THE TWO TIERS OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN WESTERN EUROPE

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Among the most intractable dilemmas confronting virtually all contemporary advanced industrial democracies, and particularly those of Western Europe, are those that arise from the economic, political, and social tensions between majority populations and ethnic and racial minorities. Although on the whole traditional ethnoterritorial and ethnonational conflicts, especially the most extreme, ebbed in Western Europe during the 1980s, the escalation of hostility during the last decade between the so-called "new" ethnic and racial groups (e.g. Turks in Germany, Maghrebis in France, and Asians in Britain) and native populations mostly negated whatever social peace or progress that may have been achieved on the previous front.[1] As a direct consequence of the introduction or, in most countries, the expansion of conflict between new minority and majority groups, ethnicity is now more salient as a political cleavage in Western Europe than at any time since World War II. In several countries, most notably Belgium, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom, newer ethnic cleavages have been superimposed over the old.

The introduction or expansion of conflict between new minority and native populations during the past decade and longer now suggests that it may be useful to speak of a duality of ethnic conflict in Western Europe or the emergence of two separate but interactive tiers of ethnic conflict. On the first tier the interests, aspirations, and, very often, the cultural identities of ethnoterritorial and ethnonational minorities are pitted against those of Western Europe's majority populations. On the second tier, the interests, aspirations, and identities of the new ethnic and racial minorities collide not only with those of the majority or significant fractions of the majority population, but also directly or indirectly with those of the traditional minority groups on the first tier. Moreover, the emergence of the second tier in recent years suggests that the parameters of ethnic conflict in contemporary Western Europe have both expanded

1. Anthony M. Messina, "Anti-Immigrant Illiberalism and the 'New' Ethnic and Racial Minorities in Western Europe," *Patterns of Prejudice* Vol. 23 (Autumn 1989): 17-31.

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and become increasingly complex. As a result, we can reasonably expect overall ethnic conflict in Western Europe to persist for some time.

The main purposes of this essay are to sketch the general outlines of these conflicts and to suggest how the two tiers of ethnic conflict alluded to above are partially converging, at least with respect to their effects on domestic politics in Western Europe. The central argument is that old and new forms of ethnic conflict in Western Europe are disturbing conventional politics and, in the most extreme examples, significantly altering the nature of political discourse while reordering the priorities of the national political agenda. In effect what has been observed during the past twenty years or so is the movement of ethnic and racial issues from the periphery to the core or center of national politics. During this process, the politics of the center have been significantly and perhaps permanently transformed.

The Ethnoterritorial Dimension

Although the term "ethnoterritorial" is not synonymous with "ethnonational" or "ethnoregional," it is usefully employed as an "overarching concept for various political movements and conflicts [in Western Europe] that are derived from a group of people ... having some identifiable geographic base within the boundaries of an existing political system."[2] According to Thompson and Rudolph, such people

> must identify themselves or be identifiable as a group distinct in ... their culture, language, history, religion, tradition and/or political past. They do not need to have been a separate political system in any recent sense, but they do need to perceive themselves as being distinct from the broader population of the overall political system.[3]

There are many ethnoterritorial groups across Western Europe today that fit the above description including the Scots and Welch in Britain; Northern Irish Catholics; Basques, Catalans, and Galacians in Spain; Alsatians, Bretons, and Corsicans in France; and Walloons in Belgium. Although they constitute a numerical majority, Belgium's Flemish population may also be included among Western Europe's ethnoterritorial groups. In the context of Western Europe, ethnoterritorial or "traditional" (in contrast to newer, recently settled minority groups) are groups of people sharing the above characteristics who were absorbed into the various European states during the process of "nation-building," a process that in some cases took several hundred years to complete. Either through military conquest, political cooptation, voluntary absorption, or other means, ethnoterritorial minorities were incorporated into existing states. In

2. Robert J. Thompson and Joseph R. Rudolph, Jr., "The Ebb and Flow of Ethnoterritorial Politics in the Western World," in Joseph R. Rudolph, Jr. and Robert J. Thompson, eds., *Ethnoterritorial Politics, Policy, and the Western World* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1989), 2.
3. *Ibid.*

most instances these minorities were incorporated as subordinate groups with their language, culture, and political and social traditions devalued or deliberately repressed by the dominant majority groups.

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The sudden surge of ethnoterritorial conflict and ethnonationalism across Western Europe and other advanced industrialized societies during the late 1960s and early 1970s is a story that has been repeated many times in great detail. Although there are obvious differences among the specific cases, most observers agree that the sudden reawakening of ethnoterritorial conflict, following its decline or acquiescence for several decades, can be attributed to several common factors including: 1) the effects of economic and political modernization; 2) the decline of traditional ideologies, and particularly the decline of ideological conflict in Western Europe along the left-right cleavage; and 3) the "domino effect," or the imitation by Europe's ethnoterritorial minorities of demands for self-determination and self-government by ethnic groups elsewhere in the developed and developing world.[4] Whether all or any of these explanations or the sub-theses which they have spawned are valid is relatively unimportant; it is an indisputable fact that ethnoterritorial conflict suddenly surged twenty or more years ago and, although there have been ebbs and flows since then, has remained fairly constant. Ethnoterritorial conflict has stubbornly survived any and all conditions, including affluence, modernization, and post-industrialism that, according to many observers, were supposed to precipitate its demise.

What is meant by ethnoterritorial conflict? What specific forms does it take? We can identify several dimensions of conflict that precipitate a specific set of demands by ethnoterritorial groups. According to Rudolph and Thompson, these demands fall under four major categories: 1) output demands (e.g., economically motivated demands for the location of industry in Wallonia or Scotland, or culturally inspired demands for media access for native Welch speakers or Spanish Basques); 2) demands that seek the reorganization of the authority arrangements in the state (e.g., the linguistic-territorial representation of the Flemish on a proportional basis in the Belgian civil service); 3) demands that focus on regime change (e.g., proposals to restructure the state along federal lines); and 4) "demands challenging the definition of political community and calling for the creation of an independent and united Ireland, a free Scotland,

4. Anthony M. Messina and Luis R. Fraga, "Introduction," in Anthony M. Messina et al., eds., *Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1992), 3-8.

or an independent, united Basque state in the European Community."[5]

The various ethnoterritorial groups in Western Europe can be divided on the basis of whether they frequently resort to violence in pursuing their ends (e.g., the Spanish Basque nationalist group ETA and the Provisional Irish Republican Army in Northern Ireland), combine occasional acts of violence with a strategy of conventional political pressure and activities (e.g., Corsican, Breton, and Welch nationalists), or work predominantly through mainstream political institutions and channels, including elections (e.g., the Scottish Nationalist party and various Spanish Catalan political parties).[6] However, regardless of what is demanded and by what means, virtually all demands by ethnoterritorial minorities challenge the legitimacy and the authority of the state and, by implication, the dominant cultural, socio-economic, and constitutional order upon which the state is ultimately founded. Since the domestic order in Western Europe reflects and serves the interests of the majority population reasonably well, ethnoterritorial minorities often find themselves in direct or indirect conflict with the majority. Under these circumstances it is not a surprise that ethnoterritorial conflict in Western Europe should occasionally flare; it is surprising that it does not come to the surface more often and with greater intensity.

The New Ethnic and Racial Conflict

In contrast to traditional forms of ethnic conflict, which have persisted for decades and sometimes centuries, the new ethnic and racial conflict dates from the arrival during the postwar period of millions of foreign workers into the labor-importing countries of Western Europe.[7] In contemporary Britain and France, for example, many of the new ethnic minorities are former colonial peoples whose emigration, apart from being influenced by economic factors, is part of the legacy of overseas empire and post-World War II decolonization. More recently settled, and often without the rights of full citizenship or permanent residence, are various Third World minorities in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Whatever their origins, most foreign workers were actively recruited and embraced by governments and private employers during the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s to satisfy the demand for cheap, unskilled labor in the then booming economies of Western Europe.

Implicit in this welcome was the expectation that foreign workers would return to their country of origin once the demand for their labor slackened. When these expectations were not realized and, more important, when the oil shocks of the 1970s plunged Western Europe and the rest of the industrialized

5. Joseph R. Rudolph, Jr. and Robert J. Thompson, "Pathways to Accommodation and the Persistence of the Ethnoterritorial Challenge in Western Democracies," in Rudolph and Thompson, 224-225.
6. Raphael Zariski, "Ethnic Extremism among Ethnoterritorial Minorities in Western Europe: Dimensions, Causes, and Institutional Responses," *Comparative Politics* Vol. 21 (April, 1989): 253.
7. See Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1985).

attention of the political center away from national issues toward local and regional problems, problems that are usually too complex for sub-national governments to address adequately. Whether it is Prime Minister John Major doggedly trying to undercut Scottish nationalism in a series of speeches in the precious few weeks before the 1992 British general election, Chancellor Helmut Kohl carefully calibrating his public response to incidents of anti-immigrant violence in the midst of national economic difficulties exacerbated by German reunification, or President François Mitterrand steering France toward the waters of integrated Europe while fending off the nationalist and xenophobic challenge of Jean-Marie Le Pen and the Front National, the result is the same: the resources of the political center are expended to fight rear-guard battles on the political and/or geographical periphery. At the very least, such battles complicate the business of national policymaking. In the worst cases, as has occurred in Belgium and Britain, these conflicts create havoc within the national policy-making process and can contribute to the fall of governments.

The new ethnic and racial minorities are convenient scapegoats for all that has gone wrong during the past few decades of economic, political, and social transformation in Western Europe.

A second way in which traditional and newer forms of ethnic conflict affect domestic politics is the challenge they pose to the concentration of authority in the central state and, concomitantly, to the state's promotion of the monocultural principle upon which the national identity has historically been constructed. In this context, Professor William Safran has persuasively argued that the process of European integration has only reinforced ethnonationalism and ethnic autonomy and diversity at the expense of the traditional authority of the nation-state.[17] In short, it is no longer possible for the political center in Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, or Sweden to deny that their societies are multiethnic and increasingly multicultural. Moreover, once this reality is conceded, it is extremely difficult to force both the ethnoterritorial and new minority groups to accept passively the state's traditional hegemonic authority in areas such as education, general resource allocation, or the delivery of public services. The usual compromise is that the state concedes some of its policy-making authority in exchange for social peace allowing, for example, Scotland or the Basque region greater self-rule and the new ethnic and racial minorities the right to found and operate their own schools and to wear

17. William Safran, "France as a Multiethnic Society: Is It Possible?" (University of Colorado, Boulder, 1987).

traditional religious headwear on the job in the public sector. However, with each compromise and concession the authority of the central state erodes, and the argument for reconstructing the state to reflect the social realities of ethnic pluralism and multiculturalism incrementally strengthens.

Third, ethnic conflict shifts the middle ground of national politics further to the ideological right. For reasons of low politics (e.g., the need to placate majority public opinion) or high politics (e.g., maintaining the integrity of the state), mainstream politicians and political parties must eventually respond to the ethnic challenge on the political periphery; their typical response, regardless of their traditional ideological orientation, is to defend the existing socio-economic and constitutional order. Thus, although there are subtle differences between and within each political camp, the Conservative and Labour parties in Britain agree that Scotland should not be granted independence and that a restrictive immigration regime is politically necessary; the Socialists and Gaullists in France concur that the number of immigrants, mostly from North Africa, is pushing the native population toward the "threshold of intolerance;" the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats in Germany reach an accord to create special "camps" for asylum-seekers and to accelerate the process of deporting those who have been denied asylum; and in Denmark there is an all party consensus that the country's immigration laws should be tightened and family reunification among settled immigrants made more difficult. In these and other examples the mainstream political Left and Right adopt common policies toward the traditional and new minorities. A policy consensus of sorts is established which often removes, for a time, contentious ethnic questions from the arena of partisan political debate. However, by their very nature, such consensuses are conservative in that they stifle political discourse, obstruct change, and feed the forces of xenophobia, racism, and nationalism within the majority population by implicitly conceding that these forces have a legitimate point of view. The ultimate and inevitable result is a more conservative national politics.

Yet a fourth and perhaps the most important way that ethnic conflict impacts domestic politics in Western Europe is its influence on patterns of political representation. Traditional and newer forms of ethnic conflict disturb or accelerate the fragmentation of established patterns of representation, including party systems. Although this phenomenon is longer-lived and most obvious with regard to ethnoterritorial conflict in Belgium and Britain (where the rise of potent ethnoterritorial political parties more than twenty years ago helped to alter the balance of electoral support for and the parliamentary representation of the traditional parties and made them less national and more regionally oriented),[18] it is also evident with regard to the new ethnic conflict in countries such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, as well as Britain. Xenophobia and racism within the native working class in these and other

18. See Joseph R. Rudolph, Jr., "Belgium: Variations on the Theme of Territorial Accommodation," and Michael Keating, "Territorial Management and the British State: The Case of Scotland and Wales," in Rudolph and Thompson, 91-113 and 159-179.

countries into a prolonged period of slow economic growth and recession, governments intervened to halt the flow of primary migration. Paradoxically, efforts to end the migration of labor stimulated a larger wave of secondary migration, a wave predominantly made up of the dependents and the extended family of the original foreign workers. Thus, what began as a temporary, economically motivated policy of labor recruitment became, by the late 1970s, a pattern of significant and permanent settlement.

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It is really the second migration wave, beginning in most countries in the early to mid-1970s and only now tapering off, that laid the foundations for the emergence of what in another context I have called "anti-immigrant illiberalism" and, hence, the second tier of ethnic conflict in Western Europe.[8] Not only did this second wave substantially increase the population of new minorities and lead to their permanent settlement, but it made perfectly evident to the opponents of the original migration that their respective societies were becoming increasingly multicultural and, in some cases, multiracial along the lines of the American model. The transparency of this reality, which could not be credibly denied or explained away by nervous mainstream politicians, created the fertile soil in which the xenophobic and racist political groups of the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s grew and flourished. The Freedom party in Austria, the Front National in Belgium, the National Front in Britain, the Progress party in Denmark, the Front National in France, the Centre party in the Netherlands, the Progress party in Norway, and a host of xenophobic groups in Germany and Switzerland all owe most of their modest political successes of the past two decades to the resentment among natives to the presence of the new ethnic and racial minorities.[9]

Is there an objective basis for the rise of xenophobia and racism? To paraphrase Aristide Zolberg of the New School for Social Research, are the countries of Western Europe under seige?[10] The entire postwar migration was certainly large. Castles estimates that approximately thirty million people entered Western Europe overall as workers or as dependents, making the postwar migration

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8. Messina, "Anti-Immigrant Illiberalism."
9. "As the Continent Tilts toward Germany It's Also Tilting to the Right," *Boston Globe*, 5 January 1992.
10. Aristide R. Zolberg, "Are the Industrial Countries under Siege?" (New School for Social Research, 1991).

"one of the greatest migratory movements in human history."[11] Although it is impossible to calculate the exact number of foreigners (i.e., non-citizens) currently residing in Western Europe, it is probably in the vicinity of eighteen million. This number includes foreign workers and their dependents from North America as well as nationals from elsewhere in Western Europe, but it excludes many of the original non-European foreign workers and their families who are now naturalized citizens. If the latter group is added to the number of foreigners, there are probably at least twenty-one million people of migrant origin in contemporary Western Europe.

However, the foreigner population in Western Europe is unevenly distributed. Table 1, which was compiled from a wide variety of government, scholarly, and journalistic sources, illustrates this uneven pattern. Germany and France together have almost ten million foreigners, while Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and Switzerland each have a foreigner population greater than 5 percent of their total population. Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, on the other hand, have relatively few foreigners, most of whom are refugees who emigrated to Southern Europe only during the past six or seven years.[12] Given this distribution pattern and the history of the Southern European and Mediterranean countries as traditional labor-exporting states, it is obvious why the rise of xenophobic and racist movements during the post-1970 period has been predominantly a North European phenomenon. Lately, however, the south has begun to converge with the north. Xenophobia, as measured by public opinion surveys and the number of violent attacks against refugees, is increasing in all four southern countries.[13] Especially in Italy, regional political parties—particularly the Lombard League—have exploited both xenophobic sentiment within the electorate and historically rooted tensions between northern and southern Italians to make significant gains in local elections during the 1990s.[14]

However uneven their distribution, it is clear from Table 1 that Western Europe is not being overrun by foreigners. Putting aside the unique case of Switzerland, only France, Germany, Belgium, and Austria have sizeable foreign populations as a percentage of their total populations. Of these countries, only France and Belgium have a foreign population that is as great or greater as a percent of total population than that of the United States. Moreover, both France and Belgium have far fewer foreigners and descendants of settled immigrants than Australia, where up to 40 percent of the total population falls into these combined two categories.[15]

Why then the recent increase of xenophobia and racism across an economically prosperous Western Europe? A number of factors appear to be at work.

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11. Stephen Castles, *Migrant Workers and the Transformation of Western Societies*, Occasional Paper No. 22 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).
12. Manfred Werth, et al., *Immigration of Citizens from Third Countries into the Southern Member States of the European Community* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 1991).
13. *Ibid.*; and "Spain Frets a Bit as Third-World Tide Sweeps in," *The New York Times*, 5 July 1990.
14. "A League of Their Own," *Economist*, 21 July 1990; and "Voters in Northern Italy Give Fringe Group a Slim Victory," *The New York Times*, 26 November 1991.
15. Castles, 113.

Table 1
Foreign Populations In Western Europe[a]

Country	Foreign Population	Percentage of Total Population
Austria	482,000	6.4
Belgium	900,000	9.0
Denmark	190,000	3.7
France	4,500,000	8.0
Germany	5,000,000	6.4
Greece	275,000	2.8
Italy	1,505,000	2.6
Netherlands	568,000	3.9
Norway	136,000	3.2
Portugal	165,000	1.6
Spain	778,000	1.9
Sweden	391,000	4.6
Switzerland	939,000	14.6
United Kingdom	1,800,000	3.2

[a]See, among others, Richard Lorant, "Tough on Immigration," *Europe* (July/August 1990): 47-48; Werth; and *Economist*, 21 July 1990.

First, and most obviously, Western Europe is more densely populated than either the United States or Australia and, moreover, the new ethnic and racial minorities are disproportionately concentrated in Europe's already crowded conurbations. For example, immigrants are more than a quarter of the population of Brussels and Frankfurt, two cities where considerable ethnic and racial violence has erupted recently. Immigrants also comprise 20 percent of the populations of Stuttgart and Munich, 15 percent of Berlin, and 13 percent of Vienna.

Second, some countries (i.e., Southern Europe) have only recently experienced significant immigration and thus have not had very long to adjust to this new phenomenon, while others (e.g., Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, and Sweden) have been somewhat overwhelmed during the past five years by the large and unexpected wave of economic and political refugees fleeing the decaying Soviet empire and countries in turmoil in the Third World. For example, almost two-thirds of all asylum-seekers within the European Community initially enter the Community through Germany, where the numbers have doubled during the last four years from 103,000 in 1988 to 120,000 in 1989, 193,000 in 1990, and an estimated 220,000 in 1991. Under these exceptional conditions, the absorption of refugees creates understandable social and political difficulties.

Third, xenophobia is a reaction to the partial integration of foreigners and,

specifically, to the ubiquitious presence of the new ethnic and racial minorities in economic, social, and political spheres where they were once excluded or did not previously seek to enter. Paradoxically, as the new ethnic and racial minorities move closer to full citizenship, and as they become more European and less closely tied to their countries of origin, they are often viewed as a greater threat by natives who are inclined toward intolerance. The widespread presence of ethnic minority children in the schools, for example, and the participation of minorities in business, organized labor activities, and party and electoral politics all underscore the point that the new minorities are permanently settled. Of course, in some areas, especially in certain segments of the housing and labor markets, the settlement of minorities does create competition with natives. However, on the whole, direct competition is not the primary source of friction. Rather, it is prospect of change, especially permanent change, that often breeds resentment and xenophobia. This is why most xenophobic groups in Western Europe are antagonistic toward the concept of a European Community and why they are socially reactionary as well as racist.

In this context much of the new xenophobia and racism is undoubtedly linked to the general phenomenon of "post-industrialism" and the specific advance of "Europeanism."[16] For the inefficient small farmer, traditional landlord or shopkeeper, long-term unemployed, rabid nationalist (including ethnonationalist), and other constituencies faced with real or imagined threats from the process of post-industrialism and the march of European integration and supranationalism, the presence of the new ethnic and racial minorities is a tangible reminder of the extent to which their communities have been penetrated by the outside world during the latter part of the twentieth century and how they have been changed as a result. On this view, antagonism toward the new ethnic and racial minorities represents a retrospective frustration with the general breakdown of traditional society and the culture, core values, and opportunities associated with that society. The new ethnic and racial minorities are convenient scapegoats for all that has gone wrong during the past few decades of economic, political, and social transformation in Western Europe.

The Effects of Ethnic Conflict

Whatever their roots and manifestations, traditional and newer forms of ethnic conflict are converging with respect to their effects on domestic politics in Western Europe. Specifically, both tiers of ethnic conflict are influencing domestic politics along four common lines.

First, and least important, traditional and new ethnic conflicts distract the attention of national politicians and leaders in the political center away from other pressing concerns, including economic management issues. They shift the

16. Hans-Georg Betz, "Political Conflict in the Postmodern Age: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Europe," *Current Politics and Economics of Europe* Vol. 1 (1991): 67-83; and "Racism Revived," *Economist*, 19 May 1990.

countries are accelerating the flight of fragments of this class away from political parties of the Left and toward parties of the traditional and new Right.[19] Racist working class voters are defecting because the Left has been less sympathetic than the Right to their views and the Left is more closely associated politically, for ideological and electoral reasons, with the new ethnic and racial minorities.[20] The defection of racist working class supporters threatens to erode further the Left's already eroding core of electoral support and, in many countries, keep the Left out of government indefinitely. The gradual political marginalization of the traditional Left also reinforces trends toward a more conservative national politics.

Interaction Between the Two Tiers

Although the second tier emerged too recently across Western Europe to discern a common pattern of interaction between the second and first tiers of ethnic conflict, there are nevertheless several observations that can be made based on evidence drawn from select countries. From the French case, for example, we might conclude that at best traditional and new ethnic minority groups do not automatically or easily find common cause, and that at worst the two sides are locked in a competitive relationship, especially with regard to their respective access to the state and their location in the social and cultural hierarchies that exist in West European countries. Safran describes the nature of this interethnic rivalry in France as follows:

> The various ethnic minorities . . . do not share identical communal self-perceptions; their ethnicities do not rest on similar historical or cultural foundations; they do not have a common list of policy priorities; and their traditions do not enjoy the same respectability in the eyes of outsiders, both among the majority and among members of other ethnic communities. . . .
>
> Most . . . "indigenous" ethnics—they are more or less united in a national organization, the Committee for the Protection of the Languages of France—agree that while Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, and Jewish ethnic communities are the heirs of honorable literary traditions and of genuine civilizations, these are essentially of foreign origin and therefore should not be considered part of France's patrimony.[21]

On the whole, traditional minority groups in France (e.g., Alsatians, Basques, Flemings, and Catalans) share the fairly conservative viewpoint of the majority

19. Betz, 75-80.
20. See, for example, Anthony M. Messina, *Race and Party Competition in Britain* (London: Oxford Univeristy Press); and Safran.
21. See Safran.

population with regard to the cultural claims of the new ethnic minorities (e.g., Maghrebis). Specifically, they concur among themselves that the state has a moral obligation to support generously their own religious, linguistic, and general cultural traditions, but not those of the new ethnic minorities.

The Flemish Bloc is enjoying a surge in popularity at a time when regional tensions are relatively quiet. It has compensated for the decline of ethnonationalism, its traditional source of support, by fanning the fires of resentment toward the new ethnic and racial minorities within Belgium's Flemish population.

From the Italian case we observe that the emergence of a second tier of ethnic conflict tends to exacerbate tensions on the first tier. Although the north-south cleavage has been politically salient since Italy was unified more than a century ago, it was not until hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants arrived in Italy, mostly from Third World countries in Africa and Asia and, of late, from Albania, that conditions became ripe during the 1990s for the surge of electoral support for the separatist Lombard League and its sister-parties in other northern regions. The basic message of the Lombard League is fairly straightforward. It preaches that the hard-working citizens of the highly industrialized north are financially supporting their less prosperous and less industrious countrymen in the south (the *Mezzogiorno*), as well as millions of illegal immigrants who are depriving unemployed Italians of work. The League argues that Northern Italy is being misruled and its wealth confiscated by Rome. The Lombard League and other northern regional parties combine the regional, separatist language of the Scottish Nationalist party or one of the Spanish Basque nationalist parties with the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the French Front National, the Progress party in Norway, or the German Republikaner party. The northern Leagues of Italy thus simultaneously operate on both the first and second tiers of ethnic conflict and exacerbate and exploit, with considerable political success thus far, the tensions on each.

Finally, from the Belgian example we see that the new ethnic and racial conflict can help revive the poor or flagging fortunes of political parties that are organized around traditional ethnic cleavages. Despite the extensive restructuring of the Belgian constitution between 1968 and 1980 to calm ethnonational tensions, the reorganization of the traditional Catholic, Liberal, and Socialist parties into separate linguistic parties, and the overall decline in the intensity of ethnonational sentiment in Belgium during the past decade or so, the Flemish Bloc was able to increase its representation in the National Assembly from two to twelve seats after the 1991 Belgian general election, on the basis of a 400

percent rise in its electoral support. Founded in 1977, the Flemish Bloc has lately married the plank of repatriating immigrants to its core demand that Flanders be politically independent. Like the Italian Lombard League, the Flemish Bloc exploits the frictions between natives and the new ethnic minorities, especially in the dilapidated sections of Brussels, Antwerp, Mechlin, and other cities where immigrants from North Africa have settled within Flemish communities. However, unlike its Italian counterpart, the Flemish Bloc is enjoying a surge in popularity at a time when regional tensions are relatively quiet. It has compensated for the decline of ethnonationalism, its traditional source of support, by fanning the fires of resentment toward the new ethnic and racial minorities within Belgium's Flemish population.

Conclusion

Writing a decade and a half ago in the "Introduction" to his now widely cited anthology, *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World*, Milton Esman argued that the volume necessarily excluded consideration of Western Europe's new ethnic and racial minorities because "the problems of these peoples differ in many respects from those encountered by peoples who have long been established in their own territories."[22] Moreover, when the book first appeared, few potential readers were led to expect by scanning the cover of *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World* that the book referred to something other than the kind of ethnoterritorial conflict briefly sketched in this essay. However reasonable were these earlier assumptions, it is now clear that they no longer hold up as well as they once did. Indeed, it has been the purpose of this essay to suggest that, during the past two decades, ethnic conflict in Western Europe has expanded well beyond its traditional parameters to include the considerable conflict between the new ethnic and racial minorities and native populations. In short, there are now two separate but interactive tiers of ethnic conflict in Western Europe.

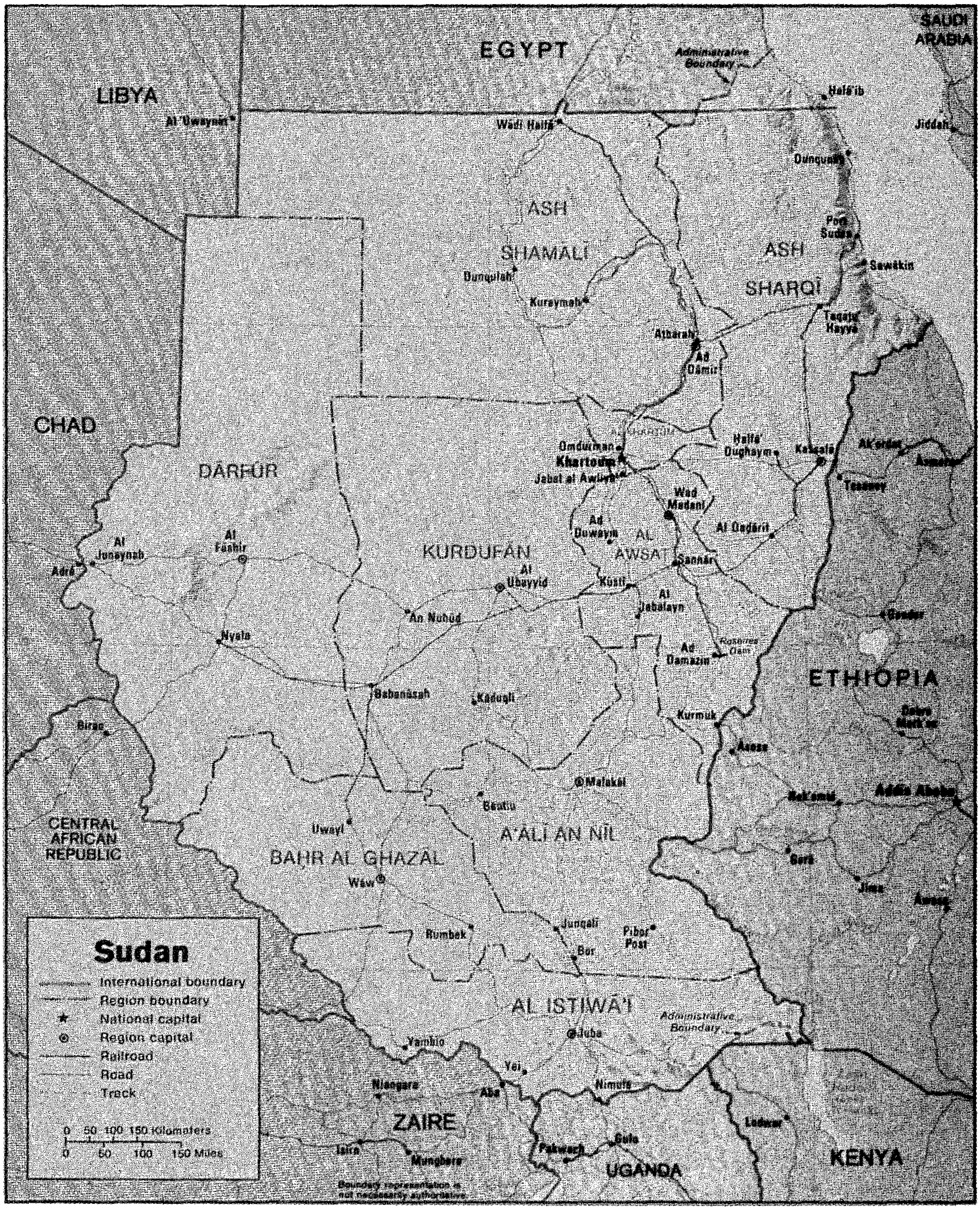
What these tiers essentially share is their impact on the domestic politics of Western Europe. It has been argued that both tiers of ethnic conflict are influencing politics along four common lines: 1) they distract the attention of leaders in the political center away from other pressing concerns; 2) they challenge the concentration of authority in a central state; 3) they shift the middle ground of national politics further to the right; and 4) they disturb or accelerate the fragmentation of established patterns of representation and especially party systems. As a consequence of the resurgence of conflict on the first tier and the more recent emergence of the second tier of ethnic conflict, ethnic and racial issues have moved from the periphery to the center of national politics in Western Europe.

The extent to which ethnic conflict remains at the center of politics in Western Europe and, indeed, the degree to which it persists into the indefinite future

22. Milton Esman, ed., *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), 11.

will, in part, be politically determined. With regard to traditional ethnic conflict, Zariski persuasively argues that "state discrimination, state violence, state repression, state concessions and reforms...tend to...overshadow purely cultural factors in provoking ethnoterritorial extremism."[23] With respect to newer forms of ethnic conflict, I have made the case elsewhere that "if the effects of anti-immigrant illiberalism are to be reversed...more positive initiatives, both by the established political Right and Left, will be required. The largely political disease of anti-immigrant illiberalism in Western Europe will not cure itself."[24] No reasonable person would deny that ethnic conflict has various causes, many of which are beyond the reach of politics. However, as the examples of the Lombard League in Italy, the Flemish Bloc in Belgium, and the various National Front parties across Western Europe demonstrate quite clearly, ethnic conflict of the traditional and newer variety both influences and is very much affected by politics.

23. Zariski, 269.
24. Messina, "Anti-Immigrant Illiberalism," 30.



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Administrative Boundary
Wādī Halfā
Halā'ib
Jiddah
Port Sudan
Sawākin
Dunqulah
Kuraymah
Atbarah
Ad Dāmir
Tagatay Hayya
Omdurman
Khartoum
Jabal al Awliya
Halfā' Dughaym
Kassala
Wad Medani
Ad Duwaym
Al Qadārif
Sannār
Kūstī
Al Jabalayn
Roseires Dam
Ad Damazin
Kurmuk
Al Fāshir
Al Junaynah
Adré
Nyala
Al Ubayyid
An Nuhūd
Babanūsah
Kādugli
Birao
Malakal
Uwayl
Wāw
Rumbek
Junqali
Bor
Pibor Post
Yambio
Juba
Yei
Nimule
Niangara
Aba
Isiro
Gulu
Lodwar
Sudan
International boundary
Region boundary
National capital
Region capital
Railroad
Road
Track
0 50 100 150 Kilometers
0 50 100 150 Miles
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.