

Leadership Change and Negotiation Initiatives in Intractable Civil Conflicts

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Abstract

Some violent civil conflicts that seem “intractable,” or especially resistant to negotiated settlement, nevertheless yield negotiated agreements. Why this happens is a central question for peace research and conflict resolution practice. This article compares five cases—in South Africa, Mozambique, Israel-Palestine, Aceh, and Northern Ireland—in which adversaries in intractable conflicts negotiated agreements on core political issues. It induces a causal relationship between negotiated agreements and changes of leadership, particularly on the government side of the conflicts. It considers implications for theories of negotiation “ripeness” in civil conflicts.

Introduction and Overview

Some civil conflicts that seem “intractable” or particularly resistant to negotiated settlement (Crocker, Hampson & Aall, 2005, 5) nevertheless yield negotiated agreements. Why seemingly intractable cases reach negotiated settlements is a central question for peace research and conflict resolution practice. At the policy level, the major marker of intractability is delegitimization and non-recognition between the main adversaries. There are structural reasons why the shift from non-recognition to mutual recognition, legitimization, and negotiation might rely more heavily on policy changes on the government side than on changes in rebel policy: Governments typically withhold recognition of rebels’ political legitimacy in order to preserve the legal and diplomatic-political advantages enjoyed by sovereign states. Conversely, rebels typically seek the government side’s recognition and are accordingly less resistant to negotiation. Due to the risks to their side’s advantages, before entering into negotiations, even government leaders interested in negotiated settlements will seek as much assurance as possible that negotiations can take place on acceptable terms. They may initiate secret or deniable pre-negotiation contacts with adversaries to lessen the uncertainty involved. However, when governments do decide to accord rebels public recognition, they experience structural pressures to remain engaged in negotiation processes. Once official negotiations begin, the government’s own political prospects become dependent on a successful outcome, which raises the government side’s commitment to negotiation.

To explore the hypotheses that settlements of violent, intractable conflicts tend to depend more on the government side’s change of policy and, secondarily, that the government side tends to remain committed to a negotiation process once it accords recognition, this article compares cases in which adversaries in intractable conflicts negotiated agreements on core political issues. It induces a causal relationship between changes of leadership on the government side of the conflicts and negotiated agreements and it considers the implications of these cases for theories of “ripeness” in civil conflicts.

The claim here is not that new leadership leads inevitably to negotiation and recognition in such conflicts; rather, the article proposes that when negotiated agreement occurs, it is often, perhaps typically, due to initiatives taken by new leadership on the

government side. By exploring how changes of leadership affected prospects for conflict settlement, the study aims at empirically based theory development. It identifies key variables and interactions between structural and agentic factors that merit further investigation. It also considers implications for relevant theories of conflict settlement, notably ripeness theory, described below.

The study analyzes five civil wars or insurgencies—in South Africa, Mozambique, Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, and Aceh—in which adversaries reversed longstanding policies of non-recognition and reached political agreements. To meet the selection criteria, cases of negotiation had to be the first instance in which the main adversaries legitimized one another as negotiation partners and reached an agreement that addressed the main political issues. Regarding conflict type, these cases include both secessionist (Palestine, Aceh, Northern Ireland) and regime-replacement struggles (South Africa and Mozambique).

Cases were selected from among civil wars terminated between 1985 and 2005 that featured policies of long-standing (10 or more years) non-recognition between governments and rebel groups. The negotiation agendas had to include the core political issues in dispute, not merely ancillary issues such as prisoner releases or ceasefires. Since adversaries had no history of negotiation on a comprehensive political agenda, the agreements reached were unprecedented. It is worth emphasizing, however, that negotiated agreements are a minority among civil war endings, and agreements among adversaries in conflicts characterized by long-standing non-recognition policies constitute yet a smaller fraction.

Databases in Toft (2010) and Stedman et al. (2002) provide a larger universe of cases during this period. In them, I found no clear examples of additional cases of civil war termination through negotiation in which non-recognition was overturned and a political agreement followed. I also could find no contrary cases in which long-standing non-recognition policies were reversed in the absence of leadership change. Moreover, a review of these databases appears to show no cases of civil war negotiation that reversed non-recognition policies without a peace agreement ensuing. This last finding suggests that reversal of non-recognition policy alone positively influences negotiation outcomes and that governments tend not to initiate negotiations with formerly delegitimized adversaries unless they intend to settle.

Usually in these cases, the rebel sides made negotiation overtures first, while government policies of non-recognition toward rebels were the main hindrance to negotiation. This is unsurprising since governments typically deny insurgents recognition, considering it a concession not to be freely given away. Rebels, for their part, typically seek changes to the status quo, including gaining the legitimacy that recognition and negotiation afford (Clayton, 2013, 610).

Ripeness theory is the most prominent paradigm for understanding why some long-standing, violent political conflicts settle through negotiation. As developed by Zartman (1985), the theory essentially proposes that circumstances favor direct negotiation or third-party mediation when the main adversaries perceive that they are in a “hurting stalemate” offering little or no prospect of unilateral victory and that maintaining

the status quo imposes high costs. Parties to the conflict must also perceive that negotiation offers a “way out.” That is, each side perceives that negotiated agreement is possible and sees that the other side shares this perception (Zartman & de Soto, 2010, 5-6).

While ripeness theory acknowledges that hurting stalemates are identified through perceptions, it does not specify whose perceptual process matters. Ripeness also does not consider potential variation in how individual decision makers perceive the same situation. For Mitchell (1995), dominant models of ripeness are weakened by their neglect of internal factors, such that

any useful extension of the ideas they contain needs to acknowledge that it is likely to be just as important to take into account internal ripeness (a set of intra-party conditions that are conducive—or, at least, do not present major obstacles—to changing strategies in the external conflict) as it is to pay attention to external ripeness (50).

Zartman (2007) notes, “when a government is too publicly committed to exclusion of [“terrorist” rebel groups] it may need to change its government in order to change its position” (195). However, this insight does not appear to have been incorporated into ripeness theory, which emphasizes perceptual change without locating such change in individual decision makers. Overall, the theory emphasizes power relationships between unitary adversaries and excludes their internal politics.

Factors excluded or deemphasized in the ripeness concept may nevertheless have explanatory relevance for intractable civil conflicts. In particular,

- Ripeness stipulates that both parties need to perceive a hurting stalemate. In the cases examined here, however, policy shifts leading to negotiation were not simultaneous or symmetrical on the government and rebel sides: The immediate precursor of ripeness was the government side’s shift, which was brought about by new leadership. Conversely, new leadership was not necessary for rebels’ acceptance of negotiation.
- The cases indicate that ripeness is not so much produced by a single structural trend in which the weaker side rises relative to the stronger (Zartman, 2000, 228). Instead, the cases featured *two* trends: Over the longer-term the government side saw its relative power position worsening, while in the short term it could credibly claim to have improved its position and reasserted military control.
- While ripeness tends to treat the adversaries in conflict as unitary, in the cases here, the timing of negotiation initiatives was such that government leaders could claim credit for improved national security in the context of their own domestic political competition.

- Ripeness assumes that adversaries rationally calculate costs and benefits of conflict and negotiation. However, some leaders in these cases demonstrated ideological and other non-rational constraints that barred them from perceiving mutually hurting stalemates and available ways out.

Why might new leadership make a difference to conflict settlement? New leaders are politically freer to dissociate themselves from the policies of previous regimes. For example, as Stedman (1991) concludes, the replacement of Ian Smith as government leader was “necessary for a settlement to emerge” in the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean civil war and the mere fact of leadership change adds fluidity and possibility to a logjammed conflict (239-241). As Pruitt (2005) notes, new leaders can also arrive with a more holistic interpretation of policy dilemmas to the extent that they have been less enmeshed in the details of policymaking. New leaders may be more able to replace or sideline personnel committed to old policies. They may be younger than their predecessors and their thinking more flexible. For their part, adversaries may pay more attention to the other side’s new leadership and consider whether it presents opportunities for a changed relationship (5).

Assessing the role of individual leaders entails counterfactual analysis (Greenstein, 2013, 121). Noting that the external environment and internal organizational dynamics impose limits on individual agency, Mukunda (2011) concludes, “Leader impact can best be thought of as the *marginal* difference between what actually happened and what would have happened if the most likely alternative leader had come to power” (5). This study relies on the best available evidence and experts’ judgments to assess whether a different political leader, particularly the previous one, would have chosen differently when faced with essentially similar environmental constraints.

The five case studies that follow aim at “structured, focused comparison” (George & Bennett, 2005, 69-71), first by introducing structural-systemic factors—characteristics of the conflict environment, such as military capabilities, alliances, or demographic trends—that created incentives for negotiation. They then consider agentic factors—contributions of new political leadership—as well as how structural incentives are related to leadership contributions. The conclusions consider implications of the cases for ripeness theory.

F. W. de Klerk and South Africa

Structural incentives to negotiate

In February 1990, South Africa’s President, F.W. de Klerk, met the preconditions for negotiations set out previously by the main opposition group, the formerly outlawed African National Congress (ANC). De Klerk’s decision to start negotiations was based on his perception that regional and domestic threats to national security had diminished: ANC guerrilla bases had been pushed far from South Africa’s borders; Soviet involvement in the region was ending; and in late 1989, East European communism

dramatically collapsed (de Klerk, author interview, 1998). Internally, during the 1980s, organizations including trade unions had launched collective actions that increased the conflict's economic costs for the government. Yet by the late 1980s, government forces had restored a sense of control and repressed uprisings.

However, de Klerk and other leaders of the governing National Party (NP) believed the advantages conferred by this reassertion of control were only temporary: Demographic and economic trends would eventually weaken the NP's negotiating position and its political dominance. NP leaders who considered negotiations with the ANC inevitable sought to act while in a position of relative autonomy and capability (Lieberfeld, 1999).

Contributions of new government leadership

What would de Klerk's predecessor, P.W. Botha, have done had he stayed in office past August 1989? Judging by his record in office and his later criticisms of de Klerk's negotiation initiatives, Botha would have continued to reject a negotiated agreement with the ANC. His inflexibility regarding communism and "group rights" (rights granted on the basis of racial categories and intended to perpetuate the supremacy of the White minority) prevented Botha from taking steps to recognize and negotiate with the ANC. De Klerk, by contrast, was personally and professionally disposed toward negotiated constitutional solutions and believed a negotiated outcome could safeguard White South Africans' political and economic interests. Botha opposed legalizing or negotiating with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and with the ANC, which he had long considered an instrument of the communists. Botha also insisted on "group rights" schemes and rejected a unitary state with majority rule.

Botha's ideological commitment to the "homelands" or group-rights concept was an insurmountable obstacle to talks over a unitary state. Esterhuysen (2012) notes that Botha "was unable to respond creatively ... because he clung to ... *his* view of groups that convinced him of the necessity of a form of partition" (175). In Giliomee's (2013) assessment, Botha was "unable to move beyond the homeland policy in meeting black demands" (419). Moreover, Botha was personally authoritarian, self-dramatizing, and vindictive, while de Klerk was "a peacemaker, a man who shied away from unnecessary conflict. He believed in his ability to reason with others and win them over to his side" (Giliomee 2013, 319). De Klerk also had "mastered the rules of logic much better than P. W. Botha" and could better control his temper (Esterhuysen, 2012, 187).

Mike Louw, second-in-command in Botha's National Intelligence Service (NIS), believed "there would be no progress towards a negotiated settlement with P. W. Botha at the helm. Botha lacked the [required] mental elasticity" (Esterhuysen, 2012, 176). In the assessment of white Afrikaner academics and political insiders who held unofficial pre-negotiation discussions with ANC leaders, "PW Botha and his party will *never* agree to black majority rule," and for government-ANC negotiation to happen, "PW Botha first has to go" (Esterhuysen, 2012, 168). Senior members of Botha's cabinet believed a

solution to the conflict required them to “eliminate Botha” as a leader (Viljoen, author interview, 1994).

Conversely, de Klerk’s pragmatism was apparent to colleagues and adversaries alike. NIS Director Niel Barnard considered de Klerk “a very strong pragmatist [who] believes he is clever enough to dodge around each issue and to manipulate and tactically out-manuever other people” (Giliomee, 2013, 319). ANC leader Nelson Mandela termed de Klerk “a cautious pragmatist” whose reforms aimed “to ensure power for Afrikaners in a future dispensation” (Giliomee, 2013, 312).

By contrast, Botha’s pragmatism only extended to adopting new means of maintaining white political dominance. His political views never changed during the post-apartheid era and he publically opposed de Klerk’s 1992 referendum that sought White South Africans’ endorsement of the reform process begun in February 1990. Until he died in 2006, Botha continued to reject unitary democracy and to advocate separate “homelands” for Black South Africans. De Klerk’s pragmatism allowed an accord with the ANC on core political issues such as group rights versus individual rights.

Had Botha remained president, the ongoing influence of security hawks would have likely imposed a barrier to negotiation with the ANC (Esterhuyse, 2012, 169). In 1984, Defense Minister Magnus Malan and other militarists had sabotaged South Africa’s Nkomati peace accord with Mozambique, which for the ANC was evidence of the military’s unreliability in keeping agreements. Giliomee (2013) assesses, “For too long [Botha] bought into the military’s perspective that the Communist threat rather than black political exclusion and widespread poverty caused the instability. He gave far too long a leash to the military” (419).

De Klerk, though, “staked everything on a constitutional solution” because disposition and legal training inclined him toward rational debate and legal-constitutional approaches to dispute settlement:

As a jurist, [de Klerk] believed that laws and a constitution could settle disputes.... His entire attempt to bring about a constitutional settlement in South Africa hung on this belief—that a deal could be struck that balanced the interests of minorities with the aspirations of the majority (Giliomee, 2013, 323 & 312).

De Klerk overestimated his own party’s negotiation skills and popular support, and apparently did not anticipate the extent of his party’s eventual loss of power. Yet, because he did not see Black South Africans’ political participation in the same existential terms as Botha, he believed the potential benefits of entering into negotiations outweighed the risks.

Relation of structural incentives to leadership contributions

The NP’s change of leadership overlapped with the collapse of European communism, which allowed de Klerk to justify his change of policy toward the ANC in

terms of reduced threats. Soviet disengagement from southern Africa, however, began in the mid-1980s and was already well advanced during Botha's tenure. Yet Botha remained committed to a "total strategy" of resistance to a Communist-directed "total onslaught." The same political and economic pressures that motivated de Klerk's policy reversal were insufficient to convince Botha to legalize anti-apartheid political parties, release jailed opposition leaders, and begin negotiations.

More ideologically flexible than his predecessor, de Klerk was also more willing to take initiatives and risks. Esterhuysen (2012) assesses de Klerk's strength as his ability to spot strategic opportunities (224). De Klerk perceived the changes occurring in the conflict environment as an opportunity for policy reorientation and believed this opportunity should be taken before the NP's negotiating leverage deteriorated. His predecessor, given the same pressures and incentives, would likely have continued to resist negotiation.

Joachim Chissano and Mozambique

Structural incentives to negotiate

The struggle between the governing Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and rebels of the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) lasted from 1977 to 1992. On both sides the decision to negotiate was influenced by loss of key patrons: FRELIMO lost support when Gorbachev ended Soviet involvement in regional conflicts; RENAMO was weakened when South Africa withdrew support in 1988-89. Consistent with ripeness theory, loss of patronage dimmed each side's hopes of military victory (Rule, 1988; Venancio, 1993, 146).

Faced with a regional drought, the failure of their collective agriculture policies, and possible economic collapse, FRELIMO leaders were significantly dependent on aid from the West and became less committed to Marxism and one-party rule. By the early 1990s, most governments in the region supported negotiated resolution of the conflict. As well, Western countries offered RENAMO financial incentives to convert itself into a political party.

Contributions of new government leadership

President and FRELIMO leader Samora Machel, who died in a plane crash in October 1986, rejected power-sharing and a multiparty system, and offered RENAMO only amnesty. To replace Machel, FRELIMO's Central Committee selected Joachim Chissano over more radical and doctrinaire candidates.

Chissano differed from Machel in several respects that enabled negotiation: He had greater ideological flexibility than Machel, who was committed to Marxism, collectivization, one-party consolidation of power, and a Leninist vanguard role for FRELIMO. Chissano was also an experienced diplomat, whose personality was oriented toward negotiation and conciliation. For Msabaha (1995):

The principal impetus for the Nairobi talks [which led to FRELIMO-RENAMO negotiations] ... came from the emergence of Joachim Chissano as president for Mozambique and the changes in the international system. The government of President Machel was identified with the hard-line revolutionary policies of FRELIMO as a vanguard Marxist party. The party and the governmental structure over which Machel presided looked at negotiation with [RENAMO] as a compromise and a defeat for the Mozambican revolution (215).

Chissano was a founder of FRELIMO as secretary to its first leader, Eduardo Mondlane, during the revolution. Following Mondlane's death in 1969, he played a conciliatory role in the power struggle between Machel and rival leaders. Relative to Machel, who in 1970 rose from a position as a guerrilla commander in the anti-colonial war to become FRELIMO's president, "Chissano ... had learned the virtues of flexibility and pragmatism" and "took a more intellectual, studied approach to issues" (Hume, 1994, 13). He was widely regarded as a cautious pragmatist who excelled in quiet behind-the-scenes negotiations.

Chissano had belonged to FRELIMO's Central Committee and Executive Committee since 1963 and was in charge of security for the organization during the independence struggle (Rule, 1986). As prime minister in the transitional government, he helped negotiate independence between FRELIMO and Portugal, and sought to reassure the white settler population about its post-colonial status. After independence, he served for 12 years as foreign minister. In addition to his security credentials within FRELIMO, Chissano had diplomatic experience and helped steer negotiations to successful outcomes.

By contrast, Machel's personality was confrontational. A month before his death, for example, he confronted Malawi's president in an acrimonious exchange in Malawi's capital, issuing an ultimatum regarding Malawi's support for RENAMO. Machel publicly threatened to close the border with Malawi, to place missiles along the border, and even to launch a pre-emptive strike against Malawi if need be (Rake 2001, 172).

Like Machel, Chissano was averse to recognizing a guerrilla movement that he considered to be bandits and stooges of colonialists. Chissano publicly opposed negotiation with RENAMO until late 1988, but overcame his aversion in the interest of ending a civil war whose continuance threatened the viability of the state and the possibility for Mozambique to become a positive model for the region. In mid-1989, at FRELIMO's Fifth Congress, Chissano pushed through policy changes that ended FRELIMO's identity as vanguard party and accommodated RENAMO's demands for multi-party democracy and open markets.

Under Chissano, FRELIMO dropped its references to RENAMO as a criminal organization and acknowledged the organization's legitimacy as a political interlocutor. Chissano also sought mediation assistance from Mozambique's Catholic Church, whose properties Machel had nationalized as part of an anti-clerical policy. With the Church as

mediator, Chissano began an indirect dialogue with RENAMO in 1989, which led to direct talks and a peace treaty.

While Machel had already begun to revive relations with Western governments and with the Church, including a 1985 visit with the Pope, Chissano demonstrated a willingness to initiate policy changes contravening many of Machel's Marxist beliefs. Chissano's efforts to legitimize negotiation with RENAMO led FRELIMO to adopt a new national constitution in 1990. Additionally, Chissano probably went further than Machel would have by meeting personally with RENAMO's leader in order to build trust.

Relation of structural incentives to leadership contributions

Negotiations were impelled by FRELIMO leaders' perceptions that RENAMO's destructive capacities could eventually threaten state survival (Msabaha, 1995, 225). Additionally, the Soviet Union, a key patron, was disengaging from regional involvement. Chissano changed key FRELIMO policies because he perceived that addressing threats from catastrophic trends-- regarding food security, refugees, public health, and the economy—required political and economic liberalization, permitting RENAMO's incorporation into the political system. However, after mid-1987, Chissano also inherited an improved national security situation (Msabaha, 1995, 215). Pragmatically, he used this temporary improvement in security to legitimize negotiation.

Chissano's policy initiatives were critical since, at the time he engineered FRELIMO's endorsement of negotiations, "the government and RENAMO were not even on speaking terms because the ontological issues of security, self-determination, dignity, and esteem were at stake" (Msabaha, 1995, 227). For Machel, RENAMO's legitimization was a defeat of revolutionary ideals. New leadership was likely necessary to overcome these psychological barriers, to allow a multi-party system, and to include Catholic officials as intermediaries.

Yitzhak Rabin and Israel-Palestine

Structural incentives to negotiate

Pressures and incentives at the international and domestic levels motivated the newly elected Labor-party-led government of Israel to sign an interim agreement on Palestinian self-rule (the 1993 Oslo Accords). Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was responding to perceived threats from Iraq and Iran's programs for nuclear weapons: Settling conflicts with the Palestinians and with Arab states on Israel's borders would better allow Israel to confront emergent "existential" threats on the regional periphery (Makovsky, 1996, 113).

Locally, Israeli forces had, by the early 1990s, repressed the uprising (*intifada*) of Palestinians begun in late 1987. However, Rabin, who was defense minister during much of the *intifada*, believed the conflict with the Palestinians was exhausting Israel's public and degrading its armed forces. Additionally, Hamas, the militant Islamic nationalist

movement, threatened to displace the mainstream nationalist Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the main representative of Palestinian nationalism, which made the PLO appear comparatively benign to Israeli leaders (Savir, 1999, 312).

After winning office in June 1992, Rabin publicly promised a peace agreement within nine months to a year. As of August 1993, however, Rabin had tried without success to engage either Syria or Palestinians unaffiliated with the PLO in negotiations, leaving the PLO as the only available interlocutors. While campaign commitments may not be reliable, Rabin reportedly felt compelled to fulfill his: Beilin (1999, 84) reports that Rabin considered himself a man of his word and regretted not fulfilling his campaign pledge, while Peres (1995) notes Rabin's increasing interest in a deal with the PLO in mid-1993, "The time had come for us to make good on our campaign commitments" (281).

Contributions of new government leadership

The PLO had been formally committed to recognizing and negotiating with Israel since late 1988. Negotiations were therefore a product of Israel's change in non-recognition policy. Israel's Likud party, which rejected negotiation with the PLO and its goal of a Palestinian state, governed, at times in a coalition with the Labor party, from 1977 to 1992. The 1992 elections empowered the Labor Party to form Israel's first government independent of the Likud Party in 15 years.

Rabin's predecessor, Yitzhak Shamir of the Likud, was inhibited from reaching an agreement with the PLO by an ideology of a "Greater Israel" that viewed the West Bank and Gaza in religious terms, or as necessary to Israel's security in a perpetually hostile world (Shamir, author interview, 1994; Aronoff, 2001, 190-191). Rabin was more pragmatic in the sense of formulating policy based on his analysis of current empirical realities and the practical effects of policy choices. Rabin overcame his antipathy toward the PLO and its leader, Yasir Arafat, when his analysis convinced him that Israel had no alternative partners and that PLO leaders would agree to postpone resolution of contentious "final-status" issues during an interim period.

Had Shamir won re-election in 1992, even the changes in the security environment to which Rabin's military background sensitized him—regarding Hamas and the emergence of regional adversaries with nuclear weapons potential—would likely not have led to negotiation with the PLO. Shamir's commitment to Israeli control of the West Bank and opposition to Palestinian statehood, as well as his party's dependence for its parliamentary majority on territorially maximalist political parties and on the Jewish settlers' movement, all prevented him from negotiating an agreement with the PLO.

Shamir, a champion of settlement-building in the West Bank, revealed his policy goals shortly after his party's defeat in the 1992 elections, voicing regret

that in the coming four years I would not be able to expand the settlement in Judea and Samaria [the West Bank] and to complete the demographic revolution in the Land of Israel.... [Now] there is a danger that it will be

turned into a Palestinian state... I would have carried on autonomy talks for ten years and meanwhile we would have reached half a million people in Judea and Samaria (In Shlaim, 2000, 500).

Shamir thus saw negotiation as an opportunity to create the semblance of cooperation, while dragging out talks so as to increase Jewish settlement, to establish permanent Israeli control of the West Bank and thereby nullify possible Palestinian statehood.

Rabin, by contrast, considered permanent control of the West Bank and, particularly, the Gaza Strip a liability for Israeli security. While negotiation with the PLO went beyond the Labor Party's platform, Rabin's reputation as "Mr. Security," along with his authority within the Labor Party and support from coalition partners, afforded him latitude for policy change. Rejection of a two-state solution within the Likud Party and among its political allies would have prevented Shamir from shifting policy, even had he been motivated to do so.

Rabin was less ideologically constrained than Shamir. He also enjoyed unrivaled credibility with the public and the security establishment on national security issues. He could count on support from within the Labor Party and from Labor's senior partner in the governing coalition. Rabin also appointed Shimon Peres foreign minister, thereby bringing into the government an activist pro-negotiation cohort among Peres's Foreign Ministry staff. This proximity allowed a cadre of pro-negotiation officials to bring to the attention of Peres, and then Rabin, a draft agreement that they and their emissaries secretly negotiated with PLO officials.

Relation of structural incentives to leadership contributions

Changes in the international and domestic environments, as well as the PLO's acceptance of Israeli terms, made Rabin see negotiation with the PLO as in Israel's national interest. Rabin's decision was facilitated by his pragmatic approach to national security and to Zionist aims, which differed substantially from Shamir's approach.

Tony Blair and Northern Ireland

Settlement of the conflict in Northern Ireland may appear anomalous in that events leading to the 1998 Good Friday accords did not include changes of leadership among the adversary Loyalist and Republican organizations in the region. However, with Britain having sovereign political and legal authority over Northern Ireland, a change of leadership in Westminster permitted the policy changes that enabled negotiated settlement.

Structural incentives to negotiate

Once a localized conflict, Northern Ireland became increasingly a regional and international matter due to the membership of both Britain and the Republic of Ireland in

the European Union. Ireland's economic expansion in the 1990s also created a business constituency in Northern Ireland for whom the conflict was a barrier to prosperity. The Clinton administration in the United States extended recognition to the nationalist party Sinn Féin (SF), creating incentives for the Republican movement to moderate radical independence demands, and connecting large numbers of local Catholics in the North to a potential peace process (Curran & Sebenius, 2003, 123).

The process culminating in the Good Friday Accords grew out of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement that established an intergovernmental forum for matters related to Northern Ireland, along with the 1993 Downing Street Declaration, in which Britain and Ireland agreed that changes to Northern Ireland's political status would require the local population's consent. The Downing Street Declaration was to be followed by negotiations that included all significant political parties. However, despite the mediation effort led by former US Senator George Mitchell and the resulting 1995 Joint Framework document recommending all-party talks, progress toward a political agreement faltered. When Britain's Conservative government stalled on implementing the Mitchell Commission recommendations, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) ended their cease-fire, begun in 1994, by detonating a large bomb in London in 1996.

Contributions of new government leadership

Why, after 1993, did efforts to resolve the conflict stall, and why was negotiated agreement reached only in 1998? The causes are multiple, including the political evolution of local leaders—particularly the increasing independence of Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) leader David Trimble from Unionist hard-liners and efforts by Gerry Adams to transform SF into a legitimate political party. However, the key permissive cause was the British national elections in May 1997, which brought to power the Labor Party under Tony Blair.

Even while leader of the opposition, Blair intended to push for a negotiated agreement. To that end, he had revoked Labor's support for a united Ireland (Blair, 2010, 153 & 159-60). Labor's 1997 landslide gave Blair a huge majority in Parliament with, as George Mitchell notes (1998), "a degree of freedom in Northern Ireland that [the previous prime minister, John Major] never enjoyed" (101). Blair became the first British prime minister to meet SF leaders (Blair 2010, 165). He pressed for SF's inclusion and, once talks began, pressed UUP leaders to compromise on matters such as prior arms decommissioning, on which agreement depended.

By contrast, Major's dependence on two members of the UUP to preserve the Conservative Party's parliamentary majority meant that, given UUP objections, Major could never have included SF in the all-party talks since his government, without UUP support, would have collapsed. Under Unionist pressure, Major had also committed Britain to the position that SF's inclusion would require prior arms decommissioning by the IRA, which the IRA would never agree to (Blair 2010: 164-5). Without participation by SF, talks could not end the conflict, since even the moderate nationalist Social Democratic and Labor Party needed SF at the table to legitimize its own presence there

(Blair, 2010, 171), and since the IRA would continue fighting unless SF joined a new provincial government. Reynolds (1999) summarizes Major's political constraints and their removal with Blair:

John Major reorientated British policy with the Downing Street Declaration in 1993, [but] subsequently retreated from his progressive stance when the fragility of his Conservative majority in the House of Commons laid him at the mercy of the Ulster Unionists, who were more than happy to twist his arm over dealings with Sinn Féin. With the election of the first Labour government in Britain for eighteen years, the situation shifted back in favor of a political settlement. The Unionists no longer had any leverage in Westminster, and Prime Minister Tony Blair brought a genuine interest in accommodating the Nationalist minority that had been absent from all previous British governments—both Conservative and Labour.

In addition to the roadblock imposed by the Conservatives' dependence on Unionist legislators who were determined to exclude SF, a longstanding lack of trust prevented Conservative leaders from influencing Northern Ireland's Catholic parties. As Curran and Sebenius (2003) note,

One of the strongest forces blocking change was the persistent dependence of the British Conservative Party on the Ulster Unionists to hold onto its narrow parliamentary majority at home. For many years, particularly under the rule of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, the British Government was limited in its ability to reach out to Catholic parties. This prevented the government from neutrality and placed it squarely in the Protestant Camp (122).

Blair and his deputies had less historical baggage and could establish a qualitatively different relationship with Catholic, Republican parties such that "a new atmosphere of cautious trust" developed (*Irish Times*, 13 April 1998, in Tannam, 2001, 504). In August 1997, just three months after the elections, this new atmosphere led to a second IRA ceasefire and to SF's subsequent inclusion in all-party talks.

Tannam (2001) concludes, "Progress was hampered in the years following the Joint Framework Document by the weakness of the Major-led Conservative government.... Tony Blair's victorious election opened the door to such progress" (504). While Mitchell and others credit Major with opening a path to an agreement and Major did authorize a representative of British intelligence to meet secretly with IRA officials, the evidence suggests that Major would not have gone down the path to an all-party conference, much less a comprehensive political agreement, had he and the Conservatives remained in power after 1997.

Relation of structural incentives to leadership contributions

Due to Britain's sovereign authority and because of Unionists' cultural identification as British, Westminster exercised considerable leverage over Unionists who, after the IRA's 1994 ceasefire, constituted the main barrier to recognition and negotiation. Leadership change in Ireland and the US also contributed: Irish leader Bertie Ahern usefully pressured Republican parties toward an agreement and Bill Clinton "began to give an unprecedented high priority to peace in Ireland, including a willingness to act as ultimate guarantor" (Curran & Sebenius, 2003, 124). However, lack of progress toward negotiation after the IRA's 1994 ceasefire declaration was mainly due to Unionist parties' unwillingness to countenance SF's participation and to the UUP's outsized leverage in Parliament. Environmental incentives, such as those stemming from economic integration in Europe, would not have sufficed to alter British policy so as to permit negotiation; a change of leadership was required.

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Jusuf Kalla, and Aceh

Structural incentives to negotiate

Talks in 2005 between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (known as GAM) were mediated by a non-governmental organization based in Finland, resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) ending the 30-year separatist struggle. Analyses of the agreement's causes tend to stress concessions by GAM stemming from military weakness. Aspinall (2005) concludes that GAM's losses after Indonesia's military offensive in 2003 "prompted the movement to rethink its position and at least set aside its goal of Acehnese independence" (66). Analyses also commonly emphasize the tsunami and earthquakes in late 2004 and early 2005, and the consequent involvement of international relief agencies, that created political pressure on both sides to end the conflict.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (popularly known as SBY) and Vice President Jusuf Kalla were elected in September 2004. SBY and Kalla likely perceived that GAM's losses had made its leaders more willing to agree to negotiations on government terms. However, SBY and Kalla were themselves motivated to negotiate a settlement that would rid the state of the costs of the conflict, and they "eventually approved concessions the government had previously rejected" (Aspinall, 2005, 66). SBY and Kalla also perceived that, despite military losses, GAM had local support and would eventually rebound (Schulze, 2010, 14).

Indeed, in the lead-up to the talks, Indonesia's new leaders demonstrated greater motivation and commitment than did the weakened GAM. Before heading the country, Yudhoyono and, particularly, Kalla had sought to start negotiations with GAM and, since 2003, had pursued contacts to that end. By contrast, GAM leaders were "cautious and skeptical" and "had to be pursued and persuaded to go down the road to [talks in Helsinki]" (Morfit, 2007, 121).

The tsunami and resultant international humanitarian mission likely accelerated

progress in the talks, but were not responsible for initiating them. SBY and Kalla took office in September 2004. By mid-December, before the tsunami struck, “concrete plans were already well underway to convene the first round of negotiations in Helsinki” (Morfit, 2007, 117-18). In Kingsbury’s assessment (2006), “it was only with a fundamental change in the Indonesian presidency in 2004, reinforced by a catastrophic tsunami and increasing international pressure that the possibility of ... compromise arose” (14). Post-tsunami international involvement was helpful mainly because it facilitated the EU assuming responsibility for monitoring the agreement’s implementation.

Contributions of new government leadership

New leadership led directly and indirectly to a negotiated agreement. Specifically, Kalla, the new vice president, initiated a negotiation process, prepared and supervised the Indonesian negotiating team, pressed the case for a negotiated settlement within Indonesia, and helped recruit a mediator—Finland’s former president, Martti Ahtisaari. Unlike his predecessors, Kalla had successfully negotiated resolution of conflicts over minority rights elsewhere in Indonesia. He also had prior experience with negotiations on Aceh as well as a power base that afforded him independence within the government. While Indonesia’s two previous administrations had been involved in peace efforts in Aceh, earlier efforts had not aimed to resolve the political causes of the conflict. Moreover, previous executives had failed to support their negotiators, leaving them adrift. SBY and Kalla, by contrast, took active roles once direct talks in Helsinki began.

As a member of Megawati Sukarnoputri’s cabinet from 2001 to 2004, Kalla had already worked to establish a negotiating process for Aceh. Even as the government pursued a military campaign there in 2003 and 2004, “SBY and Kalla were at the heart of a parallel stream of maneuvering, trial and error, informal discussions, and preparation—virtually all of which were initiated by the Jakarta government” (Morfit, 2007, 120). Kalla led most of these efforts. Shortly after the collapse of the December 2002 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) and Indonesia’s imposition of martial law, Kalla proposed to Megawati that he try to restart a dialogue with GAM (Morfit, 2007, 120). In sum, SBY and Kalla were associated with previous Aceh peace initiatives and “were generally sympathetic to the idea that negotiations were the ideal means to resolve conflicts” (Aspinall, 2005, 14).

SBY and Kalla’s campaign had stressed their ability to reach a peace agreement on Aceh (Merikallio, 2008). Kalla, in particular, brought “a strong philosophical commitment to dialogue as a means of resolving disputes” to the government’s unprecedented search for a comprehensive agreement (36). While in Megawati’s cabinet, Kalla had led negotiations concerning another communal-political conflict on the island of Sulawesi, as well as in a conflict on Ambon (Morfit, 2007, 128). From these experiences, Kalla internalized the principle that “resolving problems must always be achieved through dialogue” (Aspinall, 2005, 15). Kalla (2008) believed “to solve problems, you have to understand what is behind them.... I read all the books on the

history of Aceh—I spent a month doing the research myself. I learned the problem in Aceh was not about allegiance [to Indonesia] but economic inequality and fairness” (83).

Kalla’s background as a Buginese from South Sulawesi informed his peacemaking initiative in the Sulawesi conflict and in Aceh. Buginese have cultural affinities with Acehnese and Kalla appointed non-Javanese negotiators to the government’s team for Aceh. Additionally, former Finnish President Ahtisaari was recruited as a mediator due to Kalla’s initiatives, and contributed significantly to the success of the talks (Huber, 2008).

Unlike his predecessors—Habibie, Wahid, and Megawati—none of whom had military backgrounds, SBY had been an army general. SBY’s military background meant that GAM officials, despite their deep mistrust for the government, “could at least assume that within army circles Yudhoyono’s word would carry more weight than had that of his predecessor [Megawati]” and that SBY could therefore convince the army not to repudiate an agreement, should one be reached (Merikallio, 2008, 36). SBY also sidelined the acting military chief of staff, a hard-line nationalist, which likely prevented elements in the military from blocking the settlement with GAM, including GAM’s participation in elections.

Within SBY’s government, Kalla had unusual authority due to his independent power base as chairman of the Golkar party, which formed a coalition with SBY’s party to contest the 2004 elections. Kalla’s power within Golkar helped him to keep the legislature from interfering in the talks. Both Kalla and SBY had positive relations with nationalistic organizations that might have otherwise opposed the settlement.

Relation of structural incentives to leadership contributions

Incentives for negotiation on the government side included the perception that GAM was weak and, consequently, likely to moderate its independence demands. However, GAM’s continued viability and government and military leaders’ interest in ridding themselves of the costs of the conflict made negotiated compromise attractive. While government leaders stood to gain politically from a conflict-ending agreement, they risked looking weak to parliamentary opponents and the security bureaucracies should talks fail.

Given these mixed incentives, SBY and Kalla had to be motivated to initiate negotiations. In particular, Kalla’s philosophical preferences for dialogue led him to become directly involved in reaching out to GAM leaders. His prior experience in settling ethno-political conflicts prompted him to supervise the Helsinki talks closely and to fully support his negotiators.

Assessing the causes of the Helsinki agreement, Aspinall (2005) concludes,

Although the government and political class in Indonesia was as divided as it had ever been on the desirability of negotiations, the balance had shifted markedly in favor of the peace camp. This was ... because those who had always favored negotiations had been elevated to more powerful

positions.... In the past, those negotiating for peace had lacked strong backing or direction; now they had the support of the two most powerful figures in the government (37).

Military losses may have caused GAM to drop its independence demand, but such pressures were insufficient to change the status quo. Without new government leaders who recognized opportunities for an agreement and were motivated to spend political capital to achieve one, it is likely that Indonesia would not have sought an accord on Aceh.

Theoretical Implications

The cases provide evidence of correlation between changed leadership and negotiation in protracted violent conflicts. However, there is still the question of whether leadership change, in conjunction with structural changes in the conflict environment, caused pro-negotiation policy change, or whether leadership and policy change resulted from structural changes. This section discusses evidence for causality and implications for ripeness theory.

Evidence for the causal role of leadership change comes from the fact that several pro-negotiation leaders became heads of state in highly contingent circumstances, when their anti-negotiation rivals could have assumed power almost as easily. For example, South Africa's hard-line leader, P. W. Botha, had not intended to leave office but suffered a stroke and then inadvertently undercut his own authority by stepping down as party leader while remaining president. In the third round of balloting, by a margin of only eight votes among the 130 members of the NP caucus, de Klerk defeated Barend du Plessis, his closest rival to replace Botha as party leader. Du Plessis, whom Botha had nominated as his successor, might not have forced Botha out of the president's office before his term ended in March 1990 and might not have carried out the same negotiation oriented agenda as de Klerk.

Nor was Israel's change of policy toward the PLO inevitable: The formation of a peace-oriented government occurred due to a new electoral rule for the 1992 elections establishing a 1.5 percent threshold for parliamentary representation. This innovation prevented the Tehiyya party from gaining a seat, which would have allowed hard-liner Yitzhak Shamir, not Yitzhak Rabin, to form a government. A further contingency was Rabin's reluctant appointment of Shimon Peres as foreign minister. Peres's Foreign Ministry staff included an activist pro-negotiation cohort. Absent these eventualities, the Oslo Accords would not have happened.

This element of contingency implies that leadership change is not a mere effect of shifts in power between adversaries in the conflict. In some cases, though, politicians' perceived ability to settle the ongoing conflict appears to have contributed to their selection as leaders: As part of their electoral campaigns, both Rabin and Indonesia's Yudhoyono made public commitments to achieving negotiated political agreements (although Rabin rejected the PLO as a negotiation partner at the time). In Mozambique,

Chissano's experience with negotiation and diplomacy likely contributed to his election as president and party head by FRELIMO. Although the policy initiatives were their own, these leaders likely perceived that negotiated agreements would be at least compatible with the preferences of the groups that brought them to power.

Clearly, structural factors, such as those emphasized in ripeness, can determine outcomes. For example, no case in which the rebel side is very weak is likely to settle. However, in prolonged civil conflicts, the armed rebel group has shown it cannot be easily vanquished. The challenge in those stalemated conflicts in which non-recognition poses a significant obstacle to beginning a peace process is how to recognize a ripe moment. These cases suggest that new leadership, particularly on the government side, is best positioned to perceive ripeness and to act on this perception. The following sections discuss the implications of the cases for ripeness and realist theory, which emphasize shifting power relations between adversaries. They also identify structural conditions in which leaders can affect conflict outcomes.

Asymmetries between sides

By conditioning ripeness on both parties' perceiving a hurting-stalemate and a way out, ripeness theory overlooks key asymmetries between antagonists in civil wars. The cases here evince different timing of government and rebel moves to negotiation, with the immediate precursor of ripeness being change in government policy, brought about by new leadership. Well before the government sides did so, mainstream nationalist insurgents had declared their interest in negotiating a comprehensive political agreement—as the PLO did in 1988, the ANC in 1989 and before, and Sinn Féin at least since early 1996. In each case, the government side rejected negotiations and dismissed insurgents as terrorists. As ripeness predicts, adverse changes in the balance of power did soften rebel pre-conditions for talks—as, for example, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the 1991 Gulf War pressured the PLO to drop its objections to a phased agreement. Yet, without new leadership on the government side, even these more accommodating rebel positions would not have led to recognition and negotiation.

Ripeness occurred when new leaders emerged to head governments that had previously rejected negotiation overtures and concessions from rebels—as Israel rejected the PLO's diplomatic initiatives from late 1988 to 1992, South Africa rejected the ANC's Harare initiative in early 1989, and the UK rejected negotiating with Sinn Féin, despite the ceasefire the IRA began in 1994. The cases suggest an asymmetry wherein new leadership was not necessary for the insurgent side to accept negotiation, but was required for negotiation on the status quo-oriented government side. This asymmetry is likely rooted in governments' aversion to legitimizing rebels, while rebels often seek recognition from their governmental adversaries. New leadership may also be less frequent among rebel groups than among governments: Rebel organizations prioritize cohesiveness and leadership changes may risk splits.

Dynamism and the "rising" weaker party

Zartman (2000) notes that the static character of the mutually-hurting-stalemate concept could be modified:

If the notion of mutual blockage is too static to be realistic, the concept may be stated dynamically as a moment when the upper hand slips and the lower hand rises, both parties moving toward equality, with both movements carrying pain for the parties (228).

The cases here indicate that ripeness comes not so much from a single dynamic of the weaker side rising relative to the stronger. Rather, a dual perceptual trend is evident, wherein the stronger side (the government) perceived its relative position worsening over the longer-term, while in the short-term, the government could credibly claim to have strengthened its position by reasserting military control. This combined perception of short-term advantage and longer-term pessimism is more complex, and perhaps less common, than simply the relative decline of the stronger party. Moreover, a simple trend of increasing power for the weaker party could plausibly lead to conflict escalation, not settlement—as with Thucydides' attribution of the Peloponnesian war to Sparta's perception of Athens as a rising challenger.

All antagonists seek to avoid appearing to negotiate from weakness, while a strong position makes negotiation appear unnecessary. In Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, for example, after military gains associated with Mozambican independence in 1974, neither the increasingly confident guerrilla leadership nor the increasingly besieged white leadership was motivated to negotiate (Stedman, 1991, 240). The cases here suggest that government leaders are more likely to negotiate when they perceive their side as having a *temporary* advantage that longer-term threats will eventually erode.

Israel had militarily repressed the Palestinian uprising by the early 1990s. South Africa's government had stymied the ANC militarily and contained the township uprisings of the mid- and late 1980s. Indonesia's army had defeated GAM forces in Aceh. Chissano inherited a civil war and an expanding humanitarian crisis for Mozambique, but also, after mid-1987, an improved national security situation. The IRA, despite some spectacular attacks, had no hope of forcing Britain's withdrawal from Northern Ireland. Government leaders could, in each case, justify changing non-recognition policy by pointing to improvements in the security environment and decreased threats from insurgents. Periods of relative calm may also free leaders to think in longer-range terms than is possible when fighting is intense (Pruitt 2015: 440).

When governments in these cases entered negotiation, military threats from insurgents were limited and contained. Despite regaining the upper hand, however, government leaders perceived emergent threats from elsewhere in the conflict environment—such as Rabin's perception of the growing threats from Hamas and from nuclear weapons acquisition by Iran and Iraq. New leaders sought to resolve conflicts with long-time adversaries so as to better meet emergent challenges to national security and challenges to their own political positions. The cases thus indicate that it may not be necessary for the conflict environment to present decision makers with unambiguous

signals of a near-term “precipice,” as in ripeness theory, to make negotiation seem appealing.

Internal politics and individual agency

Zartman (2000) identifies an important research area as “the internal process of converting members impervious to pain (hawks) into ‘pain perceivers’ (doves)” (231). Here Zartman implies that the ripeness concept can potentially encompass internal politics. While acknowledging a role for perception in identifying mutual hurting stalemates and ways out, ripeness theory, like political realism, treats parties in conflict as unitary actors. Bringing internal politics into the analysis entails focusing on decision makers’ perceptions and incentive structures. For hawk-to-dove conversions to take place, leaders must see not only that negotiation provides a “way out” of the conflict, but that such a settlement is in their practical political interests (Stedman 1991, 241).

New leaders’ internal power positions are more important determinants of their stance on negotiation than their position on the issues, so “leaders who are confident of support and consolidated in their hold over their movements make compromise more likely” (Stedman 1991, 241). In most cases here, government leaders derived legitimacy from their credentials within the state military-security establishments: Rabin, Chissano, and Yudhoyono, in particular, had military-security backgrounds that insulated them to a degree against criticism of their negotiation initiatives from political rivals.

Negotiation initiatives were typically timed such that leaders could claim domestic political credit for improved national security and reduced threats from the adversary. Rabin, for example, could claim credit for suppressing the *intifada*, as could de Klerk regarding the township uprisings. However, Rabin’s domestic power position was probably the weakest of the leaders surveyed, and the fragility of his popular mandate was reflected in the most fragile agreement reached among cases.

The cases also suggest that the “leadership” concept be expanded to include the team that the head of state brings into office: It was deputies, such as Vice President Kalla and Foreign Ministry officials in Rabin’s government, whose initiatives established channels for negotiation. Pre-negotiation contacts that test the other side’s willingness to make concessions will eventually require the head of state’s authorization, but may be initiated via a deputy, even without explicit authorization.

Decision maker rationality

Like realism, ripeness theory assumes that parties rationally calculate the costs and benefits of conflict and negotiation. Zartman acknowledges an element of subjectivity, stressing that what counts is the perception, not the objective reality, of a mutually hurting stalemate. However, ripeness theory does not specify the causes of this subjective perception, or why, in cases where the conflict environment has not fundamentally altered, one side would change from not perceiving a hurting stalemate to perceiving one.

The cases call the rationality assumption into question. In Israel, South Africa, and Mozambique, for example, leaders' ideological commitments prevented them from perceiving mutually hurting stalemates and available ways out. The cases also indicate that cognitive "reframing" can affect a leader's perception of a conflict's potential for resolution. For example, Kalla reframed the Aceh rebellion as mainly motivated by economic deprivation, rather than disloyalty to the state. Previous government leaders' ideological commitments in several cases impeded negotiation, whereas the new leaders who negotiated were characteristically pragmatic.

Some conflicts became ripe because leaders overestimated their potential for success through future elections. As Mitchell (1995) notes, "What seems to have enticed a number of adversaries into a negotiated peace process ... [i]s a shared (if mutually contradictory) belief that, through ... negotiations followed by elections, they would win more cheaply the political power they were unable to obtain by coercive means" (45) (see also Stedman, 1991, 237). The cognitive bias in optimistic perceptions of one's own likelihood of victory is exemplified by de Klerk's overestimation of his party's ability to attract enough votes to retain—in coalition with smaller anti-ANC parties—a decisive degree of political control. De Klerk and other NP leaders would likely not have entered a negotiation process had they foreseen that the outcome would be their political marginalization.

Other non-rational factors, such as loss aversion or positive experience of negotiation, may also help explain why leadership change was necessary. Incumbent leaders may frame policy reversals toward adversaries as losses, given costs already "sunk" into the conflict. Loss aversion makes policy change psychologically and politically difficult for incumbents. New leaders' prior success with negotiated settlements also facilitated negotiation initiatives. Such prior experiences may help predispose new, more pragmatic, or less politically vulnerable leaders to risk their political capital pursuing a negotiated settlement.

Conclusions

As Mitchell (1995, 46) observes, differences among models of ripeness reflect the emphasis placed on either decision making or systemic perspectives. The cases here, in which the move to recognition and negotiation necessitated new leadership, argue for a shift of analytic emphasis toward decision making, while continuing to take *realpolitik* incentives into account. Since the trends in the conflict environment that ripeness theory emphasizes are often ambiguous, leaders can interpret them in ways that uphold their own psychological predispositions. Additional studies of the relationship between leadership change and conflict settlement are needed to develop the findings that new leaders may be less constrained toward recognition of and negotiation with long-term adversaries because such leaders are less identified with status-quo policies than were their predecessors. Indicators of ripeness should therefore include leadership change, particularly on the government or status-quo side.

Ripeness theory implies that, given the same structural incentives, all leaders are equally likely to perceive a mutually hurting stalemate and a way out. However, the cases indicate that hawk-to-dove conversion may be more a matter of replacing an ideologically committed leader who is impervious to pain with a more pragmatic one whose cost-benefit analysis includes the possibility of negotiated compromise.

Notes

1. I modify the definition of “civil war” used by Stedman, Rothchild, and Cousens (2002)—war fought within internationally recognized boundaries to determine who will rule—to include wars fought within de facto established boundaries, permitting the inclusion of the 1993 Israeli-PLO agreement. This was less an agreement on core issues than a transitional agreement specifying that the core issues would be negotiated in the ensuing five years.

2. The move to negotiation in El Salvador did include reversal of long-standing non-recognition policy toward the FMLN, as well as new government leadership. However, most sources seem to assign primary responsibility for the move to negotiation to an unusual degree of pressure from regional states on President Cristiani’s government, rather than to Cristiani’s initiative.

3. The Aceh case diverges somewhat from the case-selection criteria in that earlier talks between Indonesia and GAM included not only matters such as ceasefires, but discussion of political solutions as well. However, the Helsinki talks discussed here were unprecedented in legitimizing GAM as a political party.

4. Gormley-Heenan (2007, 150) concludes that “at best” the local Northern Irish leadership undertook “confused roles, with limited capacity and negated effects.”

5. Israel’s parliament only ratified the Oslo Accords through the votes of three Arab MPs, contravening a political-cultural norm that a majority of Jewish parliamentarians should support any legislation relating to national security.

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