

TESTABLE UNDERSTANDINGS OF STRUCTURED HISTORIES¹

**With Examples from a Comparative Study of
Conflict Prevention Successes and Failures**

by

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ABSTRACT

Observers and participants may disagree on how to tell the partly-shared histories of their interactions; on the basis of new experience and continued discussion and reflection, they may change their minds and self-presentations as well. In a project aimed at producing comparable, replicable, preventively-suggestive accounts of inter-group, violence-minimizing successes and failures, we have tried to respect such contested historicities. The authors propose and illustrate a partly formalized, multi-perspective, transformable, “conflict life-cycle” structured, history-encoding framework. Illustrative examples draw on, and engage with, prior narratives/chronologies of Guatemala, Moldova and Burundi cases prepared by Luis Alberto Padilla, Olga Vorkunova and Barbara Harff respectively. They close with some tentative suggestions about constructing alternative future scenarios of emerging conflicts on the basis of such encodings.

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Designed as an international, inter-disciplinary, policy-relevant response to UN Secretary General Boutros Ghali's "An Agenda for Peace," the Conflict Early Warning Systems Research Program (CEWS) aims at building a bridge between academic conflict resolution studies by peace researchers and other scholars, and practical conflict management, resolution and prevention efforts². Its key, Enlightenment-linked, premise is that the cumulation of practical conflict resolution efforts can be furthered by the widened availability of shareable, constructively critical histories of those efforts, including in roughly equal numbers, both relatively successful and unsuccessful examples. Both institutional memories of transnational or internationally oriented agencies and the knowledge bases of citizens and scholars can be furthered by the collecting, collating and – to the extent appropriate – synthesizing and sharing of discerning narratives about different conflicts in different geographical areas, from different authors. The collection of this material is not only useful for the establishment of a publically accessible, context-sensitive database useful for teaching and policy-relevant reflections, but it also represents the primary material for our present effort to make these narratives more comparable, more validly replicable, more analyzable, and more practically suggestive by encoding them within a common, structured, historical framework.

We are developing comparable encoding practices as a contribution to a CEWS book comparatively studying violent conflict prevention successes and failures. Potentially violent inter-group conflicts are conceived of as structured interactions between groups whereby the structure consists of a certain, intentions- and identity-linked patterning of their trajectories, analytically decomposed into phases. Various sequential combinations of conflict phases produce different conflict trajectories.

As part of its book production effort, CEWS will be making public on its website focused narrative accounts of the cases subjected to comparative discussion in the book's individual case study chapters. The case selection and narrative drafting was left to the authors of these chapters, working within guidelines prepared by Alker, on the basis of the discussions at a 1995 London Meeting of the CEWS Steering Committee and its chapter authors.³ These are reflected in the Report of that Meeting and Alker's own relevant writings.⁴ The narratives prepared by conflict management and prevention experts were to be structured and focused, as Alex George would say.⁵ The authors were asked to write about multi-level, multi-party peace processes, where divergent characterizations, multi-level dynamics, changing issues, and reversals in an idealized "life-cycle dynamic" of such conflicts might occur. If "success and failure" were the topics of the generalized questions case study authors focused on, "multi-perspective structured histories," were to be our multi-dimensional "dependent variable" in George's terms. They were to be "understood" in terms of generalized variants of existing (or newly proposed) "life-cycle" conceptualizations of conflict processes sensitive to both the successes and the failures of conflict prevention efforts.

More specifically, our effort to develop an encoding framework for these structured histories derives from the following guidelines:

- 1) Present and use some version of the idea of a "conflict cycle" (Report, p.5).⁶ Rising and then ultimately falling life cycle notions are common elements of

many scholarly approaches to conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. The life cycle of conflicts notion can even be said to be immanent in the notion of early warning and early response⁷, and of “preventable conflicts” as used by dedicated practitioners of that art: alternative trajectories of conflicts, involving less violence or less sustained violence and less spread of that violence to other countries and issues are seen as real possibilities, dependent at least in part on appropriate, often early-on, actions taken by relevant participants and/or third parties. The idea of a conflict cycle is also explicit in the class of “sequential models” oriented toward early warning concerns⁸. We shall articulate and test this notion in terms of sequential phases. When conflict-relevant purposes and/or identities change, we now think it useful to think of a potentially or actually violent inter-group conflict as going through different conflict cycles, or episodes.

2) But first, we note that a general concern expressed in CEWS 1995 and 1996 meetings has been with attempting at least partly to remedy the overly de-contextualized and de-historicized scientific methodologies for studying the creation and resolution of conflicts. The resolution of a conflict can be regarded as a success if looked upon in isolation. However, if the deeper roots of the conflict continue to exist, the attribution of success and failure is oversimplified in ways that intervening major powers or scientific classifiers with hegemonic aspirations may be too eager to accept. A simple categorization of mediation efforts into successful and failed ones is unable to conceive of conflicts as being embedded in other conflicts, and is therefore also unable to capture the context of any given conflict. “The big story about complex, protracted communal conflicts is often one of several years, or decades in length - - of repeated failures in one or two phases [or episodes], followed by surprising, often sudden successes, the results of complex interactions of processes at different levels, with overlapping but different participants, stakes, and time spans.” (Report, p.7) Conflicts can be embedded in other conflicts, as the Guatemalan civil war was embedded in the Cold War, or the longer running story of US Latin interventions or of the Conquistadors. Thus mixed, but dramatic successes in one of these conflicts may in turn create whole new agendas and cycles or episodes of difficulties; they may also be largely undone as conflicts recycle through violent, pre-violent and post-violent phases in different episodes of their existence.

3) The notion of conflict transformation is given a double meaning, not just between inter-subjectively coded phases or episodes, but in the ways a conflict’s story is told by particular participants or observers. Our notion of conflict transformation captures important complexities of real, historical, inter-group conflicts in that it contains within it the recognition that protracted conflicts are often transformed to new stages in a possibly cyclic process” (Report, n.2, p.7). Phases are sequential forms or modalities of conflict defined in terms of the expectations of appropriate within-phase conduct and possible subsequent phase transitions. Defined reflectively by participants and/or observers, episodes are recognized when a coherent sequence of phases is seen to have ended or abated, and new parties, identifying relationships, issues, or purposes are seen to shape a

new set of interactions and their transitional possibilities. Conflict transformation thus refers to two related but conceptually distinct aspects of conflicts. On the one hand, conflict transformation is used to describe the contexted transition of one conflict phase or episode to another. As suggested by Barbara Harff's work on "triggers" and "accelerators," Helen Fein's concept of "potential checks/interventions," and Schank and Abelson's more formal, scripted notion of historical sequences,⁹ there are potentially identifiable catalysts that may be said to move a conflict from one phase to another. On the other hand, the concept of conflict transformation is used to describe the re-interpretation of conflict histories from a particular point of view, or perspective. This implies that conflict is conceived of as symbolic interaction between groups whereby the symbols constituting the conflict, and the stories composed to tell about them are both instrumental tools and part of their self-presentations. These symbolic accounts – which embody a group's/people's historicity¹⁰ -- can be re-structured by the major parties, reflecting different understandings about their phase structures, including what the conflict is about, when and by whom it was started, and what it requires to be resolved.

4) The possibility of contested historicities presents itself and should be taken into account. The context in which conflicts unfold are often different depending on the parties' perspectives. In fact, the different conceptions of what a conflict is about can be at the root of a conflict, and can represent significant obstacles for its resolution. However, multiple perspectives are different from conflict transformations in the second sense in that each perspective can be conceived of in terms of conflict phases that can be re-arranged, i.e. a conflict trajectory can be re-interpreted in each perspective without needing the agreement of other participants to the conflict. The importance of multiple perspectives relates to the claim to recognition and/or legitimacy entailed in them, for the dominant interpretation of a conflict also determines in significant ways the identity and legitimacy of the participants, and the possibilities for escalation, abatement, or resolution. As evoked in a CEWS discussion of conflict transformation¹¹, "the empowerment of local actors as 'architects, owners and long-term stakeholders' in a sustainable peace process ... [is] particularly suggestive about reliance on local cultural resources and a multi-level approach to peace-making, including grassroots, regional/sectoral leaders and top leadership." (Report, n.3)

5) Both senses of conflict transformation as well as the existence of multiple perspectives hint at the intervention-sensitive, multi-perspective, possibilistic, future-oriented conception of conflict processes that we have here adopted. The combination of conflict stages into conflict trajectories enables us to explore which other possible sequences can exist contingently to produce different conflict trajectories. Similarly, the re-interpretation of past conflict phases is triggered by the formation of new oppositions that give rise to new possibilities for altering the trajectory of a conflict. Finally, the existence of multiple perspectives implies that several historical interpretations qua conflict trajectories are simultaneously possible, and converging different perspectives appears to be an important aspect of conflict mediation, just as it is for the development of shared historicities. Hence, the very questions underlying the CEWS Research Program are counterfactual

what-if questions. They require the exploration of an option space in which possible trajectories can unfold and in which the principal parties and relevant mediators can attempt to prevent some options from happening and to facilitate other options being actualized. Gaming, the development of simulations, and future oriented scenario-building for policy exploration are research possibilities that arise out of such imaginative practice. (See also Report, p.8)

A Tentative Outline of an Analytical Framework of Conflict

The major hypothesis in 1) above which we have adopted from the existing literature on conflict management, resolution, transformation and prevention is that potentially violent inter-group conflicts are structured in distinct phases. Yet, no agreement exists regarding the number of phases and their defining characteristics. The existing literature captures conflict transformations in the sense that one conflict phase moves to another conflict phase, and examines different conflict trajectories. However, the transition from one conflict phase to another has not been adequately unexplored¹², and we thus cannot securely say what accounts for a phase shift.

At this stage we are also unable systematically to examine conflict transformations in the sense of re-interpretations of conflict trajectories. The existing literature on conflict management/resolution is silent about this phenomenon, and we will have to look elsewhere for support. Discourse analysis, which uses insights from linguistic theory, proves to be a worthwhile avenue. Similarly, the possibilities for different conflict trajectories that multiple perspectives produce or exclude are understudied in the existing work on conflict management/resolution, and we have to base our thinking on other bodies of literature. Discourse analysis proves again a promising avenue.

In our discussions we have extracted a number of aspects that still needs to be synthesized into a coherent analytical framework. The phase structure we have agreed upon consists of six phases within which these key factors can be combined in different ways. Thus our second key hypothesis, validated or falsified by the adequacy of accounts constructed in these terms, is that there are at least three characteristic, general aspects of a dispute history in terms of which major participants will tell their collective stories of that dispute. Following upon a literature review not reported here, we hypothesize three such “essential/definitional dispute trajectory phase features” to be: historically-sensitive expectations about future possibilities, levels of violence, and inter-party recognition relationships. Expectations are usually not an indicator for the distinction of conflict phases in the existing literature. However, we argue that expectations are not only defining characteristics of conflict phases but also establish the connection between phases. We therefore provide an explanation for how conflict phases are positioned vis-a-vis each other which adds a first important contribution toward situating a conflict within its respective context. The occurrence and level of violence is a key defining characteristic in most of the existing literature. Our use of this indicator is motivated differently, however. We are not interested in distinguishing conflict phases by the number of casualties but we are rather interested in identifying how the use of violence is characteristic for particular conflict phases. For instance, the sporadic or incidental use of violence can produce more casualties than the regular and

systematic use of violence. Yet the regular and systematic use of violence suggests that the conflict has reached a level where forms of violence have become permissible or justifiable which could not have been justified at an earlier point. By focusing on the use of violence as opposed to the quantification of violence we make another important step toward a more contextualized treatment of conflicts. Finally, the importance of claims for recognition and legitimacy are included in some works on conflict management/resolution/prevention but not in those using phase structures. However, claims for recognition and legitimacy are not only always involved in conflict situations but they are very often at the root of the conflict itself. Also, the claim and denial for recognition and legitimacy is often at the basis of multiple perspectives on a conflict and successful conflict mediation needs to take account of these competing claims. By including claims for recognition and legitimacy we are able to address how the identity of participants in a conflict is defined, and how this definition affects the phase structure of a conflict.

Based on these explanations we can begin to spell out the key concepts of what is to become the analytical framework for the CEWS Research Program. In what follows we will describe the six phase conflict structure on which we have agreed including the various modifications we have made in the course of our discussions, which derive from Schmalberger's initial attempt to develop systematic coding procedures for three indicators: expectations, use of violence, and identity. His proposal rests on the use of these three indicators as essential properties of conflict phases¹³ with which we can uniquely identify each phase as a particular combination of expectations about development, use of violence, and identity.

The six conflict phases, arrayed in an ideal typical life cycle order, are:

Phase 1: Dispute Phase

Phase 2: Crisis Phase

Phase 3: Limited Violence Phase

Phase 4: Massive Violence Phase

Phase 5: Abatement Phase

Phase 6: Conflict Settlement

Phase 1: Dispute Phase.

A dispute phase differs from a violence phase (regardless of whether limited or massive) by the absence of violence. It differs from the conflict settlement phase by the absence of a resolution of opposing claims. While these distinctions are fairly obvious, the difference to a crisis phase and an abatement phase, on the one hand, and to other forms of disputes, on the other hand, are more intricate.

We can distinguish a dispute from a crisis by the claims that are being made. Whereas in a dispute opposing claims do not call into question the legitimacy of one of the contenders, in a crisis the legitimacy of a contender is being challenged (i.e. in words and deeds). By legitimacy we are to understand the authority with which actions are justified to be permissible. By recognition we are to understand the acceptance of authority that endows actions with legitimacy.

A dispute phase differs from other forms of disputes by the expectation of a crisis. For instance, disagreements do not fall within a dispute phase as long as the opposing claims made do not give rise to the expectation that as a possible next step one claim will be justified in terms of the illegitimacy of the other claim; such arguments would amount to the questioning of the other contender's legitimate authority. This implies that a disagreement is governed by "the rules of a game" which does not allow that the legitimacy of one of the contenders is called into question. However, if such a challenge becomes a possible expectation, also the "rules of the game" and thus the "game" itself is changed into an opening phase of what might lead to violent conflict.

We can distinguish an abatement phase from other conflict phases only with respect to the phase that is being abated. This implies that a dispute is abated if the opposing claims do temporarily no longer give rise to the expectation that the legitimacy of one of the opponents is challenged. Although the abatement of a dispute is indistinguishable from a disagreement if considered in isolation, the preceding dispute phase permits to identify a phase shift. Moreover, the abatement of a dispute phase differs from a settlement in that the opposing claims itself are not resolved but rather the way in which the claims are made has changed. Starting from the dispute phase a conflict trajectory can lead to a crisis (Phase 2), an abatement (Phase 5), or to conflict settlement (Phase 6).

Phase 2: Crisis Phase.

A crisis phase is preceded by a dispute phase and cannot be at the beginning of a conflict. This follows from the previous discussion and is largely in agreement with the existing literature. A crisis phase differs from a violence phase (both, limited and massive violence) in that no or only sporadic or incidental violence occurs. This suggests that the use of violence is not yet regarded as the principal means to express, pursue, or contest claims. Sporadic or incidental violence merely indicates that the conflict has reached a stage where violence grows out of particular situations (e.g. riots, skirmishes across borders) or is planned and used only infrequently and only against individual targets (e.g. terrorist attacks, shoot-down of planes). However, a crisis phase is characterized precisely by the expectation that violence be used systematically on a limited or massive scale (Phase 3 or 4).

We can distinguish a crisis phase from its respective abatement phase by the temporary absence of violence as well as the temporary absence of expectations of systematic violence. In isolation, a crisis abatement phase is again indistinguishable from a dispute phase. However, the removal of expectations about the systematic use of violence permits us to identify a phase shift.

From a crisis phase a conflict can lead to systematic limited violence (Phase 3), systematic massive violence (Phase 4), abatement (Phase 5), or conflict settlement (Phase 6).

Phase 3: Limited Violence Phase

A limited violence phase is characterized by the systematic use of violence. This implies that the use of violence has become a justifiable means to express, pursue, or contend claims which distinguishes this phase from a crisis phase. However, a limited violence phase differs from a massive violence phase in the way violence is used systematically. The limited use of violence

implies that a contending party uses only part of its means of violence, or uses its means of violence selectively in order to limit the number of casualties, and thus restrains itself from making more massive use of its violent potential. This self-restraint suggests that a more massive use of force would not be justified at this stage, although a more massive use of violence can be expected.

Notice that contrary to previous conflict phases which had the expectation of a possible next conflict phase as a defining characteristic, the expectation of a possibly massive use of violence is not a necessary but a contingent characteristic for a limited violence phase; it is contingent on the specific context in which limited violence is used. For instance, during the Cold War a US intervention in Latin America was conceivable only on a limited scale—with the possible exception of Cuba. This definition of limited and massive violence allows to nicely address power differentials. What might be a limited use of violence for a Great Powers might be massive use of violence for a smaller power who has to bear the attack.

The abatement phase following a limited violence phase can be identified by the cessation of a systematic use of violence. However, sporadic and incidental violence can occur, e.g. a cease-fire that is not respected everywhere without being considered a violation of the cease-fire agreement. From the limited violence phase a conflict trajectory can move to massive violence (Phase 4), abatement (Phase 5), or conflict settlement (Phase 6).

Phase 4: Massive Violence Phase.

A massive violence phase is also characterized by the systematic use of violence. This suggests that the use of violence has become a justifiable means to express, pursue, or contend claims which distinguishes this phase from a crisis phase. However, no restraints are put on the use of the available means of violence which distinguishes this phase from the previous one. Since our conception of a conflict phase structure is oriented around the most massive use of violence, no other defining expectations can be identified. Rather, a massive violence phase is defined with respect to previous conflict phases and the massive use of systematic violence.

Consequently, an abatement of a massive violence phase is characterized by the cessation of a systematic use of violence, although a sporadic or incidental use of violence might still occur (e.g. skirmishes during a cease-fire). A shift back to a more limited use of violence is not possible, although the conflict can reach this phase again after having traversed an abatement phase. A massive violence phase can move to abatement (Phase 5) or conflict settlement (Phase 6).

Phase 5: Abatement Phase.

Abatement is defined as a temporary halt on specific conflict phases. An abatement phase is defined with respect to the conflict phase which is temporarily stopped to proceed, which implies that the defining characteristics of the respective conflict phase have to be absent. This does not imply that abatement is equal to shifting back to a previous conflict phase. Abatement rather characterizes a phase in which the conflict is in limbo. Depending on the conflict phase that is

being abated the conflict can resume in the same or in another phase including the use of more violence or the settlement of the conflict.

Conflict abatement can follow any of the earlier phases in the ideal-type conflict life cycle; and it may lead to a Phase 6.

Phase 6: Conflict settlement.

Conflict settlement is defined as a resolution of the opposition that has characterized the conflict. At the end of the conflict this opposition does not have to be identical to the one which had started the conflict. Transformations can account for why conflict settlements are often about claims that are different than the claims over which the conflict was started. The settlement of a conflict suggests that no renewed conflict is expected. This absence of expectations about conflict distinguishes this phase from an abatement phase. However, the settlement of a conflict can result directly from violent conflict phases only if one of the parties is defeated. In all other circumstances the settlement of a conflict has to proceed first through an abatement phase.

Conflict settlement can follow:

Phase 1 if first followed by Phase 5

Phase 2 if first followed by Phase 5

Phase 3 if first followed by Phase 5 or if one party is defeated

Phase 4 if first followed by Phase 5 or if one party is defeated

The hypothesized defining characteristics of conflict phases are represented in Table 1. Notice the last row of the table which demonstrates how types of conflict can be derived from the defining characteristics of conflict phases.

Table 1:
Our Defining Characteristics of Conflict Phases for Synthesizing CEWS Cases

	Phase 1 Dispute	Phase 2 Crisis	Phase 3 Limited Violence	Phase 4 Massive Violence	Phase 5 Abatement	Phase 6 Conflict Settlement
Expectation of Subsequent (and past) conflict phases	Phase 2 (or 5)	Phase 3 , 4, (or 5)	Phase 4 (or 5)	Phase 5	Phase 6, or the beginning of a new episode in either Phase 1, 2, 3, or 4	expectations about renewed conflict are ruled out, and understandings of past phases may be redefined
Occurrence and level of violence	none	none or only sporadic or incidental use of violence	Systematic use of violence with relevant party (-ies) exercising restraints on their potential for violence	Systematic use of violence without restraints on the available means or potential of violence	- none if following Phase 1 - none, sporadic or incidental if following Phase 2, 3, or 4	none
type of conflict as a function of conflict phase and identity of conflicting parties	- opposing claims are made by conflicting parties who recognize each other - claims for recognition are formulated and/ or established legitimacy is called into question	- crisis, where conflicting parties recognize each other - terrorism, where one warring party is not recognized	- limited war, where conflicting parties recognize each other - guerilla war, where one warring party is not recognized	- war, where conflicting parties recognize each other - civil war, where one warring party is not recognized - genocide, one party is neither recognized nor warring	- temporary abstention from making opposing claims -temporary abstention from denying recognition or questioning legitimacy -defeat (without settlement)	-conflicting parties recognize each other's claims and respect established legitimacy - one conflicting party defeats others

Represented dynamically in partial flow chart form, Table 1 becomes Figure 1, An initial, tentative and incomplete version of a grammar of (multi-episodic) conflict histories. Our six conflict phases may be sequentially connected by a limited number of conflict trajectories. Multiple episodes can be identified on the basis of sufficient thematic incoherence, within a larger, relatively coherent dispute history. After a dispute has abated, we believe that a dispute may be recognized as heating up in a new episode (and becoming more “protracted” thereby) even if the issues at hand have not materially changed. And,

although the Figure does not show it, we believe that major parties may have divergent understandings/self-presentations concerning the particular phase a dispute has entered. They may even redefine the relative importance of conflict features, retrospectively, as within a settlement which allows national history to be retold according to newly shared understandings.

Figure 1: A Grammar of Episodic Conflict Histories

A Re-Coding of the Guatemalan Conflict

We now shift to our testable understandings. First we test the ability of two different teams of coders to reconstruct the “spine” of our expert narratives in the same way, according to the above coding framework, including its embedded hypotheses. Reserving for others the attempt fully to reconstruct other, more adequate narratives, we shall then try to see if our reconstructions stand our ultimate test of confirming our “readings” vis a vis their expert sources. We start with Padilla’s treatment of the Guatemalan case, continue to Vorkunova’s rather different treatment of the Moldovan controversy, and end with a particularly challenging treatment of Burundi’s genocide potential in event-data terms by Barbara Harff. Since we are in the middle of these testing efforts, mostly in response to Schmalberger’s lead efforts, we report our intermediate progress and critical questions fully.

Padilla portrays the Guatemalan conflict from 1954 to 1996 as an episode of a long struggle for independence from the imperial reach of the United States and Great Britain.¹⁴

The election of a new Guatemalan government in 1951 to have been, according to Padilla, the beginning of a dispute phase between Guatemala and the United States. It was created by “the strong nationalism and ideological rhetoric of the leftist politicians, the influence of the small Guatemalan communist party within the government, and the international context of cold war US/USSR confrontation.”(Padilla, p.7)¹⁵ Although Padilla is not explicit about the claims made by each side, it appears as if the underlying opposition did not relate to the recognition of one of the parties -- in this case, the newly elected Guatemalan government -- but rather to the legitimacy of the government action. Among the various points of contention Padilla identifies the agrarian reform law as the trigger that prompted a US intervention. The land reform included the confiscation of the unused agricultural land of the American fruit companies. This implies that from the US perspective -- and conceivably also from the Guatemalan perspective -- the nationalization of land shifted the conflict into a crisis phase.¹⁶ The American response was a covert operation; they planned and supported an “invasion of the country by a small military corps under the command of colonel Carlos Castillo Armas in June 1954 [which] was just a smoke curtain in order to prepare the conditions for the coup d’etat organized by the US ambassador John D. Peurifoy.” (Padilla, p.8) Thus, the conflict shifted directly to an abatement phase which was characterized by the establishment of an authoritarian regime, the prohibition of leftist parties, and the murder and imprisonment of individuals critical of the government; at least from the American perspective.¹⁷ From the Guatemalan perspective, the imposition of an authoritarian regime was the beginning of a new conflict episode that was to last for over forty years.¹⁸

When the conflict episode resumed, the new government saw it as only being in a dispute phase, while the opposing parties considered it more seriously to be in a crisis phase. The direct shift to a crisis phase is possible if made from an abatement phase of a previous conflict episode.¹⁹ The new conflict episode included different parties and claims, and thus characterized another conflict.²⁰ Whereas previously the Guatemalan government and the US government questioned the legitimacy of the other’s actions while recognizing each other, the confrontation between the new Guatemalan government and the insurgents was based on the non-recognition of the insurgents and the questioning of each other’s legitimacy. Padilla’s account allows us to reconstruct the insurgents’ perspective, for his rhetoric reveals the side he leans toward.²¹ From the rebels’ perspective the crisis phase included that leftist groups went underground, which in turn suggests that their expectations included the possibility of limited violence.²² The government’s perspective can only be assumed. It appears as if the government regarded the rebels as a potentially disturbing factor for the political order. The government did not expect the systematic use of significant military means but rather the sporadic use of violence in the form of terrorist attacks, assassination attempts, etc. The shift to a higher conflict phase occurred when in 1960 an attempted rebellion failed; this failure led various clandestine movements to collaborate and form a guerilla organization. The formation of such a paramilitary organization allowed the military (and/or the government, which current historians are careful to differentiate from the military) to conceive of a more systematic use of violence.²³ For the government, the historical development of the conflict shifted from a dispute to a crisis phase because sporadic attacks were launched by the rebels and because a more systematic use of violence could be expected.²⁴ For the rebels, on the

other hand, the conflict shifted from a crisis to a limited violence phase because they were now in a position to allocate and employ considerable means of violence in a systematic, yet limited fashion. They could also foresee a more massive use of violence, if the government were to retaliate more forcefully. Such retaliations occurred in 1967-1970 when two rebel groups, the FAR and the MR13, “were defeated by the army in a ruthless and bloody military campaign” (Padilla, p.8). This defeat shifted the conflict into an abatement phase.

Following the defeat of the rebels, three new guerilla organizations were formed in the mid-1970s which established their strongholds in indigenous regions, distributed their military operations in distinct geographical areas, and formed an alliance in 1982 together with the communist party. The alliance was called National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Thus, a new conflict episode started, one involving higher conflict phases than before. The new guerilla organization was able systematically to use violence on a limited scale.²⁵ However, the government, in an anti-guerilla, or counter-insurgency mode, retaliated with “monstrous and ruthless military campaigns” against the civilian, mostly indigenous, population, in 1981, 1982, and 1983. (Padilla, p.9) These campaigns shifted the conflict from a crisis to a limited violence phase for the government, and from a limited to a massive violence phase for the rebels.²⁶ Notice that the power differential is captured in this interpretation. From the rebels’ point of view the resistance to government forces required a massive use of their means of violence while the government still refrained from using its full violent potential. The result was again defeat of the rebel forces, an outcome which shifted the conflict again into a phase of abatement.²⁷

While the Guatemalan government continued to deny legitimacy to the rebels’ claims, the guerilla organization lobbied abroad for its cause and obtained international support from various political groups in North America and Western Europe. Padilla asserts that “it is not clear if at the time the insurgents were genuinely committed to a negotiated settlement of the armed conflict, but in any case their political discourse and actions were addressed in that direction” (Padilla, p.9).²⁸ This confirms the interpretation that the conflict had entered a phase of abatement.²⁹ This also confirms the interpretation that up to this point the rebels had not been recognized, neither by the Guatemalan government nor by the international community. However, what prompted this change in attitude? Padilla emphasizes that the brunt of government attacks was born by the indigenous population. He also points out that international support came primarily from humanitarian groups such as Amnesty International because of human rights violations committed by the government. This begs the question of what made the international community react in the 1980s and not earlier? Later Padilla adds that “the conflict was transformed in the middle of the eighties from an ideological conflict to a conflict on governance and democracy” (Padilla, p.13). However, in Padilla’s account it remains unclear how exactly this transformation had come about.³⁰ In a personal communication Padilla explains that the repeated defeat of the rebels forced them to change tactics. Although the rebels did not abandon their socialist ideals until the 1990s, they changed their priorities towards democracy and self-governance back in the 1980s.

It appears thus as if the changed attitude of the rebels, on the one hand, and the massive attack against the indigenous population that was not a party to the conflict, on the

other, created an opposition that had not existed before. Whereas previously, the government had confronted communist rebels with a restrained use of force, the government was now committing massacres against innocent people in its fight against democratic reformers. Whereas the previous opposition endowed the government with the legitimacy needed for carrying out its fight against rebel forces, the new opposition did not justify the systematic use of violence, especially not on a massive scale. Thus, while the rebels began to become recognized by relevant audiences outside of Guatemala, the Guatemalan government lost its claim for legitimacy. As the rebels' interpretation became more dominant also the history of the conflict was begun to be re-interpreted.

The conflict episode that had started with the institution of a new government in 1954 was no longer a fight between a government and communist rebels but between an authoritarian government and democratic reformers. The re-interpretation of this conflict episode also affected the interpretation of the preceding episode, because it was "unchained by the US intervention in 1954." In order to contain an absolutely unreal threat of a takeover by 'communism' (and the Soviet Union) in Guatemala, "Washington played the sorcerer's apprentice liberating forces impossible to control afterwards, evil forces that sowed the seeds of discord, violence, and civil war in the country." (Padilla, p.21)³¹ It appears therefore as if the re-interpretation of the history of the conflict facilitated the recognition of the rebels by a subsequent government, thus clearing the way for a settlement of the conflict.³²

Although both parties saw themselves to be in a phase of abatement, the road to a final settlement was initially blocked by the government's refusal to recognize the rebels' claims. Padilla argues that although the Central American peace process symbolized in the Esquipulas accord signed in 1986 put pressure on the Guatemalan government, "the army refused [to recognize that agreement] arguing that the Esquipulas accord stipulated negotiations with the 'legal' opposition not with armed rebels" (Padilla, p.10).³³ The establishment of the National Commission on Reconciliation (CNR) headed by the Catholic bishop Quezada brought together representatives of the URNG with different sectors of Guatemalan society.³⁴ While the URNG agreed to institutional reforms based upon democracy, human rights, and social welfare, and refrained from committing acts of sabotage during the presidential elections in 1990/91, the government continued to refuse to directly talk with the rebels.³⁵ Finally in April 1991 the government agreed to initiate direct talks with the rebels without conditions.³⁶ Negotiations resulted in the Queretaro Agreement in July 1991 but further negotiations remained in an impasse until January 1994. During this period the United Nations served as an observer and was chosen as an alternative to the Organization of American States (OAS) which is generally considered to be the preferred instrument of US foreign policy towards Latin America. (Padilla, p.5/6) A number of states formed the Group of Friendly Nations and facilitated the peace process. (Padilla, p.14)

The settlement phase was entered when the deadlock in negotiations was broken in January 1994. The United Nations was given the more active role as a "mediator", the Catholic bishop Quezada was called back to chair the newly established Civil Society Assembly, and the Group of Friends served as witnesses of honor. The issues that were

considered to be at the heart of the conflict were: the absence of democracy and the rule of law, human rights violations, the role of the army in a democratic society, economic, social, and agrarian inequalities, recognition of indigenous people. The resolution of these issues removed any expectations about a renewed conflict. However, some of these issues were clearly not at the heart of the conflict that began in 1954. A definitive cease-fire and the disarmament of the rebel forces was not signed until the final accord in 1996.

A provisional version of the phase structure of the Guatemalan conflict is graphically represented in Figure 2, which recapitulates the above reconstruction. Two questions currently being debated by our second coding team – Alker and Schjolset – concern whether or not there should not be a fourth conflict episode, the end game, with a Phase 1 and a Phase 6: surely the issues have been redefined, and the parties self-presentation as democratically oriented and civilian fits this conception too. Moreover, we might suggest that there would be a second transformation arrow from the final Phase 6 of the Figure back to the redefined Episode I: by the end of the negotiations, the re-understanding of at least the first episode in this history as an illegitimate US-instigated subversion of a democratic government was probably shared by both the new government and the former rebels, some of whose supporters became part of that government. A genuine change in shared understanding of a society's past had occurred: historicity transformed. Also, the Alker-Schjolset team wanted to re-code the US intervention as a limited violence Phase 3 in this story's first episode. Even though the invasion killed few of its victims, a government was violently toppled; Schmalberger countered with the argument that the invaders may have been prepared to go into a moderate or high violence phase, but did not have to because of the remarkable (but hard to repeat) tactical success of their intervention.

Figure 2: A Provisional Episodic History of the Guatemalan Conflict

A Re-Coding of the Moldovan Conflict

Similar to other authors of case narratives, Vorkunova begins her account of the Moldovan conflict by situating the most recent situation in a long “historical controversy over possession of Moldova” going back to the Middle Ages (Vorkunova, p.2). Yet, contrary to other accounts which emphasize the struggle for independence from one or several dominant powers, Vorkunova takes the opposite position, and emphasizes the struggle for control and “possession of territory”. Her perspective can thus be considered as being one of a Great Power.

Vorkunova begins her account of the Moldovan conflict when in 1987 groups of intellectuals made claims for the “dominant position of Moldovan language and culture, to reach power and political independence, unification with Romania” which stood in opposition to the “forced russification” that the Soviet government had been promoting.³⁷ (Vorkunova, p.4) In this period the conflict entered a dispute phase in which the Russian minority feared “a loss of national identity, social status, and economic security”. (Vorkunova, p.5) The loss of identity, status, and security fits remarkably well with our definition of a crisis whose expectation is a necessary element for a dispute phase. Although the author claims that “there were abundant signals of all categories to indicate the upcoming crisis in Moldova”, she fails to explain both, what these signals were and how the impending crisis could have been avoided. (Vorkunova, p.5)³⁸

The Language Act of 1989 “was the trigger” for a shift into a crisis phase that was characterized by a “radicalization of the Popular Front concerning the demand for reunion with Romania on the grounds of close historical, cultural, and linguistic ties” (Vorkunova, p.6) This implies that the fears of the Russian minority were actualized, but it is less clear whether or not the use of violence was or could be expected as a plausible consequence at this stage.³⁹

The Soviet government offered a Union Treaty to all autonomous regions of the Soviet republics based upon which they would be treated equally to republics. This offer was accepted by the Slavic (Russian and Ukrainian) minorities in Moldova which declared the independence of Transdnistria and Gaguzia (a Turkish area) in January and the summer of 1990 respectively. Violence was first used in November 1990 between Moldovan government troops and militant civilian groups from Transdnistria and can be considered sporadic. It is interesting to notice that by proposing the postponement of elections in Transdnistria until the situation would be more stable, the Soviet government recognized the independence of Transdnistria. The Moldovan government, on the other hand, explicitly denied recognition of Transdnistria. (Vorkunova, p.7)

Moldova became itself an Autonomous Soviet Republic in June 1990, and in the elections following in December, the Moldovan Popular Front carried home a landslide victory. The Soviet Communist Party was suspended, the Central Committee dissolved, and the communist central authorities in Moscow were challenged. (Vorkunova, p.5)

Vorkunova states that the new Moldovan government “made no attempt to integrate members of all minority communities in the process of government, or to solicit their support for a new state”, but fails to report on the reaction from Moscow. (Vorkunova, p.5) She also fails to relate the elections in Moldova to the elections and the first use of violence in Transdniestra in November of the same year.

In the first half of 1991 “the situation in Transdniestra was rather stable” which suggests that the crisis phase had shifted into a phase of abatement (Vorkunova, p.7). However, the coup attempt in Moscow in August 1991 “triggered a new wave of ethnic uprisings, a month-long blockade of railways, attacks upon police stations, and the occupation of public buildings.” (Vorkunova, p.7)⁴⁰ Thus, the conflict resumed in a crisis phase although it is again not clear whether or not the outbreak of more systematic violence could be expected. Another violent incident occurred when the “first armed combat between Moldovan government troops and the Dniestrian Republic National Guard - supported by the former Soviet 14th Army stationed in the region and Cossacks from Russia - took place in December 1991.” (Vorkunova, p.7)⁴¹ While plans for the unification of Moldova and Romania became more concrete at the beginning of 1992, expectations about the systematic use of violence were raised for the first time, or as the author states “these plans of unification with Romania underpinned a potential outbreak of violence.” (Vorkunova, p.8) However, it remains unclear whether the Moldovans, the Transdnistrians, or both expected violence to break out. More violence occurred when Moldovan authorities started to claim “the right to re-establish Moldovan leadership over Transdniestra”, and used military force “to suppress the autonomous province”. (Vorkunova, p.8) This, in turn, led to the establishment of paramilitary units, a separate currency, secessionist claims by Slavic minorities in Moldova, and “raised the prospect that communal violence may turn into civil war.” (Vorkunova, p.8)

Although the number of casualties resulting from violent clashes between the Moldovan army and the Dniestr insurgents remained low compared to other conflicts in a limited violence phase, the “escalating violence from the parties to the conflict shifted the balance from political to military action”, and thus to a phase of limited violence. (Vorkunova, p.8)

At this stage the Ukrainian government intervened. The author describes this intervention as both an offer to mediate and a threat to retaliate. More concretely she writes that “the Foreign Ministry called for a cease-fire in the Moldovan conflict over the ‘Dniestr Republic’ and offered to mediate, adding that refugees were crossing into Ukraine. Warning both sides not to violate its borders, it said it would take steps to protect its frontier.” (Vorkunova, p.9) It would be interesting to know how the author would explain the combination of mediation and retaliation action in terms of phases and episodes.

A phase of massive conflict was expected and is reflected in the appeal of the Ukrainian population living in the Dniestr republic to the Ukrainian government to “help

prevent conflict in the region from spreading.” (Vorkunova, p.9) Massive violence was also expected in Moldova where mass demonstrations were held and called for a general mobilization. (ibid)

In this situation the Moldovan government proposed a unilateral cease-fire. The author would have to explain how the Moldovan government could de-escalate a conflict that was headed for escalation. She also would have to assess whether or not the offer of a cease-fire could be interpreted as a recognition of the insurgents. Conversely, it would be interesting to know whether or not the insurgents could have proposed a cease-fire. In any case, the conflict was shifted into a short phase of abatement. During this phase, Romania, Moldova, Russia, and the Ukraine announced their intention to resolve the conflict.⁴²

However, the abatement phase included sporadic violence and shortly thereafter the conflict shifted into a new crisis phase that was characterized by “planned acts of sabotage and large-scale fighting.” (Vorkunova, p.10) A more massive use of violence was expected because “the Moldovan government was ‘actively preparing for combat operations’”, the Moldovan government declared to “take ‘all necessary measures’ to restore its authority in the break-away ‘Dniestr Republic’”, and the leader of the Dniestr announced that “his supporters would do everything possible to protect their region” (Vorkunova, p.10). While the tensions were rising, the leadership of the Dniestr Republic called upon Russia whose support for the break-away republic had stirred some controversy. In unison with her Great Power perspective, the author argues that Russia was forced to take a more active role and to resolve the conflict by peace enforcement. (Vorkunova, p.11)⁴³ Evoking the possibility of a massive use of force, the Russian intervention shifted the conflict into another phase of abatement. However, the Russian intervention transformed the conflict in the sense that the Moldovan government was in conflict with Dniestr insurgents over the integrity of Moldova and future plans for unification with Romania as well as with Russia over the means to be used in its conflict with the Dniestr insurgents. This suggests that Russia and Moldova had been in conflict with each other before. But it is difficult to establish from the author’s description whether the conflict had been in a dispute or in a crisis phase. The transformation brought about by the Russian intervention indicates however, that now the conflict had entered a phase of abatement.

During this phase sporadic violence continued to occur while the conflicting parties convened to negotiate a termination of the conflict.⁴⁴ While more violations of the cease-fire were reported, the Moldovan President called upon the UN Security Council to stop the Russian aggression.⁴⁵ While Ukraine recognized the Dniestr Republic on June 23, 1992, the Russian and Moldovan governments entered into negotiations about the settlement of the conflict. The deployment of peacekeeping forces consisting of Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Romanian, and Bulgarian troops was considered to monitor a cease-fire and to separate the belligerent parties in Moldova.

Expectations of a renewed crisis phase were raised when the Dniestr insurgents renewed their claims and proposed the establishment of a federalist Moldova of which the Dniestr Republic would be one. These claims were buttressed with the announcement to create an own army.

While the conflict between the Moldovan government and the Dniestr insurgents grew more tense, the conflict between the Moldovan and the Russian government grew less tense. The two governments agreed on the withdrawal of a Russian regiment and negotiations continued on the withdrawal of the Russian 14th Army from Moldova. However, the author holds that “the association between a political solution to the Transdnistria conflict and the withdrawal of the former Soviet 14th Army has further complicated the negotiations. Due to the active and central role of the army in the Dniestr-Russians’ withdrawal is a condition for a solution.” (Vorkunova, p.13) ⁴⁶

The conflict between the Moldovan government and the Dniestr insurgents grew less tense when the claims or unification with Romania subsided (Vorkunova, p.14).⁴⁷ Basic principles for the settlement of the conflict were agreed in January 1993 including the recognition of distinctive features of regions . The Dniestr region was to be given special status within the existing territorial limits of Moldova ⁴⁸ It does not become clear from the author’s description whether the conflict is still in a phase of abatement or whether a phase of conflict settlement has been entered. This is largely due to two puzzles. First, the author argues without a sense of contradiction that the withdrawal of Russian troops was a major obstacle in the resolution of the crisis, while the presence of the very same troops has successfully implemented a peacekeeping operation. (Vorkunova, p.16). ⁴⁹ What then does it mean that the withdrawal of Russian troops had been agreed upon? Second, in her concluding paragraph, the author speaks of a breakthrough in conflict prevention in 1997 due to the “‘top down’ strategy of conflict prevention” carried out by the Russian government. Was there another Russian “peacekeeping operation”? What exactly was “fueled by perspectives of NATO enlargement” (Vorkunova, p.16)? And is the author’s last sentence not representative for the entire conflict and which is not explicitly stated, namely: “The demand to preserve Moldova in the Russian sphere of interest contributed to efforts to prevent escalation”? (Vorkunova, p.16)

Figure 3: A Provisional Episodic History of the Moldovan Conflict

Can Event-Data Forecasting be Represented within the CEWS analytical framework? Harff's Burundi Case

In a series of contributions,⁵⁰ Barbara Harff proposes a model that tries to capture the processes that lead from a crisis situation to the outbreak of genocide/politicide. The goal of her model is to develop an early warning capability that enables her "1) to provide reliable estimates of conflict potential, 2) generate 'warnings' months in advance of serious escalation, 3) enable analysts to differentiate among different types of conflict" (Harff, p.4). Thus, contrary to other contributors, Harff does not focus on exploring possibilities for conflict mediation but rather focuses on timely warning that allows "diplomats and activists to 'buy' time for developing appropriate responses to each particular stage of crisis development and ideally, in the long run, to prevent escalation" (ibid).

Harff's model consists of four elements: international background conditions, internal background conditions, intervening conditions, and accelerators. Accelerators are the focus of analysis and "are outside the parameters of the model: they are essentially feedback events that rapidly increase the level or significance of the most volatile of the general conditions, but may also signify system breakdown or basic changes in political causality" (Harff (1996:47) It is unclear what system Harff has in mind. However, it appears as if genocide reflected the breakdown of this system.

Harff's presentation of the accelerator model is more complete in other chapters than in the one she is contributing to the CEWS project. The notion of accelerator is explained best in Harff (1998) and how accelerators are coded (i.e. how accelerators are distinguished from each other, not how they are distinguished empirically) is presented in Harff (1996). An accelerator is not a single event, like a trigger would be. "Accelerator events typically are reflective of, and are linked to, larger interests and issues. They are reminders of the larger issues at stake, those that have been identified in our specification of background or intervening conditions for particular kinds of conflict or crises" (Harff 1998:73). Hence, events become accelerators only in specific contexts (background and intervening conditions). The problem with this conception is that any notion of time is absent. How can we speak of accelerators, i.e. a path leading somewhere, without including expectations that tell us where somewhere is? Harff herself argues in her contribution to the CEWS project that "accelerating variables operationalized as events are events that move conflict along a predictable path" (emphasis added, Harff, p.6). It is therefore difficult to reproduce how accelerators can be distinguished from triggers, international, internal, or intervening variables conceptually and/or empirically. The list of accelerators that is available to us does not include the other variables (international, internal, and intervening variables) based upon which one can only start to speak of accelerators. Without these variables and coding procedures or other explanations for how they are related to accelerator events, we are unable to reconstruct the context of any of the cases Harff has analyzed for the CEWS volume. Since Harff herself seems to make an argument for more context-sensitive codings -- "in the absence of these

preconditions [specification of background or intervening conditions], accelerators are not accelerators, they are simply events" (Harff 1998:73) -- we are currently lacking what appears to be the key to fully adapting her model to fit within our analytical framework.

However, adapting her model to our analytical framework might turn out to be mutually beneficial. Our framework is based on a more nuanced conception of conflict, and distinguishes different forms of conflict. In Harff's model the conception of conflict is problematic. At times she uses conflict as a more generic term of which crisis is a subset; at other times, conflict and crisis are used synonymously; and at still other times, conflict precedes crisis. Moreover, our distinction between limited violence and massive violence also adds a valuable distinction for the accelerator model, because the model conceives of a linear path from crisis to massive violence without entertaining the possibility of violence remaining limited. Our framework could benefit from Harff's model to the extent that it allows to think of phase shifts. We have at present no clear conception of how a phase shift is brought about. Although we can tease catalysts for phase changes from most of the case narratives, we simply lack the descriptive detail to seriously think about a systematic analysis of possible paths leading to one rather than to another phase. Harff's model could provide us with a quick fix because it simply adds up events until a new phase is reached. It still does not allow us to speak of alternative trajectories - Harff's model allows only for two possibilities (acceleration and de-acceleration) when our framework oftentimes allows for more - but at least we could connect phases a bit better.

Adapting Harff's model to our framework:

First, we need to separate the eight accelerator categories into five categories that reflect the first five phases of our phase structure. Second, we need to test whether the re-coding generates results that justify the use of accelerators as indicators for phase shifts. Table 2 contrasts Harff's accelerators divided into accelerator groups on the lefthand side with a re-coding in terms of conflict phases on the right hand side.

Table 2: Harff's Genocide Accelerators Adapted as Indicators for CEWS Phases

Accelerators for paths leading to genocide	Indicators for phase change
<p>Accelerator 1: Occurrence of violent opposition by kindred groups in neighboring countries, or increase in refugee flows (displaced people).</p> <p>1.1 Declaration against the government 1.2 Threats of physical action 1.3 Marches, demonstrations 1.4 Riots 1.5 Physical destruction of property 1.6 Physical injury 1.7 Increase in refugee flows (number of displaced people)</p>	<p>1.1 Phase 1: Dispute Phase 1.2 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 1.3 Phase 1: Conflict Phase 1.4 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 1.5 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 1.6 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 1.7 Phase 2: Crisis and Limited Violence Phases</p>
<p>Accelerator 2: Increase in external support for politically active groups, ranging from symbolic support by sympathetic groups to transfer of arms.</p> <p>2.1 Statements, speeches, reports issued in support of targeted group 2.2 Statements, speeches, reports issued against the government 2.3 Dispatch of peacekeepers 2.4 Transfer of non-military aid to targeted group 2.5 Transfer of arms or other military aid to targeted group</p>	<p>2.1 Phase 1: Dispute Phase 2.2 Phase 1: Dispute Phase 2.3 Phase 4: Abatement Phase 2.4 n/a 2.5 n/a</p>
<p>Accelerator 3: Threats of external involvement against governing elites, ranging from warnings of sanctions to the threat to intervene militarily, that are not backed by action.</p> <p>3.1 Threat of sanctions 3.2 Threat of arms transfer to targeted groups 3.3 Threat of military intervention</p>	<p>3.1 Phase 1: Dispute Phase 3.2 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 3.3 Phase 2: Crisis or Limited Violence</p>
<p>Accelerator 4: Increase in size of, or degree of cohesion in, opposition group.</p> <p>4.1 Emergence of uncontested leadership in political opposition movement. 4.2 Agreement between factions of political opposition movement 4.3 Significant new members join political opposition movement</p>	<p>4.1 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 4.2 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 4.3 Phase 2: Crisis Phase</p>
<p>Accelerator 5: Aggressive posturing or actions by opposition group.</p> <p>5.1 Declaration against the government 5.2 Threats of physical action 5.3 Marches, demonstrations 5.4 Riots 5.5 Physical destruction of property 5.6 Physical injury: bombings, assassinations</p>	<p>5.1 Phase 1: Dispute Phase 5.2 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 5.3 Phase 1: Dispute Phase 5.4 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 5.5 Phase 2: Crisis or Limited Violence Phase 5.6 Phase 2: Crisis or Limited Violence Phase</p>

<p>Accelerator 6: Physical or verbal clashes between regime (or regime supporters) and targeted groups. 6.1 Exchanges of verbal attacks by representatives of the regime and the targeted group (charge and response may occur on the same day) 6.2 physical clashes</p>	<p>6.1 Phase 1: Dispute Phase 6.2 Phase 2: Crisis Phase</p>
<p>Accelerator 7: New discriminatory or restrictive policies by the regime 7.1 Threat of new restrictions or threat of violent action by regime 7.2 Restrictions on access to education 7.3 Restrictions on access to jobs in the civil service and military 7.4 Restrictions on economic activities 7.5 Expropriation of property 7.6 Restrictions on political participation 7.7 Revocation of citizenship</p>	<p>7.1 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 7.2 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 7.3 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 7.4 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 7.5 Phase 2: Crisis Phase 7.6 Phase 2: Crisis or Limited Violence Phase 7.7 Phase 2: Crisis or Limited Violence Phase</p>
<p>Accelerator 8: Life integrity violations by government or government-supported groups against targeted groups 8.1 Destruction of houses and property 8.2 Attacks involving physical injury 8.3 Mass arrests or detentions 8.4 Forcible resettlement 8.5 Torture 8.6 Assassination or execution of prominent leaders 8.7 Massacres, mass executions, pogroms</p>	<p>8.1 Phase 3: Limited Violence Phase 8.2 Phase 3: Limited Violence Phase 8.3 Phase 3: Limited Violence Phase 8.4 Phase 3: Limited or Massive Violence Phase 8.5 Phase 3: Limited or Massive Violence Phase 8.6 Phase 3: Limited Violence Phase 8.7 Phase 4: Massive Violence Phase</p>

Although the re-coding of Harff's data in terms of conflict phases seems to produce commensurable results, it remains unclear how the number of events can help us to explain a phase shift. The only clear phase shift occurs in September 1993. However, a creative reading of the graph produces the following result. In the beginning of 1993, Burundi was in a crisis phase that shifted into abatement in the summer, although the possibility for resuming the conflict in a crisis phase persisted. However, the conflict shifted directly from abatement to massive violence whereby it seems important that in the two months prior to this shift the abatement phase was no longer characterized with any significant abatement events. After a short but bloody phase of massive violence the conflict shifted again into an abatement phase, resumed briefly in a limited violence phase before shifting again into an abatement phase. The conflict resumed once again in a crisis phase before shifting directly to limited violence. Although events characteristic for massive violence were observed in the spring of 1994, the relatively low number of events in combination with the more regularly occurring limited violence events seem to suggest that Burundi remained in a phase of limited violence until the end of the observation period. In terms of phase shifts we can only notice that shortly before the shift to massive violence, no abatement efforts are recorded. If we can find more cases in which a phase shift to higher violence levels is preceded by an absence of abatement

events, we can hypothesize that the absence of abatement accounts for a shift to the next higher phase, while high levels of abatement events account for the shift to an abatement phase. We do not have enough cases to test these hypotheses but we can at least contrast the case of Burundi against the case of Rwanda.

Figure 4: Harff Data Recoded Into CEWS Conflict Phases (of Table 2) and Represented as a Singular Phase Trajectory

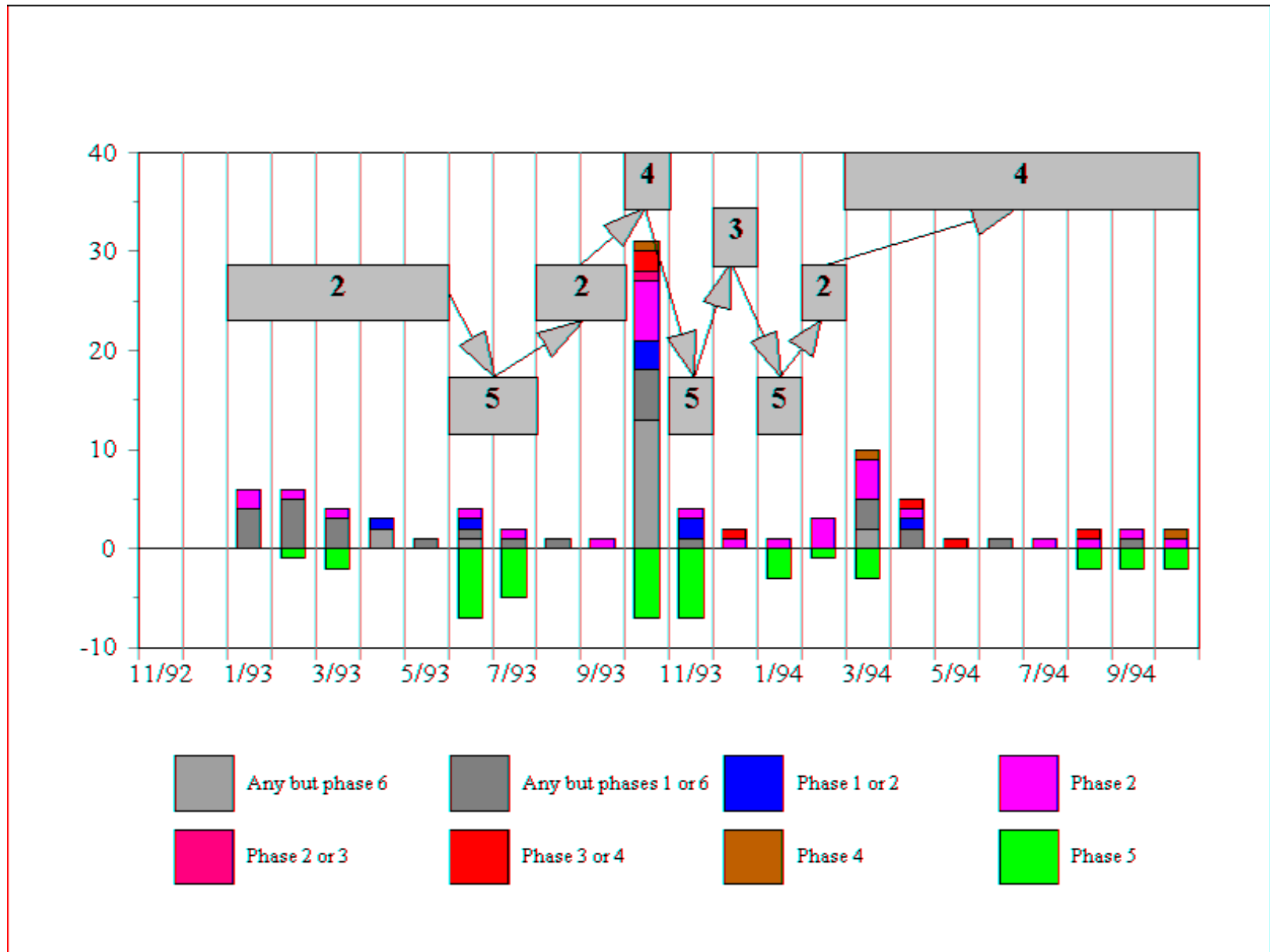


Figure 5: A Singular Multi-Episodic Representation of Harff's Burundi Case

That we can reconstruct a version of our multi-episode encoding from Harff's event-data account is evident from Figure 5. But several points should be made about the limitations of the event-data available to the scholar attempting the more intentionally oriented, interpretive approach to history encoding that we have advocated. First, note that the reliance on news media from a distance in countries without a free press means that we almost never can find good information about rebels' intentions, expectations and self-interpretations. So there are lots of question marks in our Figure. The type of history line constructed from such information sources tends to be a singular one, without shared or divergent interpretation of a society's history. There are no splits in histories, as we say so graphically in the Guatemala coding of Figure 2 above. What one of us has called the methodological criminality of event-data research is especially evident in such cases⁵¹: it suppresses the contested historicity and the sociality of shared and divergent historical self-understandings that are the essence of ethnic societies or broader nationalities. It is just these bonds that genocide and politicide also intend to destroy.

The Inter-textual Challenge of Future Scenario Construction

One of the main reasons for our development and application of the multi-episode, multi-phase, multi-perspective CEWS case-encoding framework has been the improved comparison, retrieval and practical analysis of such cases. Of course rich underlying narratives are needed if realistic policy recommendations are contemplated. Think of what relevant experts might say in testifying and cross-examination before the Secretary General of an inter-governmental or transnational organization considering ways they might help transform a conflict away from a crisis phase. Perhaps the most challenging task is the construction of relevant future scenarios when the underlying causality of the conflict's development is not fully known. Expert scenario drafters somehow organize the vast but incomplete information in their memories to help make this kind of future-oriented thinking realistically plausible. We too are particularly challenged by this kind of inter-textual challenge: how do we use and blend information from various other stories in the past to help construct possible futures for the one we are in the midst of now?

It is the virtue of counter-factual supporting simulations and crisis information support systems like Bloomfield and Moulton's CASCON that they help the interested observer make such leaps of inter-textual faith. It is the bet implicit in the present effort that our coding scheme, augmented by further analyses and the attitudinal inputs and historical knowledge of different participants, will help us achieve this noble purpose.

Endnotes

¹ This research has been funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to the Center for International Studies, USC; it is work within the Conflict Early Warning Systems (CEWS) Research Program of the International Social Sciences Council. The work will be more fully reported on in a volume with many collaborators, co-edited by Alker, Ted R. Gurr and Kumar Rupesinghe. In particular, we are grateful to the contributions of our collaborators, especially Barbara Harff, Luis Alberto Padilla, and Olga Vorkunova, whose narratives we focus on in the present paper.

² The project was also designed to widen participation in and subject to more inter-disciplinary discussions the work of the Internal Conflicts Commission of the International Peace Research Association, then led by Kumar Rupesinghe, CEWS Co-Coordinator, and exemplified in the pioneering reports of that group, especially, Kumar Rupesinghe and Michiko Kuroda, eds., Early Warning and Conflict Resolution, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1992.

³ See H. R. Alker, "Report on the Inaugural Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Conflict Early Warning Systems (CEWS) Research Programme," xerox, dated December 23, 1995. A slightly abbreviated version of this document (hereafter cited as "Report") was published in IPSA's Participation newsletter, probably in 1997.

⁴ Authors were given Alker, Ted R. Gurr and Kumar Rupesinghe, "Conflict Early Warning Systems: An Initial Research Program," paper presented at the Chicago Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, 1995; the Report, his "Draft Guidelines for Contributors to the CEWS Comparative Study of Conflict Prevention Successes and Failures," (hereafter, "Guidelines"), and his "Emancipatory Empiricism: Toward the renewal of empirical peace research," chapter 10 from his Rediscoveries and Reformulations, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996. A general review of relevant earlier literature occurs in other chapters of that book, and in Alker's "Making Peaceful Sense of the News: Institutionalizing International conflict-Management Event Reporting Using Frame-Based Interpretive Routines," and Merritt's review chapter in Richard L. Merritt, R.G. Muncaster and Dina A. Zinnes, eds, International Event-Data Developments: DDIR Phase II, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1993.

⁵ Courtesy of Steven van Evera, the authors have had access to the unpublished, 1982 draft version of the George-McKeown paper on "Case Studies and Theory Development".

⁶ Only Barbara Harff among project authors has had serious doubts about this notion, to which we will return below. Relevant citations to this widely shared notion, which appears to be immanent in the concept of preventive diplomacy, are provided in Lincoln P. Bloomfield and Amelia C. Leiss, Controlling Small Wars, Knopf, New York, 1969; L. P. Bloomfield and A. Moulton, Managing

International Conflicts, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1997; Alker and Frank L. Sherman, "Collective Security-Seeking Practices Since 1945," in Daniel Frei, ed., Managing International Crises, Sage, Beverly Hills, 1982, and Frank L. Sherman, "SHERFACS: A Cross-Paradigm, Hierarchical and Contextually Sensitive Conflict Management Data Set," International Interactions, Vol. 20, Nos. 1-2 (1994), pp. 79-100; Johan Galtung, Peace by Peaceful Means, Sage, Newbury Park, 1996?; Michael Lund, Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., 1996; and Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, Preventing Deadly Conflict, Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1997. A thoughtful critique (but not a disavowal) of unidimensional life-cycles conceptions is contained in Chapter 2 of Janie Leatherman, William DeMars, Patrick Gaffney, and Raimo Vayrynen, Pursuing Peace in the Shadow of War: Strategies for Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, forthcoming.

⁷ The CEWS Research Program is indeed a member of the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response, a London-based NGO focusing on such concerns.

⁸ See in particular, the discussion of "correlation models," "sequential models," "response models" and "conjunctural models" in Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, "Conceptual, Research, and Policy Issues in Early Warning Research: An Overview," pp. 3-14 of their edited special issue of the Journal of Ethno-Political Development, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1994), entitled Early Warning of Communal Conflicts and Humanitarian Crises. The present effort may also be seen as a contribution to the "development of a thesaurus or "common language" for classifying information in early warning research," as called for on p. 13 of that article.

⁹ See Barbara Harff, "A Theoretical Model of Genocides and Politicides," pp. 25-30, Helen Fein, "Tools and Alarms: Uses of Models for Explanation and Anticipation," pp. 31-35, in Gurr and Harff, eds., 1994, op. cit.; Barbara Harff, "Avoiding Humanitarian Crises and State Failure," paper presented at the London CEWS Steering Committee meeting, 1997; and Roger Schank and Robert Abelson, Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures, L. Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ, 1977.

¹⁰ In the writings cited in note 3 above, Alker, following Olafson, treats "historicity" as "the time-ordered self-understanding of a continuing human society"; the present project attempts to encode within the historicity of world society, the common and divergent ways in which such the historical accounts of its major social groupings are constructed.

¹¹ The peace research literature on this broader kind of conflict resolution is ably reviewed and developed in Kumar Rupesinghe, Conflict Transformation, St Martin's Press, New York, 1995.

¹² Bloomfield's previously mentioned studies are of course focused on situational factors pushing conflicts towards more or less violence, and Lund's excellent book has many relevant discussions of phase changes. SHERFACS based studies

by William Dixon (in International Organization) have also begun to account for some trajectories vis a vis others, and Harff's work in particular is focused aggregatively on triggers and accelerators of change, but we have yet to find a powerful synthesis of the fragmentary insights generated in these studies. The Schank-Abelson "scripts" approach to historical modeling, has for the limited class of scripted narratives, been more precise on the conditions of phase-redefining actions. See also the semantically incomplete, but intentionally coherent narrative reconstructions in Peter Abell, The Syntax of Social Life: The Theory and Method of Comparative Narratives, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987; and the recent sociological history literature citing Larry J. Griffin, "Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 98, 5(March 1993), pp. 1094-1133.

¹³ We are thinking of essential properties very much like the Kripkean approach to naming and necessity, as constitutive relations stipulated to hold in accessible alternative possible worlds, thus supporting historically suggestive counterfactual inferences. See David Sylvan and Steven Majeski, "A Methodology for the Study of Historical Counterfactuals," International Studies Quarterly, 42(1998): 79-108. See also Thomas Schmalberger, Dangerous Liaisons: A Theory of Threat Relationships in International Politics, Ph.D. dissertation, Geneva, 1998, and for a computerized simulation of possible Cuban Missile Crises, visit <http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~thomass/index.html>

¹⁴ Padilla's draft paper, "Peace Making and Conflict Transformation in Guatemala," (hereafter, "Padilla") was distributed at the CEWS London 1997 meeting. The creation of Guatemala was itself the result of the imperial practice of *divide et impera*. (Padilla, p.6) The Central American Federal Republic established in 1821 dissolved into its five republics in 1838 of which Guatemala was one. In 1859, the British "forced the Guatemalan government to give up Belize ... in order to legitimize the occupation of the Guatemalan territory known afterwards as 'British Honduras' (Padilla, p.7). The US intervention in Guatemala in the 1950's is "an historical *example* of the 'big stick' policy that Washington applied to Central America in those years (emphasis added, Padilla, p.7).

¹⁵ The dispute cannot be clearly delineated in the narrative. We would need at least some of the arguments made by the US and Guatemalan governments in order to identify some of the key claims. We also need more information on how the disagreement between the US and Guatemala entered a dispute phase in which a crisis could be expected. It would, of course, be interesting to find out whether or not the Guatemalan government had such expectations at all, and thus, whether or not the Guatemalan government considered itself to be in conflict with the United States.

¹⁶ Although Padilla speaks of an "explosive cocktail" referring to the institution of a new leftist government, it does not become clear whether the election of the government or the reforms it tried to implement shifted the conflict into a crisis phase. Also, an "explosive cocktail" is not specific enough to determine whether limited or massive violence could be expected.

¹⁷ It is difficult to imagine that the United States could have intervened more openly. If we can confirm that limited and massive violence phases could not have occurred, we are dealing with a conflict for whose mediation a focus on violence would be misleading. A possible way to address this problem is that of Sylvan and Majeski, in their writings on the contingency of place characteristics for military interventions.

¹⁸ This difference in perception needs to be corroborated by the author. However, a number of cues support this interpretation. First, in Padilla's account references to the United States as a participant in the conflict cease after the account of the coup d'état. Second, Padilla characterizes the Guatemalan conflict as "simultaneously external and internal, that is to say, that the insurgent movement represented an ideological and nationalist response to the violation of national sovereignty and to the national trauma generated by the US intervention in 1954, and at the same time it was a conflict over governance and authority, because it also expressed popular demands for democracy and political participation" (Padilla, p.2) This assessment has to be taken with a grain of salt, though. The conflict was not simultaneously external and internal, if the insurgent movement was a response to US intervention. It appears that the conflict was first external and then internal, the first producing the second. Also the reference to democracy and political participation appears to be anachronistic. We would need to know the insurgents' claims made at the time in order to judge what the oppositions were that characterized the conflict. Democracy and widened political participation appear to be the result of a transformation in the participants' stated aims, their attitudes toward each other, and a common desire not to reinitiate another violent episode. These changes in the 1980s allowed the conflict to be resolved. Padilla will have to provide more historically accurate interpretations.

¹⁹ See explanation above, associated with Table 1.

²⁰ Padilla says nothing about the claims made by insurgents at this time, nor what kind of society the government wanted to create. He will have to be more specific in order to better distinguish this internal conflict from the previous external one as well as to better explain the transformation that the insurgents underwent from communist rebels to democratic reformers.

²¹ For instance, Padilla describes the actions of the army as "ruthless and bloody military campaigns", a "wave of terror against real or suspected leaders or leftist intellectuals", "the operation of death squads in charge of political assassinations and 'disappearances' of people". (Padilla, p.8) On the other hand, he describes the rebels' activities as "military effort", or he does not mention their activities at all. (Padilla, p.9)

²² This interpretation needs to be corroborated by the author. Especially relevant is whether the possibility of massive violence could be entertained at this point. Also important is whether or not, and if, how a shift to an abatement phase could have been brought about. It appears that a prerequisite for such a shift would have been the recognition that the rebels make legitimate claims that can be talked about. The author will have to provide more specific answers.

²³ This action can in turn be considered a trigger that accounts for the phase shift.

²⁴ Padilla is silent about the rebels' activities. In order to validate this interpretation we need to know how the rebels made use of violence, including their targets, the number of people killed, etc.

²⁵ Padilla does not tell us what the new guerilla organization undertook in military terms, i.e. what kinds of violence the geographical distribution of military activities included. What were the targets of these operations? How many casualties did they produce, and who were they?

²⁶ It is not entirely clear whether Padilla tries to describe an escalation of the conflict, or whether he tries to describe the cruelty of government activities. However, later references emphasize that the 1980s was a period of "mutual destruction" (Padilla, p.13) What is missing in his account what the rebels part was in this mutual destruction.

²⁷ The description "was not able to resist" and "military stalemate" is coded as defeat. (See Padilla, p.9) Regardless of whether the rebels were defeated or a stalemate was reached, the conflict entered once again into an abatement phase.

²⁸ It is not clear how the rebels were able to obtain international support. What were the claims made by the rebels that were supported by western groups? Why was this kind of support not provided before? What made the rebels look for international as opposed to domestic support?

²⁹ However, clarification needs to be obtained whether violence ceased entirely or whether sporadic violence still occurred.

³⁰ Padilla's explanation is not fully sound because he argues that "in the international field the collapse of communism and the fall of the Soviet Union was a determinant factor" (Padilla, p.14) Although a general decline in Soviet influence on Third World development strategies occurred in the 1980s in several regions, the actual events of the Soviet collapse occurred in 1991 and therefore cannot explain an ideological transformation in the mid-1980s. Moreover, Padilla's statement that "guerilla commanders ... changed their Marxist-Leninist ideology for a democratic and pragmatic approach" (Padilla, p.14) requires some additional explanations, for it is hard to imagine that such a radical change is credible even if genuinely intended. Something else must have happened that changed the world view of the rebels in such a way that it became credible and acceptable to a wider audience.

³¹ Contrast Padilla's assessment of "absolutely unreal take over of 'communism'" (p.21) with his earlier assessment of "strong nationalism and ideological rhetoric of the leftist politicians, the influence of the small Guatemalan communist party within the government, and the international context of US/USSR confrontation" forming an explosive cocktail (p.7).

³² It also appears that the re-interpretation of the conflict made a renewed attack on indigenous people impossible, and perhaps prevented the government more generally to pursue a violent policy with regard to the rebels.

³³ Padilla argues implicitly that the government was prevented from resuming violent actions against the rebels because the international community observed closely the Guatemalan situation. This suggests, however, that the government's legitimacy had

been significantly curtailed, for it could no longer argue that its military operations were needed to restore the political order. Although it appears that the government lost its legitimacy when it launched massive attacks against the indigenous population, this process needs to be made explicit.

³⁴ Padilla writes that as early as the early 1980s the URNG “obtained massive popular support for their military effort and they also succeeded in organizing thousands of people through popular organizations ... and even the student movement ... The URNG also obtained support of an important number of priests and religious people mainly linked to the Catholic church and all sorts of NGO’s and organizations in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe.” (Padilla, p.9) If the URNG had so much support in the early 1980s while it was still militarily active, why could no pressure be brought to bear on the government? Why was it necessary to bring different sectors of Guatemalan society together with UNRG if it enjoyed wide domestic support since the early 1980s?

³⁵ The promise to refrain from acts of sabotage begs the question of how much violence had characterized this phase of abatement? Also an attempted coup d’etat by former president Serrano in May 1993 needs to be reconciled with a phase of abatement. (See Padilla, p.18)

³⁶ Considering that Elias was the only presidential candidate willing to enter into direct contact with the rebels suggests that the ruling class was still largely opposed to recognizing the rebels. It would therefore be important to know whether the government would have sooner or later given in, or whether the election of Elias was a close call. Election results might give us a clue.

³⁷ The basis of this discussion is Olga Vorkunova, “The Evolution of Conflict Prevention Strategies in Russia and the Successor States: Moldova and Chechnya” (hereafter, “Vorkunova”), paper presented at 1997 CEWS meeting. Throughout her account Vorkunova does not explain the paradox that Moldovan nationalists pursued political independence from Russia as well as unification with Romania. For a better understanding of the conflict it would be crucial to know why the claim for independence did not contradict the claim for unification.

Notice the assessment by the author that the root of the conflict was not the “russification” undertaken by the Soviet government (p.4), but the “moldovanization” undertaken by the Moldovan majority (p.5).

³⁸ More specifically, it would be necessary to elaborate on the claim that reactions in an “adequate manner” could have prevented the conflict. (Vorkunova, p.5)

³⁹ This instance points at an element which our focus on violence might easily overlook. From the perspective of a minority a conflict can get worse and be terminated without any physical violence being used. For instance, the Moldovan majority does not need the use of violence to effectively prevent any Slavic participation in the political and social life of Moldova. This would be synonymous to a shift into an abatement phase due to defeat. I thus propose an amendment to our definition of a crisis phase which should also include the expectation of defeat with respect to the claims made.

⁴⁰ The connection between these two events would have to be elaborated on. Which side in the conflict felt pressed or encouraged to use violence with the prospect of a hard-line Soviet regime?

⁴¹ Although the author states at a later point that “since December 1991 it has been difficult to determine the loyalties of the Russian 14th Army deployed in the Dniestr region” one can nonetheless specify its status by looking at the reactions from the Russian government, the Moldovan government, and the Transdnistria government.

⁴² A peculiar aspect of this case narrative is the absence of the international community. Why did the CSCE not intervene?

⁴³ It remains puzzling how the Russian 14th Army, whose loyalty had been difficult to determine since December 1991 (Vorkunova, p.9) accepted without any hesitation to be placed under Russian jurisdiction (Vorkunova, p.11).

⁴⁴ It appears as if the sporadic violence occurred in the abatement phase of the conflict between the Moldovan government and the Dniestr insurgents, and not between the Russian and the Moldovan government. However, the author creates more puzzles when she states that “the 14th Army has provided the role of peace-keeping forces in the region” that “also supported the secession aspirations of Transdnistria in conflict with Moldova.” (Vorkunova, p.12) Later she argues that Moldova had called the Russian control of the 14th Army as illegal and declared in turn that “all forces in Moldova, except for those on the left bank of the Dniestr, have been placed under the legal jurisdiction of Moldova.” (Vorkunova, p.12) In light of these oppositions between Russia and Moldova, how can the author detect a “direct confrontation between Russian and Moldovan interests” only in May 1992?

⁴⁵ It is unclear whether this cease-fire is the one established on March 18, 1992, or whether another cease-fire agreement is meant. It also remains unclear how the Security Council responded to the Moldovan appeal.

⁴⁶ Once again the author argues that the intention of the Russian 14th Army were unclear. (Vorkunova, p.14) How is it possible that the Russian intervention using these troops as peace-keeping forces was successful if they could not be controlled? Would it be possible that this argument is used by Russian authorities to justify the deployment of Russian troops in Moldova? Could it be that the conflict is about Moldovan independence from Russia while the Dniestr insurgents are proxies for the Russian government?

⁴⁷ The author describes the “normalization” between the conflicting parties in too sketchy a fashion. She argues that the deterioration of the economic situation in Transdnistria made their leadership more susceptible to agreements with their Moldovan counterparts which had also changed towards more liberal and moderate ideas. (Vorkunova, p.14) Does she want to make the (Marxist) argument that ideas grow out of economic situations, and that the conflict and its solution was essentially an economic issue? Or does she want to argue that the economic situation and the change of government are coincidences that affected the conflict?

⁴⁸ The author mentions in passing that in January 1994 the Moldovan government accepted the peace plan proposed by the CSCE. (Vorkunova, p.16) Up and until then the CSCE has been mentioned only as a meeting place for the representatives of Russia, Ukraine, Romania, and Moldova. It has never been mentioned as an active player in the attempt to resolve the crisis. This aspect of the conflict requires much more elaboration.

⁴⁹ The author fails to provide the necessary explanations that allow to appreciate her conclusion that “the role of the Russian 14th Army deployed in the Dniestr region should not be overestimated, but at the same time it succeed to contain the conflict.” (Vorkunova, p.17)

⁵⁰ Besides her draft chapter and other already cited studies, for our engagement with Harff’s work we relied heavily on Chapter 3, “Early Warning of Potential Genocide: The Cases of Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia, and Abkhazia,” in Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, Early Warning of Communal Conflicts and Genocide: Linking Empirical Research to International Responses, United Nations University, Tokyo, 1996, pp. 47-78; and Barbara Harff, “Early Warning of Humanitarian Crises: Sequential Models and the Role of Accelerators,” in John L. Davies and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., Preventive Measures: Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 1998, pp. 70-78.

⁵¹ See Alker, “On the Ontology of Peace and War,” a 1999 Working Paper Publication downloadable from <http://www.santafe.edu/sfi/>.