

MANAGEABILITY OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS: CONDITIONS AND LIMITS

The paper provides a philosophic analysis of issues and hidden assumptions in political theory and in real world situations. Conflict avoidance has been treated as a positive value, although its price could be too high: economic competition involves conflicts. Some conflicts between individuals are unavoidable. Therefore, societies have to develop means and strategies of conflict resolution and conflict management (e.g., warrior-shopkeeper (Nicolson) or imperialist-status quo (Morgenthau) strategies). Conflict avoidance is but one strategy of conflict management. Sometimes ethnicity and race are overlays to other sources of conflict. Agrarian societies are based on unequal access to land-ownership. This may be protected or supported by racial and ethnic differences. Politicians may just express common feelings or exploit these feelings for their own personal and party-political aims, thus creating a second overlay. Estonian land-reform in 1920s and land claims by Blacks in Zimbabwean are examples of these overlays. In some cultures, religion may be a constituent property of a culture and religious conflicts in these cultures are inextricably bound up with conflicts about political power. Religious differences between ethnic groups may strengthen conflicts discursively and behaviourally.

Keywords: nationalism, conflict management, democracy, multiculturalism, values

MOŽNOST UPRAVLJANJA ETNIČNIH KONFLIKTOV: POGOJI IN OMEJITVE

Članek prinaša filozofsko analizo uprašanj in prikritih podmen v politični teoriji in v okoliščinah resničnega sveta. Izogibanje konfliktom velja za pozitivno vrednoto, čeprav je njegova cena previsoka: gospodarska tekmovalnost vključuje konflikte. Nekaterim konfliktom med posamezniki se ni mogoče izogniti. Družbe morajo zato razviti sredstva in strategije razreševanja in urejanja konfliktov (npr. strategije bojevnika-trgovca (Nicolson) ali imperialist-status quo (Morgenthau)). Izogibanje konfliktom je le ena od strategij upravljanja konfliktov. Včasih etničnost in rasna pripadnost le prekrivata druge vzroke konflikta. Poljedelske družbe temeljijo na neenakopravnem dostopu do lastništva zemlje. Rasne in etnične razlike lahko to neenakopravnost ščitijo in podpirajo. Politiki lahko le izražajo splošna občutja ali jih izrabljajo za svoje osebne cilje in cilje svojih političnih strank ter na ta način ustvarjajo še eno "prekrivanje". Estonska zemljiška reforma iz leta 1920 in črnske zahteve po zemlji v Zimbabveju sta primera takšnega "prekrivanja". V nekaterih družbah je religija lahko sestavna lastnost kulture in verski konflikti so v teh kulturah neločljivo povezani s konflikti za politično moč. Verske razlike med etničnimi skupnostmi lahko okrepijo razsežnost in obliko konfliktov.

Ključne besede: nacionalizem, upravljanje konfliktov, demokracija, večkulturnost, vrednote

INTRODUCTORY NOTE¹

This paper is a contribution by a philosopher. Philosophers do not produce empirical data. They argue about justifiability, research methods, standards of proof and evidence, meaning of concepts and statements. Philosophic analysis discovers hidden assumptions and coherence or otherwise of arguments and theories. Philosophy is relevant to the world outside philosophy and, therefore, assumes empirical data and empirical knowledge in general. Philosophy is highly relevant to rational decision-making. The latter involves knowledge, values and goals and philosophy helps to understand and justify our values, goals, to draw dividing lines between the moral and immoral. Moreover, internal coherence is a condition of practical realisability.

ARE CONFLICTS AVOIDABLE?

Traditional or strong Hobbesian theory assumes inevitability of conflicts between individual humans. It is human nature itself that, according to Hobbesian theory, human creates conflicts between individuals. Therefore, these conflicts can be suppressed or otherwise managed, but they cannot be avoided. To be effective, suppression has to be institutionalised. Obviously, suppression will involve permissible violence. Hobbes argued that conflicts may be manageable and that there exists a justified mode of conflict management, an absolute monarchy that has been set up by means of social contract.

Realist versions of International Relations Theory extend the Hobbesian view to be applicable to a selected kind of organisations, the states. They do not have to concur with Hobbes on justifiable internal organisation of states. What they do claim is that states are participants of a Hobbesian world, therefore, conflicts between states are unavoidable. There are no instruments for conflict suppression, but there may be instruments for conflict management. This has been a somewhat simplistic description of the realist IR-theory. Actually, the theory is compatible with the view that sometimes states may cooperate and cooperation may be a perfectly reasonable and 'natural' strategy for states (Stein 1990). Obviously, if states can cooperate, other groups can also cooperate in some circumstances.

On the opposite side of the theory spectrum, there is anarchism. Very strong anarchism assumes that the basic human nature is good and conflicts are generated only within the wrong kinds of human social arrangements. More reasonable forms of anarchism can accommodate the idea that conflicts between humans



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are possible, but they claim that conflicts are manageable by free rational agents without a state (and that humans will be free rational agents without a state). Communist anarchism will just add that private property is the second causal factor for conflicts and the abolition of state will have to be complemented by the abolition of private property.

There are in-between positions. A Lockean position will hold that humans are not naturally in a perpetual state of war of everybody against everybody else, but that conflicts do occur sometimes, often due to misunderstandings and insufficient knowledge of natural law. State is a management agency for conflicts. A justifiable state has, of course, to be set up and maintained by social contract (consent) and it cannot have absolute powers in Hobbesian sense. States do commit acts of aggression, but aggression is always unjustified.

Needs theories supply more examples of in-between positions. They claim that conflicts between humans are generated by conflicting needs, in case there are insufficient amounts of needs satisfiers. Needs are objective and the availability of need satisfiers at any individual space-time location is also empirically given. There just may not be enough food for everybody. Certainly, there is never enough money for 90 per cent of individual consumers. Needs-theories allow for some conflict management. They may claim that if there is enough food to keep everybody alive and in good health, then somehow social justice can and has to be maintained and arrangements for minimal social justice will provide a means for minimising conflicts and making them non-lethal.

Marxism is a kind of needs-theory. It claims that needs conflicts between social categories of humans in some societies can only be managed by suppressing the needs-based wants of one category. State is an agency for this kind of conflict management. Marxism, of course, assumes a democratic anarchy under future communist conditions and assumes sufficiency of needs satisfiers under communism. The conflicts themselves, on Marxist view, are generated by the social system, conflicting desires are 'expressions' of systemic conflicts. The latter view may be shared by some non-Marxist theories (they will just adhere to a different theory about the social system).

Needs theories either make a strong claim that conflicting goals and desires are generated by a needs conflict (Marxism) or a weaker claim that some conflicts between goals and desires are caused by conflicts between needs which cannot be fully satisfied for all participants of a particular set of humans. For needs theories, conflict management has to provide needs satisfiers to prevent the conflict from becoming destructive for the participants.

Subjective psychological conflict theories would see grounds for conflicts in conflicting desires, but also in misunderstandings. Strategies for conflict

regulation that derive from this conception are akin to therapy. They call for the existence of conflict management agencies, but they can also be part of milder anarchism.

Psychological theories may be combined with needs theories. Certainly, conflicts sometimes grow out of misunderstandings. Communication failures can increase the intensity of conflict. Any action is justified by means of values, and if the received values support conflict-prone behaviour, then ways of thought and emotional components in values will play an important part in generating conflicts. In any case, arrangements for conflict management might have to employ divergent means to deal with conflicts stemming from different sources.

Conflict avoidance might be a positive value, but if some conflicts are unavoidable, then insistence on conflict avoidance will be just wishful thinking. For example, let us assume that *P* and *Q* both love *R*, who is a person of opposite sex, and under arrangements of their particular society, only either *P* or *Q* may set up a family with *R*. There is a conflict between *P* and *Q*, and, of course, there is a solution: *P* could stop loving *R*.

The conflict in the preceding example was generated by two independent acts, *P* and *Q* falling into love with *R*. Let us assume that *Q* was the first one to fall into love with *R*. Then should a conflict management agency tell *P* not to fall into love with *R*? This is, obviously, nonsense (although at some previous point *P* might be able to manage his/her emotional states). There is also another solution. Social arrangements could be changed to allow both *P* and *Q* marry *R*. This change will help, of course, only if under new arrangements *R* will be able to love both *P* and *Q*. Otherwise the desire of either *P* or *Q* will still be unsatisfied. Of course, if social arrangements could be changed to do away with romantic love, then there would be yet other possibilities of solution for this conflict. These arrangements would still have to cope with satisfaction of sexual desire without this satisfaction being destructive to human personalities and social system. Romantic love is just one source of possible conflicts. Economic competition involves conflicts. The social price of abolition of all economic competition will be extremely high (if this will be possible at all). Needs theorists are right to point out, that sometimes there are insufficient needs satisfiers and that this insufficiency at any given space-time location is an objective condition. If there is insufficient food for everybody, then either somebody will have to die of starvation, or the health of everybody will be impaired. For the most part of human existence, periods of insufficiency of food supply have been a rule.

Competition in sports is conflict, although managed conflict. Only one party (a team or an individual) can win, and it is considered unfair for a participant not to do her utmost to win. Sports might be a socially avoidable institution, but in the

contemporary world it seems impossible to abolish not just the Olympic Games, but also every sports altogether.

Market competition involves conflicts between competing parties. Free market is a means of consumer needs-satisfaction and suppressing market often leads to suboptimal consumer needs satisfaction both at a certain time point and dynamically, although it might lead to maximum satisfaction of a seller (monopoly or oligopoly conditions). Without any management, market actors sometimes destroy other actors (Mafia-style actions, mediaeval trade restrictions, takeover of firms in occupied territories).

ARE CONFLICTS BAD?

Conflict avoidance involves not only possibility but also desirability of life without any kind of conflicts. Many humans have not shared this goal during large part of human existence. Societies and ideologies have glorified war (Nazis were definitely not the first to do this). Societies and philosophers have glorified power, and, therefore competition for power (even for unrestricted power). Nevertheless, Hobbes was right in stating that a war of everybody against everybody is an undesirable state of affairs. Humans cannot exist in this kind of society.

Some means of conflict solution might also be undesirable, although sometimes unavoidable. Murder seems to be a universal condemnatory category and prohibition of murder seems to be a universal norm. What counts as murder differs of course in different societies. Killing a person in a duel did not count as a murder some centuries ago, at least for public opinion (or opinion of some definite estate of society). If Benjamin wants to kill José, then José either has to exercise self-defence by forcible means even if this means killing Benjamin, or let himself be killed. A conflict management agency (police) may also have no other solution under some particular circumstances apart from shooting to kill Benjamin. Conflict avoidance is but one strategy of dealing with conflicts.

A conflict has at least two parties. There will be no conflict, if one of the parties will not engage. Let us consider an example:

- (1) 1. *A* wants to kill *B*.
2. *B* wants himself be killed by *A*.

Therefore,

3. *B* permits *A* to kill *B*.

Submission in this case will not avoid violence, but there will be no conflict.

The result will be the same, if *B* submits, although dislikes being killed by *A* or even just being killed at all.

Let us no assert:

- (2) 1. *A* wants to kill *B*.
2. *B* does not want to be killed.

Therefore,

3. *B* prevents *A* killing *B*.

If *B* engages in self-defence, we have a case of conflict. Resistance by *B* will probably make it a violent conflict. Conflict avoidance in case (1) is simple but is it good? Conflict management in case (2) can involve lethal force (*A* may not be susceptible to argument about the sanctity of human life, etc.).

Let us consider another example. If free market competition involves some conflicts (although not necessarily lethal), then some conflicts cannot be considered essentially or absolutely bad. Therefore, the presumption that conflicts are always bad is unsustainable. Moreover, the presumption seems sometimes to be hypocritical. If conflicts are bad, then resistance to an aggressor or a would-be murderer creates a conflict and is, therefore bad. Conflict involves at least two actors and it is patently insufficient to say that conflict is bad without also saying that a party in a conflict may have acted reasonably, rationally and justifiably. In case of a particular conflict, these judgements would have to be supported by the facts of the case and not just general principles.

What follows from the above is that 'ethnic' conflicts ought not to be presumed to be irrational and absolutely avoidable. This does not mean that they are unmanageable or that they can be terminated only and only by lethal means.

Conflict Termination: Results and Means

Distinction needs to be made between conflict termination, conflict dissolution, conflict management and conflict suppression. A 20th century British diplomat and writer, Harold Nicolson (1939: 53-54), pointed out that there are two major schools of conflict resolution: the warrior and the merchant kinds. Nicolson wrote about diplomacy, but his treatment may be extended to conflict management in general.

Nicolson defined warrior school to be an approach with predatory goals. The methods to achieve the goals and the internal justificatory language derive from a military point of view. Negotiations, for the warrior school, are military campaigns or, at least, manoeuvres. War is about victory, and the purpose of negotiations for the warrior school is victory. Any denial of complete victory means defeat. Outflanking the opponent would be a commendable strategy. Weakening

of enemy by all means of attacking behind the lines would be a good strategy. Seeking every occasion to drive a wedge between your main enemy and his allies, holding your opponent to one position while planning to attack elsewhere would be standard stratagems. A concession or a treaty is never seen as a final settlement of an isolated dispute, but as consolidation of strategic positions before the next battle, or as evidence of weakness and retreat of the enemy. These intermediate solutions must be immediately exploited for further triumphs and the final overall victory.

The mercantile or shopkeeper idea is that a compromise between rivalries is generally more profitable than the complete destruction of the other side. Therefore, negotiation is an attempt to reach durable understanding by mutual concessions. Questions of prestige should not be allowed to interfere unduly with sound business deals, national honour means national honesty. For a merchant, there is possible some middle ground between bids and counter-bids which could reconcile the conflicting interests. The aim of negotiations is to discover this middle ground. Frank discussions, placing the card on the table, and just the usual processes of human reason, confidence and fair-dealing will be instruments to achieve this middle ground.²

It was obvious for Nicolson, who was writing just after Munich, that adherents of the military school would misinterpret positions taken by their opponents who belong to the shopkeepers. The effects would be disastrous for both. The same applies to the shopkeepers in dealings with the military-minded opponents.

Non-violent solutions are possible within the latter strategy. A mild nationalism on issues of state set-up and political regime (core political choices) is compatible with merchant strategies and non-violent conflict resolution. Within cultures, which have warrior strategies embedded, a mild nationalism could grow into strong or even Nazi nationalism. If a culture has merchant strategies embedded within its core positively valued behavioural traits, then negotiating minority rights for cultural or ethnic minorities becomes possible. An effective and caring conflict management has to steer solutions away from the warrior school strategies.

Strong forms of nationalism are usually accompanied by a warrior school mentality or justify warrior school mentality. For strong forms of nationalism, there exists an absolute priority order of ethnic units and ethnic units are supreme over all other units. Therefore, the tendency to generate demands against other entities is internally unchecked.

Conflicts can be suppressed. If parties to the conflict are governed by superior force, there could be no outward signs of a conflict (although potential and trust-



2 The distinctions between the policies of *status quo* and imperialism put forward by Morgenthau (Morgenthau 1993: 50-83) are analogous to those between shopkeeper and warrior strategies made by Nicholson.

ed outside sympathisers might get a whisper...) Soviet totalitarianism suppressed Azeri-Armenian and Ossetian-Georgian conflicts. It did not succeed in dealing with the root causes and goals.

Rational action is compatible with conflict management. The case for states has been studied by Stein (1990). Of course, if one participant opts for an annihilation strategy towards the others, then there would be limits for conflict management. Conflict may be postponed, but sooner or later either one side will be annihilated or the side will be forced to make a strategy shift. In warrior school terms, this shift means defeat of the proponent of an annihilation strategy. It would have been practically impossible to achieve the defeat of German Nazi expansionism or Taleban-bin Laden strategy to destroy the United States of America without destroying the respective governments or states. It should be noted that the destruction of a state does not always mean erasure of a country or an ethnic unit.

Conflicts could be resolved by dissolution, by dying out. Individual members of an actor set undergo, for example, generational change. With changes in list of members, the goals of an actor made up from a set of persons can change. In case of conflicts between individuals, these will also end with the natural death of the persons involved in particular conflicts. Conflict management cannot always change the goals of participants but it can prevent them killing each other and the conflict could wither away.

GROUP CONFLICTS AND ETHNIC CONFLICTS

Are there group conflicts? For strict individualistic liberalism and for various forms of nominalism, there are no supra-individual essences or entities, and groups are reducible to their individual members. Organisations can be accommodated within this kind of thought, although with difficulty. Strict individual liberalism tends to reduce a family to its independent individual members (love is notably absent from traditional political theory and the feminist charge of its masculinity and male chauvinistic character is certainly a well-founded claim). Actually, modern legal theory assumes that corporations have interests that are distinct from the interests of its members.

Methodological individualism has difficulties with the concept of ethnic conflict. Methodological individualism accepts individual conflicts and may accept conflicts between organisations. For a methodological individualist, there are no ethnic or racial or other 'communal' conflicts, therefore nationalist ideologies are pure inventions without any basis in fact. Artificial labels will just intensify conflicts. Actually, traditional methodological individualism is based on analytical oversimplifications. A set is an individual entity, which is made up from individual

entities. Humans are made up from individual cells, but each cell within a human is not that human.

It is useful to distinguish between groups and categories of humans for the purposes of conflict regulation. . Groups are sets of persons who interact (directly or indirectly). Governments, political parties, armies and families are groups. There are also *social categories*, persons sharing social properties (possessing common properties). Consumers, insurance salespersons, aircraft pilots, artists are categories. Marxian economic classes are categories. Can there be nonreducible category interests or category needs in the same sense as corporate needs might not be reducible to the needs of the individual members of a corporation? Obviously, category desires are reducible to the desires of its individual members. We may loosely talk of category desires ('what the consumers want') if the desire is shared by a majority of category members. Category needs are positional needs, needs of a person who occupies this specific position.

Groups can make decisions, but categories cannot. This is important for conflict management. It is possible to negotiate with groups, but not with categories. Under certain conditions, a category may be transformed into a group or may generate a group, which will be or could be the focus of its loyalty. There are trade unions and there is (or was) an institute of directors in UK Politicians try to mobilise categories, but category mobilisation is not an arbitrary result. Let us imagine politicians telling their voters how good they would have it if they were to consent becoming slaves...

While there are certainly no essences and no supraindividualistic causal entities, there are categories of humans with shared cultures and cultural needs. Ethnicity is a subkind of culture. Cultural incompatibilities or differences can produce significant divergences of value sets and goal-sets. These divergences can become conflict-generating factors both discursively and because they are involved with different need-structures and different interpretation-structures. Ethnic units or *ethnies* are situated between groups and categories. Members of an *ethnie* share a common culture. 'Culture' is used here in an anthropological sense, to refer to a fuzzy set of properties, which usually involve language, behavioural regularities, ordered sets of values and may include beliefs. I am suspicious of the insistence that ethnicity involves common myths about history. Something actually happened in past. Hitler, Attila, Winston Churchill, abolition of slavery are not myths, although there could be myths about them.

Moreover, people are sometimes able to laugh about myths. For Estonians, an important part of their history is a 'national awakening' during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. A number of intellectuals started to claim that Estonians are a nation, should be proud of being a nation and possess all cultural properties of a nation. They could and should organise to produce art and they have created

epic poetry in the past (therefore, they should be equals with Germans who hold dominant economic and government positions within an area which was inhabited mostly by Estonians). Of course, it was a 19th-century myth that only those collections of people who had created epic poems had an ethnic culture ('nationality'). This part of Estonian history is not just taught reverently at schools, but the particular activists of the 'awakening' are held in very high esteem by all (98 per cent) of Estonians. Nevertheless, during a prime viewing time in summer, 2000, Estonian **state-owned** TV broadcast a Monty Python type show about these persons and their doings. The show was part of a celebration of a Midsummer Day holiday (and this holiday, given the present evidence, has been a major part of the cultural tradition of present Estonians and their predecessors since pre-Christian tribal life). People can laugh about their myths and still think some past writers and even politicians were great and are part of *their* past. It is not unnatural to like one's own culture. A.D.Smith has pointed out the political dangers of systematically blocking the needs of ethnic communities (Smith 1988: 225, 277).

A cultural need is not a meaningless concept. Language is part of human life, but we always use **a** language. To talk in a language, I need at least one other speaker of this language. If I am part of a group which consists of persons sharing my native language and if I am not allowed to talk with them in our common native language, then I feel oppressed and am oppressed and am discriminated, even if somebody claims that to abandon our language and switch to a language used by a more numerous set of people would be rational in the marketplace of languages. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Estonian schoolchildren were prohibited to talk to one another in Estonian on school premises (even outside classes). They were ordered to talk in Russian. In late 1970s, the Soviet Government tried to reintroduce this practice. This was, obviously, a conflict-generating approach. Strategically, proponents of this approach hoped to achieve conflict-erasure. Switching the language was seen as part of assimilation. There are no ethnic conflicts, if there is just one ethnic group. Of course, switching the language might not always produce the desired effect. There is the case of Ireland.

The present Estonian government supports switching the teaching language of all secondary schools to Estonian. This is not yet equal to the Czarist or Soviet policies, but might still produce long-term annoyances and, therefore, might be inimical to successful conflict management. On the other hand, Estonia is a democracy, the numbers of citizens and voters, who identify themselves as Russians, are growing. This may provide for future influence in a multiparty system (like the influence of religious parties in Israeli coalitions). There are already signs of agreements between nationalistically Estonian-orientated political parties and Russian-orientated parties on local level: some politicians will discard their nationalism in order to keep themselves in power. This is possible only on condition that democracy is an overriding value among politicians and population.

LABELS AND ROOTS

Sometimes ethnicity and race are overlays to other sources of conflict. Agrarian societies are based on unequal access to land-ownership. This may be protected or supported by racial and ethnic differences. Care is necessary in labelling these conflicts as ethnic ones even if the parties themselves use the ethnic idiom. Moreover, politicians may just express common feelings or exploit these feelings for their own personal and party-political aims, thus creating a second overlay.

Estonia was an agrarian society until the beginning of the 20th century. Between 13th and 19th century, the land was monopolistically owned by German-speaking nobility, which used its control of state power to reproduce this kind of seigniorial agrarian structure. Peasants did not own the land, but received allocations for, basically, *corvée* services. During the 18th century they were also of serf status (could be sold with the land in their use). Originally, the structure was created by alien invasion, although few descendants of the 13th century crusade survived within the nobility by 19th century. By the end of the 19th century, the peasants were free and allowed to buy land, but the market depended on the willingness of the big landowners to sell (and not to use wage-labour). The conflict was viewed in ethnic terms since the middle of 19th century and a sole attempt to construct an overall Baltic identity (complete with invented common myths) failed dismally. Estonian-speaking peasants considered the situation unjust in a kind of Nozickian sense: their goal was rectification of an original injustice. With creation of democracy in 1918-20, Estonian voters demanded and got land reform, free distribution of the estates of nobility to peasants.³ More than 90 per cent of population identified themselves as ethnically Estonian in these years, and approximately 75 per cent of voters were rurally or agriculturally occupied.

Social conflicts about medieval systems of land-holdings are known from other areas of Europe, like Germany or France. In France, the old agrarian system was finally terminated during the French revolution. Marxists may claim that this conflict is in essence an economic one. Obviously, it is. But with the development of ethnic nations, ethnicity could provide an overlay and blur the identification markers. There were no Estonians among nobility in Czarist Russia, social and ethnic borders strengthened each other and ethnicity was merged with social status.

Land claims by Blacks in Zimbabwean supply another example of the same kind of conflict with overlays. Big commercial farms were created with state support of the colonising power. Decolonization provided for the transfer of state



3 Under Western pressure, this was modified later and landowners were paid compensation. The land-reform legislation provided for the noble landowner to retain a 'normal-size' holding as his property.

power, but not for the transfer of land. Economic and social borders remained where they were. This kind of situation was prone to conflict-generation. Land is a first requirement of an agrarian society. There is a political difference with the Estonian case. Estonia was a democracy between 1919 and 1934 when the land reform was effected. All political parties supported the land reform (with the exception of the 'German' party). No politician was able to manipulate the reform for the personal gain, apart from using his support for the reform as a justification for staying in politics. Any hypothetical opponent would have committed political suicide.⁴

Religion is sometimes an important constituent part of a culture. If two conflicting groups possess different religions (or varieties within the religion), then it might be difficult to distinguish religious conflict from and ethnic conflict. In some societies, government is charged with suppressing 'wrong' views. Moreover, it is justified to use lethal force to carry out this duty. A conflict between groups with different religions or varieties of a religion in these societies is also a conflict about gaining governmental power. Liberal, libertarian and human rights theories oppose this vision of governmental duties. Mediaeval European attitudes, Nazi and Stalinist theories supported the vision. Iraqi attitudes at the beginning of the 21st century seem also to concur with Mediaeval European attitudes on the issue. Within the suppressive vision, it is possible to argue for preservation of life of the supporters of the 'wrong' ideas, although to discriminate (in Liberal sense) against the latter. The result will be rational from the point of the dominant religion. Only a few rationality criteria are Kantian universal and culture-independent. Rational decisions in real world involve culture-dependent criteria, and, therefore, incompatible strategies could still be rational, although only a single strategy (or a set of strategies) would be rational for a particular actor in a conflict. It is important to notice that comprehensive world-views (religions, totalitarian ideologies) consider all other world-views as 'wrong'. There is no 'shop-keeper' type discourse available between their supporters and Liberals, although realities of a balance of power may be understood by power-wielders in societies with comprehensive ideologies. Therefore, co-existence of states with different world-views is a method of conflict management.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL MANAGEABILITY

The actual world has been divided into states and some states have dominant *ethnies*. Internal activities of a government do not create direct conflicts with other states (although they may threaten to create future conflicts). In the pres-



⁴ The Latvian case was broadly similar to the Estonian one.

ent world, internal violence usually creates a pre-threat situation to order within neighbouring states, but sometimes also within some other states. Therefore, the international community has some interest in conflict management in other states, but the non-interference principle provides grounds for managing possible divergences on 'internal matters of other states'.

Politics is about power to govern. If government is carried out in accordance to some specific cultural values and behavioural standards which are characteristic of one ethnic unit, then other ethnic units may be discriminated against and precluded from participation in power. In a democratic polity, minority opinions can be translated into votes and may become a real factor in politics. This does not always dampen conflict, for there might be no easy solution in case of important conflicts of values.

Switch to non-annihilation strategies is not an easy decision for participants and might be inconsistent with the existence of some participants. Nazis could not switch to equality of all ethnic groups and stay Nazis. Adoption of non-annihilation strategies involves acceptance of significant compromises by all participants in an actual or potential conflict. The founders of the U.S.A. accepted non-establishment of religion as a means of avoiding annihilation strategy on state-religion relations. In the contemporary world, the equivalent of their choice would be a secular state, even in a situation with only one religion being the religion of the vast majority of citizens. Acceptance of secular state will obviously have to be made in mercantile, and not in warrior mode. Otherwise, annihilation will only be postponed. Note that annihilation could mean conversion, switch between faiths, and not just killing of infidels.⁵

Nationalism may justify territorial claims to other states and, therefore, may become a conflict-generating factor between states. I have argued elsewhere (Loone 1999) that some forms of nationalism are compatible with negotiated conflict management between states, while other forms are not compatible.

VALUE INCOMPATIBILITIES

Values are constituent parts of cultures. Values are parts of normative arguments, they provide warrants for practical premises. Therefore values limit what is seen as reasonable by members of different cultures.⁶ Cultural values act as



5 On Millian grounds, secular state is justified by liberty, even if all citizens belong to the same religion (and the same school within the religion). I am not using Millian argument here, because in the actual world liberty might not be the highest value in all cultures. Honour or faith may have higher positions.

6 On warrants for arguments see Toulmin, 1958. A discussion of some issues about Toulmin see Habermas, 1987.

programs or templates for thoughts and emotions. Standard liberal democratic theory assumes that members of a polity share basic values (e.g., about liberty) and are amenable to arguments about the rationality and reasonableness of particular policies. Actually, cultures involve sets of values and there are many dimensions about sets of values.

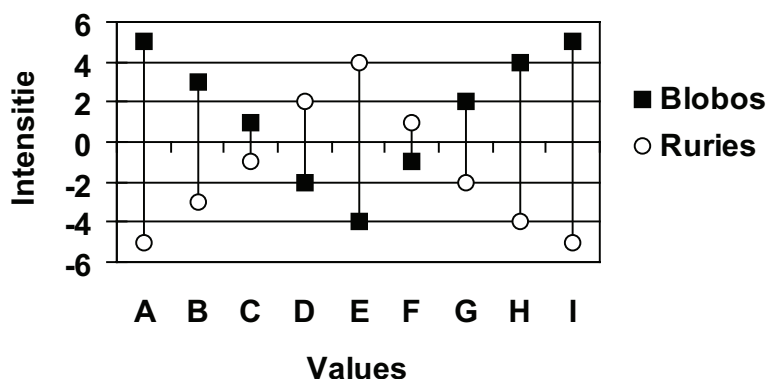
Each culture includes a list of values. These values possess varied intensities and are assigned different priority orders. It is a standard practice of public opinion studies to discover which issues are important for the voters and which policies are considered to be in line with the voters' preferences on the issues. Values are, of course expressed verbally, but also in body language, customs, etc. Values act as self-evident and, thus, often hidden presumptions.

Let us consider the implications of some of the differences between lists of values.

INTENSITY CONFLICT

The list of values is shared, priority order is shared, intensities assigned to individual items are opposed. The following chart assigns imaginary intensities for unspecified values; negative intensities mean hostility; A, B, C, ... stand for value names. Lines measure difference on each value. There are two imaginary categories of population, Blobos and Ruries (imaginary units are used as placeholders for real units, their use avoids value judgments on particular actual conflicts).

Chart 1



This is a case of cleavage communities. Minority will be always outvoted, and if the categories are roughly equal in membership numbers, instability will follow and hardening of positions on ethnic lines is a real possibility. Any concessions to the minority will be overestimated by the majority and underestimated by the minority. Concessions may be taken as a sign of weakness by both sides. No actual solutions apart from submission or separation are possible. Tolerance by both sides may make submission easier, in particular in cases of small minorities.

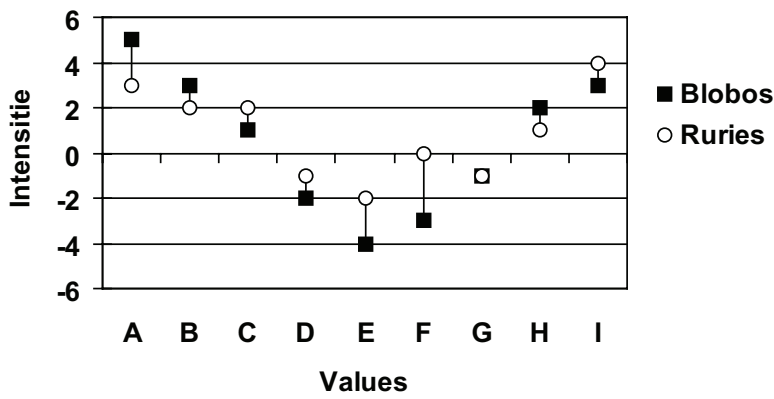
Let us say that the value **A** means democracy. Opponents and supporters of democracy cannot very well run the same kind of state. It has to be noted that numbers are important. A large majority (98 per cent) supporting democracy and a small minority of 2 per cent opposing it can coexist. The same situation is applicable if the opposing values are core parts of ethnic cultures, but members of one culture are a tiny minority within a country.

Something like the situation described in Chart 1 happened in Estonian politics in 1990-91. 'Russian' politicians were ready for many concessions, but they were opposed to 'Estonian' politicians on the basic issue of Estonian independence. 'Estonian' parties started to vote in the parliament as a bloc, and nationalist parties strengthened their positions among general population at the expense of more moderate (or devious?) politicians.

A study by Sniderman et al (1997: 191-234) has demonstrated that the views of anglophone and francophone Canadians differ markedly about issues like preserving two official languages of Canada or minority language education rights. They also found that U.S. and Canadian citizens differed markedly on issues like the importance of further strengthening racial equality (Sniderman et al. 1997: 86). 50 per cent Canadian respondents thought that it is a job of government to see that every one has a job and decent standard of living, while only 25 per cent of U.S. respondents agreed with this view (Sniderman et al. 1997: 123).

INTENSITY DIVERGENCE

Chart 2



The list of values is shared, priority order is shared, intensities assigned to individual items are different, but they are not opposite in a majority of cases.

Conflicts are manageable, trade-offs between policies on different items are possible. A condition for the success of conflict management is that the majority will have to carry out policies on matters of intensive feeling by a minority. If democracy is present among positive values, then it will function as a warrant for mercantile strategies of conflict regulation.

PRIORITY ORDERS

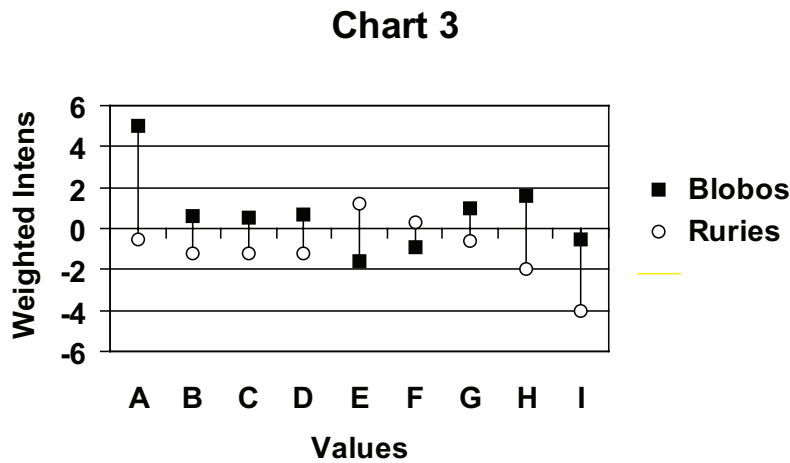
If, within the same list, priority orders are different, conflict management within a polity may be possible. Items with high positive intensity and high priority for the minority may be of low priority and low negative intensity for the majority. This makes trade-offs possible. Certainly, sharing of some basic values (liberty, tolerance, preferability of trader strategies) makes manageability easier. Priority orders may be measurable as importance assigned to an item.

Let us construct a hypothetical case with intensities as in Chart 1, but with two different distributions of importance of items. Each pair of values gives us a product (Intensity x Importance = Product):

Table 1

	Blobos			Ruries		
	Intensity	Importance	Product	Intensity	Importance	Product
A	5	1,0	5,0	-5	0,1	-0,5
B	3	0,2	0,6	-3	0,4	-1,2
C	1	0,5	0,5	-1	0,9	-1,2
D	-2	0,7	-1,4	2	0,6	1,2
E	-4	0,4	-1,6	4	0,3	1,2
F	-1	0,9	-0,9	1	0,2	0,3
G	2	0,5	1,0	-2	0,3	-0,6
H	4	0,4	1,6	-4	0,5	-2,0
I	5	0,1	0,5	-5	0,8	-4,0

The chart of the differences of products of intensities and importance will be:



In this case, although Blobos and Ruries have opposing values, there is an area of possible accommodations. Trade-offs would be possible.

DIFFERENT LISTS OF VALUES

There are many problems. In theory, trade-offs should be possible. If there were no common part, the construction of a viably popular government program would be extremely difficult.

DISCUSSION

Value divergences generate political conflicts if these values are involved in choice of policies. Values cannot be always arbitrarily chosen: we have no choice over our primary socialisation. Full oppositions of core values can be managed externally by limiting the areas that involve common decisions. Even in cases where there is no full opposition, shifting the divergence from internal to external status may lead to disappearance of conflicts and new co-operation. If a group is opposed to government by foreigners and numbers are against it, then separation could become a successful method of conflict management.

Understanding other values does not necessarily solve a conflict. If Blobos feel that the central value of Ruries is something really evil, then understanding the values of Ruries might just enhance their resolution to convert, suppress or kill the Ruries. Understanding Nazi attitudes towards Jews does not mean we ought to condone these attitudes and the actions that stemmed from Nazi values.

There is also a possibility that two ethnic groups share some value-template, but there are no demand satisfiers available. If the value-set includes a value 'power has to belong to us', then the value-template is shared, but the identification of 'us' is not. Warrior approaches will look to power sharing as an expedient, but not as a long-term solution. Let us assume that group *B* constitutes a local majority, but an overall minority. Let us assume there exists significant local autonomy. In these conditions there might be reasons for group *B* to preserve the overall set-up. Now, let us introduce a change. Group *A*, which possesses the overall majority within the state, reduces local autonomy and takes steps towards a more unitary state. There might be even perfectly good administrative and budgetary reasons for these steps, from the point of view of group *A*. Nevertheless, this change will be perceived as a sign of attack on group *B* by members of group *B*. If members of group *B* belong to the warrior school or think that group *A* belongs to the warrior school, this assignment of meaning is more or less inevitable. Now, in a situation of potential conflict, any steps that change status quo to the advantage of one side are destabilising and conflict-generating. A proper conflict management would involve avoidance of conflict generating and conflict enhancing actions, but this is not the aim of the warrior school.

Given an extremely tense situation or a suppressed conflict, even symbolic actions may lead to significant intensification of levels of conflict, if these actions pre-empt solutions which are still contestable or negotiated by the parties. The Soviet Union defeated Nazi Germany (within a coalition), but its armed forces did not liberate Eastern Europe. There was a change of occupying power and that is not a liberation. Therefore, for a majority of Estonians, Soviet war memorials are insults against their state and their ethnic group. For Russians, the war against Nazis was a war of self-defence and liberation. They are proud and reasonably proud of their achievements and the memory of the costs of that achievement is precious for Russians. Memorials to the victims are, therefore, precious symbols and any change in the location or status of these memorials is an insult. Relocation of a widely revered memorial is obviously a symbolic action, seen as a deliberate insult by those who revere the memorial, although seen as an act of justice by those who consider the memorial as a memorial to injustice and crimes.⁷

A minority must accept minority status within a state, to switch from annihilative to non-annihilative strategy. A minority status in a democracy is not apartheid. The *millet* system in Ottoman Empire accepted the existence of religious minorities, but there was no equality between members of minorities and the majority. The system was an apartheid-type system. Obviously, the majority may not vote a minority out of existence. Non-annihilation has to be the strategy of all participants, otherwise the strategy will end in failure. What the acceptance of the minority status means is that in general decisions majority values may be accepted as warrants in supporting reasoning, limited by the minority existence condition. Different sets of compromises become possible. For example, there could be one 'state' language and teaching this language might be obligatory in all schools. Nevertheless, the actual language of teaching may be different from the official language, the only condition being the knowledge of the official language by all citizens.⁸

Non-annihilative conflict management is possible for ethnic conflicts inside a state, if general conditions for non-annihilativeness are present. The actual value-structures, customs and body-languages have to satisfy templates presented



7 During an actual removal of a Soviet war memorial in Tallinn, Estonia (the 'Bronze Soldier') approximately 1,000 persons participated in riots. The Russian population of Tallinn is around 150,000. Large numbers of Russians laid flowers at the memorial after its relocation. Many rioters used the occasion to loot stores; the numbers of persons with previous criminal convictions were larger than in the general population. There were some pre-arrangements to induce rioting by nationalist Russian groups in Estonia and Russia. The Estonian government combined the pursuit of narrow party political interests with satisfaction of a low level majority value of ethnic Estonian electorate.

8 And a grant from public funds to enable all citizens to learn this language, apart from their 'mother tongue'.

by charts 2 or 3 (or some varieties of different lists of values). In some cases, this option is not available within a state but a nonviolent creation of new states will provide another kind of options for ethnic conflict management.

SELF-DETERMINATION AND/OR GRIEVANCES

Lord Acton claimed that before 1831 revolutionary movements were based either on grievances about misgovernment or rival imperial claims. After 1831 they fought 'usurpers', foreigners (see Connor 1994: 25 n.2). Conflict about self-determination can be solved only by self-determination or suppression by force. Of course, logically self-determination does not mean 'separation' and in practice may mean 'devolution', 'federalism', etc. Self-determination of ethnic nations still has its opponents and probably became accepted in international law as a right as late as in 1990s (the meaning of earlier UN documents is unclear).

In case of self-determination it is not the individual grievances, oppression or relative backwardness which matter. Walker Connor has pointed out that economic or cultural deprivation is not a necessary cause of nationalism (Connor 1994: 176-178). It is just the fact that the set-up of the unit itself is contentious and there exists no way of making decisions on this issue purely on the basis of 'one person, one vote' (Loone 1999). Of course, right to self-determination does not mean it would be prudent in all cases to strive to set up a separate state. It means that the sole justifying decision-making body on this issue is the collection of humans aspiring for self-determination.

Obviously, there may be grievances apart from the overall goal of self-determination. It has to be noted that a claim of self-determination is put against a government that is thus placed into a role of a colonial power (or occupying authority). Violent suppression of the demand for self-determination or symbolic actions that signify refusal to grant self-determination will cause aggravation of the situation and new grievances. This is a secondary layer of conflict above the primary one.

The present author supports the assertion that ethnic nations have the right to self-determination. Justification of this assertion lies beyond the goals of the present paper. It has to be noted that under present international law, the right of self-determination belongs to the *ethnie* as a whole and not to any of its parts (Müllerson 1994: 112). In philosophy, we may question the law. In politics, we may also question the law, even if we are obliged to submit to the law. In any case, if self-determination is a right, then it applies to all members of the class. Israeli right to self-determination (and preservation of the State of Israel) is (i) non-disputable and (ii) it implies the non-disputable right of Palestinian Arabs to self-determina-

tion. What is subject to negotiations is how to achieve the realization of the latter right.⁹

What has been said does not mean there are no genuine first-order grievances in ethnic relations. Sometimes a group has accepted a state unit as justified, although the group constitutes a minority. A group may be indifferent to governments and territorial states. Value divergences will still exist and conflict management will have to prevent these differences from becoming destructive to participants.



9 At present, Palestinians are a nation in ethnic sense. It is unimportant whether they were a nation in the eighteenth century and whether there were, indeed, any nations at all in the eighteenth century. Obviously, no state has a *right* to exist if a condition of its existence is starting an unjust war against another state. Whatever were the matters in 1917, 1919, 1928 or 1947, at present the existence of an Israeli state is justified on the foundations of self-determination.

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