influence of regional great powers, such as Russia in the Caucasus. Table 2 shows what mechanisms of conflict spread were present in the regions.

There was general agreement that among these factors, transnational ethnic or religious groups enhance the likelihood of conflict diffusion or escalation, as seen in the cases of the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi and Rwanda, Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, and Croats and Serbs in Bosnia. In the latter two cases, the existence of a country perceived as an “ethnic” home or mainland led to irredentist claims and regional chain reactions while ethnic conflict in Burundi or Rwanda has constantly affected the other country. Transnational ethnic kin groups seem to make demonstration effects stronger and potentially more destabilizing. According to Cord Jakobeit, one of the participating experts, kin groups can be “mobilized as a transnational vehicle and pretext to intervene, pursue, exploit and manipulate in neighbouring countries”. But demonstration effects can still be important over longer distances—e.g. with ethno-nationalist mobilization in Georgia fuelled by the example of the Baltic region, or the whole Middle East strongly influenced by the nearly constant demonstration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The workshop discussions highlighted another prominent factor that potentially enhances the risk of conflict spread: refugees. Most people fleeing from civil war remain within their region of origin, thus placing a strong burden on neighbouring countries, as in the case of the estimated 2.3 million Iraqi refugees presently living in countries like Syria, Jordan and the Gulf States. Recent studies have shown that under certain conditions, refugees can pose a threat to local stability by fuelling competition over resources, such as food, land and jobs. But they might even trigger much more destabilizing dynamics by impacting directly on ethnic relations in their host countries or by building a base for rebel group mobilization and operation. The phenomenon of “refugee warriors” has been widely studied indicating that the origin of flight, the availability of humanitarian aid as well as the policy of the host country are

²⁵ Lake & Rothchild 1998.

important determinants of militarization.²⁶ One of the best-known examples for refugee militarization can be found in the Great Lakes region with refugees as a source of spread in the two Congo wars (1996–97 and 1998–2002). However, neither transnational ethnic kin groups nor refugee flows are responsible for the spread of conflict *per se*, but they become important against the background of regional alliances and power configurations operating more or less visibly.

| | Balkans | Caucasus | Great Lakes | Middle East |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <i>Presence of conflict spread</i> | <p>Yes: Within Yugoslavia.</p> <p>No: Beyond Yugoslavia to rest of Balkans (e.g. Greece or Turkey).</p> | <p>Yes: Spread of post-Soviet nationalist mobilization & direct link of South Ossetian conflict in Georgia with Ingush-North Ossetian conflict.</p> <p>No: Transnational linkages rather weak, no spread of Russian-Chechnian war, great potential for spread of current conflicts, but no actual spread until now.</p> | <p>Yes: Between Rwanda and Burundi, Rwanda and DRC, Uganda and DRC, and Uganda and Sudan.</p> | <p>Yes: Effect of Israeli-Palestinian conflict on Lebanon and Jordan.</p> <p>No: Many potential sources (Kurds and Shiites in different countries), but no actual occurrence of conflict spread.</p> |
| <i>Conflict spread through contagion / spill-over</i> | Change of ethnic power balance and majority-minority relations within Yugoslavia triggered by the exit of Slovenia (snowball effect). | No contagion, conflicts are within countries. | Kin country syndrome and/or proxy warfare, networks of local factions and foreign patrons, see esp. Second Congo War. Direct or indirect spread by refugees. | Palestinian militants in Jordan and later Lebanon after Six Day War. |
| <i>Conflict spread through demonstration effects</i> | Reaction of Serbs to exit of Slovenia (and Croatia) and decisions of elites involved. | Demonstration of Baltic and Armenian struggles. Mobilization spiral within Georgia. | Strong effect between Rwanda and Burundi because of the same ethnic structure. | Israeli-Palestinian conflict, inter-ethnic fighting in Iraq. |

Table 2: Conflict spread in the regions

While demonstration effects also took hold in (former) Yugoslavia, the destruction of the federal power balance by the exit of Slovenia triggered Croatia's disentanglement and the subsequent wars. Equally, formal or informal alliances can lead to the spread of internal wars. But external (military) support and proxy warfare are more common than the direct intervention of further states in crisis regions today. The support of Syria and Iran for the

²⁶ Lischer 2005.

Hizbollah in Lebanon, of Rwanda for the RCD-Goma in the DR Congo, or of Uganda for the SPLA in Southern Sudan in the past, are severe examples. States often support (or even create) non-state actors in neighbouring countries, either to influence the political and military situation or in a rather predatory manner to gain access to natural resources. Likewise, alliances of non-state actors are possible as in the case of battalions from Chechnya and other North Caucasian regions fighting in Abkhazia, and battalions from North Ossetia fighting in South Ossetia.

While alliances seem to be crucial for the escalation of conflicts, state strength of neighbouring countries seems important for conflict diffusion. Conflict is likely to “infect” countries that are already “ill”—i.e. those already facing some instability or state weakness. This has been demonstrated by the different impact the mass influx of refugees from Rwanda had on the DR Congo and Tanzania,²⁷ or the same Bosnian refugees fleeing first to Bosanska Krajina and later to Croatia.²⁸

Overall, the occurrence and degree of conflict spread strongly differed between the regions and within them. While the African Great Lakes and (former) Yugoslavia are on one end of a fictive scale with quite intensive demonstration and contagion effects, the Caucasus seems to be on the other end with the Middle East somewhere in between. Even in those regions where spread has been common, it affected some areas while others remained more or less stable, as Table 2 also shows. Looking at the underlying causal mechanisms behind conflict spread, demonstration effects basically played a role in all four regions, but again their impact was much stronger in (former) Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes (mainly between Rwanda and Burundi) than in the Caucasus. This also holds true for more direct contagion and spill-over effects. The most obvious reason seems to be that in the former two areas the ethnic kin syndrome intensifies the links between countries/areas and provides the basis for outside manipulation.

Beyond these differences, the discussions of the regional workshops revealed several issues of conflict spread that are relevant to future research in the IP3 project. Firstly, countries as the common unit of observation are problematic because spread can occur across as well as within countries, and the latter process might not be less severe. Strictly speaking, (former) Yugoslavia was a case of internal rather than transnational spread as the units involved were still part of one state at the time violence spread to their territory. Similarly, the Caucasus officially belongs to the territories of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, but it makes a difference if we talk about Chechnya or Ingushetia on Russian territory. In addition, the explanatory force of spread by escalation from internal to inter-state war is very restricted due to the non-consideration of proxy warfare or escalation by involvement of new non-state actors. Beyond this, the classification of diffusion and escalation is questionable as both are products of strategic interactions that can often not be differentiated in regional conflict settings. The case of spill-over through rebels retreating to, or operating from, foreign territory basically falls in both categories, and cases of internationalized internal war cannot be detected as a separate category. Though states remain the central actors, concepts like that of regional conflict formations²⁹ could be useful,

²⁷ Whitaker 2003.

²⁸ Lischer 2005.

²⁹ As developed by Rubin, see Rubin et. al. 2001.

in addition to that of regional security complexes,³⁰ to get better insights into dynamics at the transnational level. While the primacy of local causes of conflicts is taken into account, Rubin's approach can shed light on regional interdependencies by highlighting sets of transnational conflicts forming mutually reinforcing linkages and including military, political, economic, and social networks at the regional level.

Secondly, situations where conflict has remained limited to its original scope have hardly been researched under the aspect of "non-spread". It is insufficient to look solely at the original conflict setting. Instead, it is necessary to analyze possible estuaries of spread in the region that have not become inflamed (yet)—such as the area of Javakhetia in Georgia inhabited by Armenians.

Thirdly, though factors enhancing the risk of conflict spread have been identified, the mechanisms linking them are still diffuse. Concepts like demonstration effects or chain dynamics are useful starting points, but there often seems to be too much automatism in the explanations they offer. The interaction between rather structural or contextual factors (e.g. ethnic configuration, state strength, conflict history or political transition), process factors that turn up because of the outbreak of the original conflict (e.g. refugee flows, changing alliances and agendas) and strategic actions of elites and groups involved needs to be researched in greater detail.

Beyond further investigation of the causes and dynamics of violent (ethnic) conflict and conflict spread, mechanisms linking conflict to changes in the political system have to be explored. The following sections highlight the influence of democratization on the internal stability of the political unit and the effect of different institutional arrangements on inter-group relations.

3) *Democratization as Conflict Trigger?*

It has been widely acknowledged that democratization increases the risk that states fight wars or face internal destabilization. There also is a large literature on the conditions that favour a successful transition from autocratic structures to a democratic system. This literature heavily draws on the outcomes of democratization processes in South America, Southern Europe and the former communist states. Summarizing the literature on democratization in the first three regions, Bunce identifies the following three elements that are central for a successful and peaceful transition:³¹

- i. The national and state questions need to be settled;³²
- ii. The rules of the transition and the new political order are the result of bargaining between a small group of the autocratic elites and a small group of representatives of the democratic opposition;
- iii. The cooperation of the authoritarians can be secured through co-optation. The transition is essentially a compromise between the old and the new elite. The public

³⁰ Buzan and Wæver 2003.

³¹ Bunce 2003.

³² Rustov 1970.

can be demobilized so that it does not pose a threat to the old elites, which otherwise could provide them with a rationale to undermine the transition process.

Interestingly, the transitions in the former communist states do not correspond to the latter two elements. The most successful transitions were characterized by nationalist mass mobilization and a clear break with the old elites. In the most successful cases, the truism that nationalism is a threat to democracy is therefore misleading. Bunce finds that it is the timing of national mobilization relative to the destabilization of the old regime that was a decisive factor for the success of democratic transitions in the former communist states.³³ States where nationalist demonstrations occurred before the regime began to unravel took a much less favourable pathway than states where the sequence was reversed. Where nationalist movements were present before the transition set in, there was no room for a liberal agenda to emerge when the regimes started to break apart. Instead, in these cases nationalism coupled with an illiberal political agenda, which was often driven by former communists who co-opted the nationalist movements in order to secure their power.

The latter reasoning is very close to Snyder's argument that powerful elites have an incentive to promote nationalist agendas because it allows them to gain popular support without being fully democratic.³⁴ However, his "elite-persuasion" argument holds that nationalism is largely the product of elite manipulation during the transition period—it is democratization that produces nationalism. Whether or not this elite manipulation leads into an exclusionary, ethnic nationalism depends, according to Snyder, on the economic development and the educational background of the masses, the degree to which elites' interests were at stake, and the nature of political institutions during the transition period. Regarding the latter, ethno-federal arrangements and patronage-based systems were especially vulnerable.

Snyder and Bunce both highlight important elements of democratization processes that also showed up in the regional workshops.

There was a general agreement that democratization can trigger conflict, but it is not the direct cause of (renewed) violence. It rather provides certain incentives and opportunities for political actors that can have a destabilizing impact. All four regions display examples of transitions to a more democratic system accompanied by instability or even outright war. Three aspects of democratization turned out to be central for the outbreak of conflict:

- i. The opening of the political arena;
- ii. Political competition producing "winners" and "losers";
- iii. The sequence of democratizing procedures.

First of all, the opening of the political arena means that formerly marginalized or suppressed groups have the opportunity to mobilize and organize. New actors and movements occupy the public space and old ones normally transform or disappear. On the other hand central power might loosen its grip on the periphery, since chains of command fall victim to the opening of the system. In extreme cases, democratic transition can be

³³ Bunce 2003.

³⁴ Snyder 2000.

accompanied by a power vacuum at the centre, especially in the initial phase, which obviously holds a strong danger of turmoil.

The second point is a direct consequence of the first: political competition. The emerging plurality of actors generates competition over constituencies and resources. However, the peak of rivalry is normally reached in the course of elections as “democracy polarizes by distinguishing between voters and non-voters, majorities and non-majorities” (Keridis). The first election is also the first comprehensive account of power relations in the new system and can easily become a zero-sum game. Groups feeling marginalized in the process or as losers of the popular vote may try to change the results by non-democratic means and even resort to violence. Former elites are especially likely to become spoilers when elections demonstrate their definite loss of power. It also seems to be crucial when, and with what sequence, elections are held in the course of democratization. Firstly, it seems dangerous to hold elections shortly after the start of the transition, because early phases of transitions are supposed to be more critical than later periods of consolidation. However, the disruptive force of the second round of democratic elections might even be stronger than that of the first one as it is the real test of whether a democratic transfer of power is accepted by the relevant actors. The government might take exclusive actions to secure power ahead of the second national election, for example by denying citizenship to certain groups opposing it. In addition, second elections often experience much less international attention and support.

Thirdly, the sequence of elections matters. Especially where local and regional elections take place before national elections, this might have negative effects. In contrast to post-Franco Spain, this way of proceeding was adopted in Yugoslavia during the transition with very negative results. Federal elections led to the fragmentation of the political arena and to strong regional claims while no serious national programme developed for the whole of Yugoslavia. The pro-independence referenda demanded as a precondition for recognition had a similar effect turning the vote into a national census and fuelling the fears of minorities. Overall, political competition cumulating into early elections runs counter to the elements for a successful transition outlined by Bunce. Especially a lasting compromise between old and new elites and a demobilization of the public will become hardly possible under the condition of electoral competition. The national and state question will hardly be settled if regional or local elections are carried out first.

All three examined points are inherent in the democratization process and thus signify possible drawbacks for a peaceful transition. But these aspects of democratization take place against a specific background in a country and region. Whether they become disruptive largely depends on certain features of this context at the time or directly before the start of the transition.

Besides structural factors making conflict more likely in general, such as the geographic concentration of groups, several other conditions are important specifically in connection to democratization processes. A first very general point concerns the existence of an educated middle class as a basis of a functioning democratic civil society at the beginning of the transition. If a country lacks such a middle class and thus pluralist political organizations, the opening of public space and political competition might lead to the ethnicization of politics. This development partly depends on another factor influencing the likelihood of conflict during democratization: the type and characteristics of the former regime. A highly repressive

military dictatorship with hardly any room for political dialogue might retain more societal pressure and intensify what Hippler called the “pressure cooker syndrome” in comparison to one-party states transforming into democratic systems. In line with Snyder’s argument on the importance of political institutions at the time of transition, Jeronim Perović identified the Soviet ethno-federal system as the source for regional movements referring more specifically to the Caucasus. According to him violent conflict was more likely where one titular nation was able to control power within its territory.

Another central question for the conflict-proneness of democratization apparently is the history of conflict in a country or region. Certainly transitions after (civil) wars face even stronger threats, normally from former violent actors that have to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated in the new setting parallel or even before the real democratization process can start. One reason might be that a bargain between a small group of the old elite and a small group of the democratic opposition as envisaged by Bunce is unlikely to take place in a post-war setting. On the one hand, a democratic opposition might not exist (for reasons mentioned above); and on the other hand, conflicts ended by peace agreements followed by a democratization process usually involve several groups of actors. Bargaining by a small elite behind closed doors will hardly be accepted by the different parties to the conflict.

By and large, it makes a difference if democratization emanates from a peace process after violent conflict (like in the DR Congo and Burundi), from the break-up of a larger political unit (like in the former Soviet Union), the rather seldom unification of separate entities (like in Yemen) or the peaceful transfer of power from non-democratic regimes (like in Tanzania). Another very direct influence on the likelihood of conflict during democratization stems from the position of neighbouring states that might have an interest in the destabilization of the process, as with Syria during the transition in Yemen between 1990 and 1993. If the change through democratic transition threatens (or is perceived as threatening) regime stability in neighbouring countries, direct or indirect intervention might take place. One important link between democratization and conflict seems to work via state capacity. If the state is further weakened in its functioning by the process of democratization, conflict becomes much more likely.

The above outlined factors can all decrease state capacity, but they do not clarify mechanisms finally leading to the outbreak of violence in the course of democratization. A crucial point that was mentioned in this respect is the degree of fragmentation of elites. The more coherent the elite leading a new government is, the more likely that democratic consolidation will be successful. On the other hand, in line with Bunce’s argument, it was also considered as important that the new elite be able to include former rulers or at least pact with them. Still, according to Mansfield and Snyder, a unified and inclusive elite in the transition to democracy seems rather unlikely: “Both old and new elites use all the resources they can muster to mobilize mass allies, often through nationalist appeals, to defend their threatened positions and to stake out new ones. However, like the sorcerer’s apprentice, these elites typically find that their mass allies, once mobilized, are difficult to control. When this happens, war can result from nationalist prestige strategies that hard-pressed leaders use to stay astride their unmanageable political coalitions.”³⁵

³⁵ Mansfield & Snyder 1995, p. 7.

The focus on elite manipulation was partly challenged with regard to the Caucasus by Arman Grigorian. While the common argument assumes that entrenched elites have strong incentives to “play the ethnic or nationalist card” during transition and thus redirect the attention of the mobilized population, it could be argued that publics might have ethnic or nationalist preferences. Thus, in the Caucasus it was popular nationalism driven by the “doctrine of sovereignty” rather than irrational hatreds or elite manipulation that led to strong nationalist movements. Further mechanisms potentially linking democratization and conflict in the different regions are outlined in the following table.

| | Balkans | Caucasus | Great Lakes | Middle East |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <i>Ethnic cleavages with or without outbidding dynamic</i> | Intra-ethnic cleavages among Serbs during 1991; exploitation of Albanian question by Milosevic; exit of Slovenia + Croatia advantageous for his strategy; privileged elites willing to use violence and marginalized liberal parties. | National movements exploited prospect of secession from the Soviet Union. Popular nationalism based on doctrine of sovereignty rather than elite manipulation. Ethno-federal Soviet state institutions used by regional elites to formulate regional interests and mobilize mass support. New elites: degree of fragmentation, ability to cooperate with old elites were decisive for likelihood of outbidding. | Outbidding by groups with strong position before elections and fear of loss of power, esp. where results resemble the tyranny of an (ethnic) majority. Citizenship can become factor for exclusion (like in the DR Congo) in the run-up to elections. | Yemeni election results were raising fears of exclusion by southern elites. |
| <i>Dynamics of electoral sequencing</i> | Pro-independence referenda as precondition for recognition turned into national censuses, raising fears of ethnic minorities. Regional before national elections provide platform for regional/ethnic elites and lead to fragmentation. | First elections to republican and local parliaments increased weight of national movements or led to the organization of popular mass movements. | If elections too early, disarmament, demobilization & reintegration incomplete. Violence likely by actors who see elections as the continuation of war by other means or who have anti-ethical code of conduct. Second round of elections often more conflict-prone than first. | If mechanisms for producing stability are disappearing faster than new, democratic mechanisms for stability are created, the likelihood of conflict increases. |

Table 3: Links between democratization and conflict in the regions

Based on Table 3 above, differences in mobilization and election dynamics raise the crucial question of whether processes like that of Burundi in 1993 were driven by the same mass political phenomena as, for example, those in the former Soviet Union after 1989. As Jack Snyder has pointed out, it is possible that democratization produces new waves of mass mobilization or simply displays an intensification of earlier mobilization and preferences. In much the same way, elite struggles might really be triggered by democratization, but can also be the continuation of older confrontations.

Besides this necessary distinction, the IP3 project can build on additional findings from the workshops. First of all, it has clearly been confirmed that democratization indeed is only an enabler, not a cause for the outbreak of violence. Linking background, conditions and dynamics of democratization with actor configurations could provide further insights into the constellations likely to lead to violent conflict.

Looking at the discussions of the workshop as well as the relevant literature on conflict and democratization, political institutions seem to be somewhat of a blind spot. While they play a central role in the discussion on conflict regulation in divided societies, institutional settings during democratization (except voting systems) are not at the centre of attention. Instead the situational factors and general opportunities that democratization processes provide have been highlighted. The next section will provide a short overview of the scholarly literature on institutional solutions for ethnically divided societies. It also outlines a few thoughts about the conceptual link between democratization and institutional solutions before it summarizes and evaluates the main results of the workshop discussions in regard to future research within IP3.

4) *Institutional Solutions for Divided Societies*

The research agenda on the role of democratic institutions in ethnically divided societies was started thirty years ago.³⁶ Power sharing and ethnic federalism are top on its list of institutional prescriptions to prevent and mitigate conflicts in divided societies. Power sharing gives minorities a greater voice in the national government. Ethno-federal solutions transfer decision-making powers from the national government to independent governmental agencies at the regional level. This devolution of power provides regional minorities with opportunities to gain access to state institutions.

There are two main arguments in favour of segmented political structures. The first one, which is most prominently held by Lijphart,³⁷ states that ethnic cleavages need to be recognized in order to make them manageable within the institutional framework of the state. According to Cohen,³⁸ ethnic divisions have to be made a visible object of management efforts because “majoritarian attempts to crosscut political ethnic cleavages into irrelevance only suppress them and preserve them as latent sources of tension”. The second argument, which is held by scholars such as Gurr and Hechter,³⁹ says that access to state power appeases the demands of minority groups because it provides them with a more optimal mix

³⁶ Nordlinger 1972; Rabushka & Shepsle 1972; Lijphart 1977.

³⁷ Lijphart 1977 and 2004.

³⁸ Cohen 1997, p. 613.

³⁹ Gurr 2000; Hechter 2000.

of government-provided goods. Secured representation within governmental institutions renders politics more responsive towards the demands of minority groups.

The critics of segmented political structures argue that the distribution of power provides national minorities with the necessary resources and incentives to mobilize nationalist movements against the centre.⁴⁰ Furthermore, segmented political structures are alleged to consolidate and fortify the ethnic boundaries and cleavages they were meant to address. Additional criticisms are that segmentation limits democracy, puts the focus on inter-ethnic allocation, discriminates against unrecognized groups, and leads to rigid, inefficient and corrupt governments.⁴¹ With regard to ethno-federal structures, it is argued that federal institutions provide an arena for ethnic entrepreneurs to put ethnic issues on the political agenda and to gain legitimacy and popular support for their extreme positions,⁴² or to bargain more power and resources from the centre by making separatist claims.⁴³

The critics of segmented political structures do not dispute the necessity that minorities should be represented in one way or another. However, locking in divisive national identities in order to enhance the representation of some groups is considered a price too high to pay in the long run. Instead, more integrative forms of representation are endorsed that provide institutional incentives—often through the electoral system—to bridge ethnic divisions.⁴⁴ In the short run, the adoption of segmented structures can have positive effects because it reveals the moderate intentions of the majority.⁴⁵ In this respect, it can help to overcome strategic dilemmas that prevent groups from striking a bargain.⁴⁶ However, this positive effect is assumed to fade away with time.

In those cases where divisions between territorially concentrated ethnic groups run deep and trust has been destroyed by previous violence, partition is often proposed as a more radical alternative to an institutional redesign within the existing borders.⁴⁷ Cases in point are the frozen conflicts in the Caucasus and the Kosovo status question (see also Table 4). The rationale behind “resizing” or “rightsizing” states is to end conflict between groups by removing the conflict issue itself, namely access to state institutions.⁴⁸ Critics of such an all-out solution argue that the redrawing of borders often does not lead to the desired outcome. To reach an agreement on the new boundary may be impossible and new borders often create new minorities, which can become the source of new conflicts.⁴⁹ The latter argument is especially valid for the Great Lakes region where attempts to partition existing states could set off an avalanche because of the large number of different ethnic groups (see also Table 4).

Before we now turn from this brief overview of the main theoretical arguments that are advanced in the literature to the outcome of the workshop discussions, some conceptual

⁴⁰ Rothchild & Roeder 2005b.

⁴¹ Bunce 2005.

⁴² Cornell 2002.

⁴³ Treisman 1997.

⁴⁴ Horowitz 1985 and 2002; Reilly 2002.

⁴⁵ Rothchild & Roeder 2005a.

⁴⁶ See also Section 3.

⁴⁷ Kaufmann 1998.

⁴⁸ Wimmer 1997.

⁴⁹ Sambanis 2000.

remarks on the connection between the previous section on democratization and this section on institutional solutions seems to be in order.

As we have seen in the previous section, democratization is a dynamic concept that captures the break down of the old autocratic order and the associated rise of popular political participation. In contrast, institutional solutions are often discussed as if they were a static set of institutional arrangements, which—if properly designed—can “solve” the problem of conflictual inter-group relations in multi-ethnic societies. This separation between a dynamic transition and a static institutional solution as its end point is conceptually not very satisfactory. It disguises the endogenous nature of institutional arrangements. As the discussions during the workshops have clearly shown, the trajectory of the transition and conflict history are crucially important for the set of viable institutional solutions in a given situation. The actual performance of institutional provisions also depends on the context in which they are embedded. However, they also affect this context and thus set the stage for future change.

Given this embeddedness of institutional solutions, it is not surprising that all experts agreed that institutional one-size-fits-all solutions do not exist. As Table 4 shows, the same institutional solutions are recommended for some but not for other conflicts (the grand coalition being the exception). There was also unanimous agreement that meaningful discussions on institutional solutions can only be held in regard to individual cases, since the same institutional arrangement can contribute to peaceful integration in one country but trigger conflict in other settings.

Bearing these caveats in mind, the outcome of the workshop discussions can be structured along the three institutional solutions mentioned in the above literature overview—partition, power-sharing and ethnic federalism.

It comes as no surprise that the experts' assessments of partition as an institutional solution strongly depends on the conflict history. In those cases where violence has destroyed trust between the antagonists and where breakaway regions have experienced de facto independence, partition is regarded as the only viable solution. This is the situation in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabagh and to a lesser extent also in Kosovo. The three breakaway regions in the Southern Caucasus are nearly completely ethnically cleansed. There is already a generation that has had no experience of being citizens of Georgia or Azerbaijan. Moreover, Russia acts as a powerful veto player that has no immediate interest in changing the status quo. Against this background, reintegrating the breakaway regions is considered to be theoretically possible, but till now an unfeasible solution for these frozen conflicts.

In those cases where the conflict regions do not enjoy any de facto independence, partition is rejected as an institutional solution. For the Great Lakes region, it is argued that partition greatly enhances the risk of fractionalization and that it could set off an avalanche since most countries in Africa include too many ethnic groups to create roughly homogeneous units. Moreover, the international community strongly opposes secessionist solutions. This assessment clearly connects to the reservation in the theoretical literature regarding partition as a method to solve inter-ethnic conflicts. Partition is also not seen as a viable solution in those cases where resource wealth is distributed very unevenly across the territory. In the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is further argued that the strong

sense of Congolese identity would hinder partition. With regard to the Middle East, one expert raised the question of whether democratization is possible without redrawing the map of the region yet again. The question is whether or not all the minorities living in the region are willing to continue to live under the rule of their respective states. Given that the settlement of the national and state question was identified as a central element for any peaceful transition in Section 4, this question certainly needs to be posed, even though it offers a rather frightening perspective. In summary, partition is seen as a last resort, which should be avoided whenever possible but which may be the only solution in those cases where de facto independence and ethnically cleansed regions render any solution short of independence impracticable.

| | Balkans | Caucasus | Great Lakes | Middle East |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Secession / partition as a solution</i> | Yes: Kosovo. | Yes: In regions that are de facto independent, where trust has been destroyed and where groups are already geographically separated. No: Russian opposition in Chechnya. | No: Could set off an avalanche, distribute resource wealth unevenly, face opposition of international community. | Yes: Redrawing of state borders may be necessary for Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen. Minorities do not want to live in their respective states. |
| <i>Ethnic federalism as a solution</i> | Yes: No renewed conflict in Bosnia. | Yes: Could theoretically address minority interests in all conflict regions (except Chechnya) | No: Central state too weak. Wealth redistribution problematic. Yes: Autonomy for eastern provinces could avert rebellion in DRC. | |
| <i>Grand coalition as a solution</i> | Yes: No renewed conflict in Bosnia. | Yes: No conflict in those political units where groups shared power. Could address minority interests in all conflict regions (except Chechnya) | Yes: Gives all groups a stake in the system, works already reasonably well in Burundi. | |

Table 4: Institutional solutions in the regions

Power-sharing and ethno-federal arrangements are potential solutions in those cases where no de facto states have been created through previous conflicts. The discussion during the workshops clearly confirmed the danger of empowering minorities, an argument that is also forcefully advanced in the theoretical literature. In those cases where power-sharing arrangements are not yet in place, the discussion also highlighted the importance of the bargaining process between the majority and the minority. The perception of the intentions of the opposing parties is seen as a key factor that determines the success of such arrangements. The bargaining processes are therefore path-dependent and need to be

calibrated very carefully. A case in point is the pending settlement of the relation between the Georgian state and the Armenians living in Javakhetia.

In those places where power-sharing arrangements are already in place their track record is assessed as rather positive. Regarding the North Caucasus, power sharing between two or more titular ethnic groups residing in one territory has proved conducive to stability. This observation is based on cases where power-sharing arrangements were already in place when the democratic transition set in. This raises the question of whether power sharing is also a viable solution in those cases where the democratic transition has already led to violent conflicts—potential path-dependencies may render such analogies invalid. In Burundi, the post-conflict power-sharing arrangement works reasonably well. The question in this latter case is how much its success is related to Burundi's special circumstances.

Ethnic federalism and regional autonomy were assessed less favourable than power-sharing at the centre. This was especially true in those cases where state institutions are weak as in the Great Lakes region. It was argued that federalism needs a functioning centre to arrange the redistribution of wealth between the federal sub-units and to serve as an arbitrator in case of conflict between the federal sub-units. The pessimistic assessment of federal arrangements in the Great Lakes region was reinforced by the lack of independence of constitutional courts in many African countries.

5) Conclusion

The workshop debates have clearly shown that ethnicity is linked to conflict, but that the connection is not automatic. Accordingly, democratization in itself does not represent a cause for outbreaks of violence, but it can become a driving force. A possible avenue for further investigation is therefore the identification of actors with motive and opportunity to politicize certain identity-layers in regime-type transformations.

In addition, transnational aspects are crucial to understand why some conflicts spread while others remain limited with regard to location and actors. Within some regions, cross-border dynamics are even essential for the outbreak of violence in the first place. Therefore, a regional view on conflict formations and political dynamics in general is crucial for further research. Furthermore, it is necessary to not only look at the spread of violence, but in addition at transnational factors after conflicts and during regime-type transitions.

Overall, the role of institutions needs to be studied more carefully. With small exceptions, no institutional setups have been tied to a significantly increased or decreased likelihood of conflict. Given the identified path dependencies, a general answer does not seem to be within reach. However, it could well be possible to identify the mechanisms that render some of the proposed institutional solutions more or less viable. Here it is essential to confront the problem of endogeneity and take the interactions between political systems and conflict into account.

Despite similar conflict patterns, the situations differ sufficiently to prohibit one-size-fits-all solutions. Institutional solutions may have very different effects on inter-group relations depending on the context they are embedded in but also on the time perspective: for example, while regional autonomy may be a useful tool to prevent conflict in the short run, it can strengthen cleavages in the long run.

In determining which institutional solutions are most applicable after the end of violence, the intensity, development and outcome of the conflict is decisive. Phases of ethnic cleansing have the potential to make integration efforts unacceptable by one or more conflict parties. Other political, economic and social preconditions also influence the applicability of potential solutions. Federal structures, for example, require the presence of impartial institutions that can negotiate between different actors within the system.

Even when a solution exists that would be advantageous to all parties, it may not be realizable due to strategic dilemmas such as information failures and commitment problems. Here, the bargaining process between parties becomes crucially important, and the role of institutional propositions as signalling devices for one's own intention should not be underestimated. The fact that desirable solutions may not be achievable by the parties underlines the need for facilitation.

To evaluate the available courses of action, a more general framework is needed that accommodates the dynamics between groups, the effect of different institutional arrangements and cross-border linkages on these dynamics.

Future research will need to treat seriously these insights from the workshop discussions in order to bridge the gap between specific cases and general mechanisms. The results of the workshop clearly indicate that the focus needs to be process-oriented and further research has to identify the relevant causal sequences, rather than presenting a new, invariant but underspecified causal story that at best accommodates all observed cases.

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Appendix A: Participating Regional Experts

Arman Grigorian is Visiting Instructor of Government at the College of William and Mary. He has a B.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the Yerevan State University, Armenia, and an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Chicago. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Political Science Department at Columbia University working on the last stages of his dissertation on third party interventions. Previously he has been a fellow at the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies and at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. Mr. Grigorian attended the regional workshop on the Caucasus on December 18, 2006.

Jochen Hippler is a scientist at the well-known Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) in Duisburg. He previously held an assistant professorship for international relations at the University of Duisburg-Essen and has worked as a freelance political consultant for a number of foundations and unions in Germany, the US, Pakistan and the Palestinian Territories (among others). He has published extensively with the focus of his work being political identities of nationalist, ethnic or religious nature in the context of conflicts as well as democratization processes. Dr. Hippler attended the regional workshop on the Middle East on June 2, 2006.

Cord Jakobeit is Professor for International Politics at the Department of Political Science of the University of Hamburg. After studying at several universities including the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris, the London School of Economics and Harvard University, he was a researcher at the Free University Berlin (1988-93) and Visiting Assistant Professor at Stanford University, Stanford Study Center in Berlin (1990-93). He also was Thyssen and Kennedy Fellow at Harvard University (1993/94) before his habilitation at the University of Hamburg in 1998. He became professor at the University of Hamburg in 2000 and also served as Director of the Hamburg based Institute for African Studies from 2000 to 2002. He published extensively on the political and socio-economic development in sub-Saharan Africa (mainly West and Central Africa) and issues of democratization, but also on topics like regional integration and international economic relations. Prof. Jakobeit attended the regional workshop on the Great Lakes region on June 24, 2006.

Dimitris Keridis is the Constantine Karamanlis Associate Professor in Hellenic and Southeastern European Studies at the Fletcher School, Tufts University. He is also a tenured Assistant Professor of International Politics at the Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, Greece. Prior to his arrival at Fletcher, he was the director of the Kokkalis Foundation in Athens, Greece and of the Kokkalis Program at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He has published extensively on issues of Balkan, European and Middle Eastern security, nationalism and ethnic conflict. Prof. Keridis attended the regional workshop on the Balkans on April 1, 2006.

René Lemarchand is emeritus professor of political science from the University of Florida. He came to UF in 1963, shortly after receiving his Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles. He was active at the Center for African Studies. From 1992 to 1998 he served as Regional Advisor on Governance and Democracy with USAID in Abidjan (1992-96) and in Accra (1997-98). He has written extensively on Rwanda, Burundi and the DR Congo/Zaire. His book on Rwanda and Burundi (1970) received the Herskovits award from the African

Studies Association. He has taught in Copenhagen, Helsinki, Concordia (Montreal), Berkeley, Brown and Smith College. Prof. Lemarchand attended the regional workshop on the Great Lakes region on June 24, 2006.

Elham Manea is a Fulbright Scholar who has recently joined the Institute of Political Science at Zurich University. Originally of Yemeni origin, she has studied in Kuwait, the US and Switzerland and is currently an active member in the Europe & Asia Research Project as well as the IP3 project in the NCCR Democracy. Besides her research work, Dr. Manea is actively engaged in the shaping of public opinion in the Middle East through regular newspaper columns and media appearances. Dr. Manea attended the regional workshop on the Middle East on June 2, 2006.

Jeronim Perović is a senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies (CSS), ETH Zurich. He was a visiting scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University in 2003-2005, a short-term scholar at the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in 2002, and an international student at the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow in 1995-1996. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Zurich in 2000. He has published widely on contemporary aspects of Russian foreign and security policy, energy politics in the Caspian region, regionalism in Russia, and Soviet-Yugoslav relations. His current research focus is on historical and contemporary aspects of ethnic conflict in the Northern Caucasus. Dr. Perović attended the regional workshop on the Caucasus on December 18, 2006.

Christoph Zürcher is professor of International Politics at the Otto-Suhr Institute in Berlin. Born in 1967, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Bern, Switzerland, in 1996. From 2003 - 2005 he was Research Chair for Conflict Research of the "Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft" at the Institute of East European Studies, Free University Berlin. His previous teaching and research appointments include the University of Konstanz, Germany, the Institut d'Etudes Politiques d'Aix-en-Provence, and Stanford University. He has been a consultant for various international organizations and government agencies (World Bank, GTZ, BMZ, AA). His research and teaching interests include conflict research, methods of empirical conflict research, state-building and intervention, international governance and development. His regional focus is on the Former Soviet Union especially on Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia including Afghanistan. Prof. Zürcher attended the regional workshop on the Caucasus on December 18, 2006.