

**Improving Ethnic Conflict Analysis through the Use of Comparative
Scenarios: A Prototype CASES Report on the Kurds in Turkey**

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I see in the plots we invent the privileged means by which we re-configure
our confused, un-formed, and at the limit mute temporal experience.
- Paul Ricoeur¹

I. Introducing CASES

The Guyanese man asked politely, “How’d they fix it?” He was referring to the ethnic situation in Trinidad, which was being discussed during a conflict management workshop in Guyana.² This man understood very well the problems in Guyana, but he also understood that other societies must have faced similar problems. He simply wanted to know what they did and if it worked. This paper develops a prototype for a new type of conflict analysis tool designed to provide this type of information in a manner that is both timely and accessible to local and international conflict managers.³ We call this tool, Conflict Analysis through the Structured Evaluation of Scenarios (CASES).

CASES provides this comparative information by systematically analyzing cases from the comprehensive datasets housed at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management (CIDCM) at the University of Maryland. In this paper, the Minorities at Risk dataset (MAR) is used to develop a prototype CASES report on the Kurds in Turkey.

The MAR project monitors and analyzes the status and conflicts of politically-active communal groups in all countries in the world with a current population of at least 500,000. It currently includes data on 285 groups. From these 285 groups, the CASES report identifies five *comparison cases*, designed to illuminate potential future trajectories of the *subject case*, the Kurds. In the current paper, the comparison cases are the Palestinians in Israel, the Tibetans in China, the Basques in Spain, the Azerbaijanis in

¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative I*, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) xi.

² Of course, the ethnic situation in Trinidad has not been “fixed”. The man was reacting to the point that Trinidad seems to be managing its ethnic relations better than Guyana at the moment. Trinidad and Guyana have a similar set of ethnic issues. The primary ethnic tension in both countries is between descendents of Africans brought to the Caribbean as slaves and descendents of Indians brought to the Caribbean as indentured servants after slavery was outlawed throughout the British Empire.

³ I use the term conflict manager to refer to any individual who is seeking to prevent conflict, resolve conflict, or mitigate the effects of conflict. Local conflict managers can include everyone for a small town mayor to the head of a woman’s group to the owner of a larger corporation.

Iran, and the Québécois in Canada. The methodology for how these comparison cases were chosen is described below.

In the CASES report, each of the comparison cases represents a scenario, a possible future of the subject case. The report therefore contains five brief narratives that describe the Kurdish case *as if* they were the subject cases. For instance, one of the narratives below describes a potential future in which the Kurdish follows a trajectory similar to the case of the Basques in Spain. The report is designed to be used as part of a Track II peacebuilding process. Ideally, the report would be used as part of a series of workshop held to assist local conflict managers to both better understand the conflict they are addressing and to identify effective peacebuilding interventions.

The paper is organized as follows. Section II of the paper will describe problems with current methods of providing policy relevant conflict analysis and discuss how the CASES approach addresses some of these weaknesses. Section III describes a strategic planning methodology known as scenario planning. This approach is similar to the CASES approach, the primary difference being that scenario planners do not use other actual cases to construct their scenarios. Section IV consists of the prototype report on the Kurds in Turkey. Section V will discuss the intellectual underpinning of the CASES approach from a variety of disciplines in order to provide a justification for the scenario analysis methodology that the CASES project employs.

II. CASES and Existing forms of Conflict Analysis

Before proceeding to the CASES report, it will be useful to situate the CASES approach vis-à-vis other forms of conflict analysis.

Much conflict analysis is undertaken for the purpose of developing early warning mechanisms. Several organizations have developed methodologies for evaluating what countries are most at risk for conflict in the near future. Examples include:

- *Swisspeace*: The FAST program monitors every country in the world with the goal of, “early recognition of impending or potential crisis situations for the purpose of early action and prevention of violent conflict.”⁴

⁴ See <http://www.swisspeace.org/fast/default.htm>

- *International Crisis Group*: ICG, though its CrisisWatch program is currently monitoring roughly 70 current or potential conflict situations.⁵
- *CIDCM: Peace and Conflict*, a biannual report, assesses the ability of 158 countries worldwide to, “build peace and avoid destabilizing conflict.”⁶

There are other early warning systems as well, but almost by definition, all of these systems are based on a binary distinction, conflict/no-conflict. As a result, they provide little guidance for the analyst in regard to how to respond to a situation the data has identified as high-risk. Nor should it, as this is not the role of early warning risk assessments.

The CASES approach provides a method of moving beyond risk assessment. Although the approach is rooted in the same (or similar) data as that used for early warning, the method allows the analyst to devise peacebuilding strategies by evaluating the various trajectories that a conflict in a high-risk country may follow.

A second set of conflict analysis strategies has been developed by international development organizations. In the past five to ten years, the international development community has become more aware of the importance of understanding what effect development programming has on conflict. Early efforts focused on ensuring that development programming did not exacerbate conflict. In recent years, this “Do No Harm” approach has given way to the goal of “conflict-sensitive development” (CSD). In brief, CSD refers to the idea that in conflict-affected societies development programs in all sectors should also be conflict management programs to the extent this is feasible. This idea has led to the development of several conflict analysis frameworks. The most prominent are those of The World Bank, USAID, The Department for International Development-UK (DfID) and the consortium of the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER), Saferworld, and International Alert.⁷

⁵ See <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm>

⁶ Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, *Peace and Conflict: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy* (College Park: CIDCM, 2003).

⁷ See World Bank, “Conflict Analysis Framework,” available at [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/TheConflictAnalysisFramework/\\$FILE/CAFAugust03.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/TheConflictAnalysisFramework/$FILE/CAFAugust03.pdf), DfID, “Conducting Conflict Assessment: Guidance Notes,” available at http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/conflict_assess_guidance.pdf, and the FEWER consortium’s “Resource Pack,” available at <http://pcia.fewer.org/>. An official version of the USAID conflict assessment framework is due to be released in April 2004.

The debate regarding these models usually centers on the pros and cons of creating a generalized framework versus conducting context-specific analysis. The World Bank, for instance, has developed a set of indicators designed to be used for every country in which an analysis is to be done. In contrast, the FEWER project seeks to “Root [the] resource manual in practice as reflected in Kenya, Uganda, Sri Lanka. . .” The other frameworks fall somewhere in between, using a mix of generalized indicators and context-specific analysis.

Clearly, there are pros and cons to each approach depending on the purposes of the analysis. However, there is an often-unrecognized problem with *both* approaches. While clearly the design of the conflict analysis frameworks are informed by the study of other cases, none of these mentioned above has a mechanism for identifying similar conflicts in other parts of the world and then understanding what lessons those cases could impart as part of the analysis process itself. For instance, a recent USAID Conflict Vulnerability Assessment reviewed by the authors discussed the danger of “Colombianization”, but the comparison was left as a vague analogy. No systematic comparison is undertaken.

Nor is systematic comparison with other similar cases a part of traditional interactive conflict resolution (ICR) or problem-solving workshops. In a useful and detailed summary of the ICR process, Harold H. Saunders et al. make no reference to the use of comparative cases during the dialoguing process, which is at the heart of ICR.⁸ While the lessons learned from other cases *are* often brought into the dialogue process as the result of the facilitator’s interventions, only cases with which the facilitators are familiar can be used in this way. Even with the most experienced facilitation team, this is a limited number of cases. In contrast, the CASES approach creates the ability to access hundreds of cases in order to inform the dialogue process

It should be reiterated here that many local conflict managers are eager, at times desperate, for this type of comparative information. In addition to the Guyana example already mentioned, CIDCM was also recently approached by organizations from Mostar, Bosnia. These groups wanted a concrete analysis of Mostar's and Bosnia's prospects for

transition to a more peaceful and democratic future, given what we know happened in other cities and region.⁹

This desire for information about other conflicts should not be surprising. Conflict creates vicious circles that at times make resolution seem impossible. The classic example is: “no peace without development, no development without peace.” Conflict managers often feel hemmed in by these vicious circles to the point where it becomes difficult to develop peacebuilding strategies. In these situations, it is natural to want to know how others have dealt with similar dilemmas.

III: Scenario Planning and the Mont Fleur Scenarios

The CASES approach is inspired by strategic planning approach known in the business world as scenario planning. Pierre Wack, who pioneered the use of scenario planning at Royal Dutch Shell describes its purpose in this way, “Scenario planning is a discipline for rediscovering the original entrepreneurial power of creative foresight in contexts of accelerated change, greater complexity, and genuine uncertainty.”¹⁰

In a scenario planning exercise, senior managers of a corporation are asked to develop 3-5 scenarios, each of which represents a possible future. The scenarios are designed to provide a, “learning environment in which managers can explore these forces, better understand the dynamics shaping the future and thus, assess strategic options and prepare to take strategic decisions.”¹¹

Although this approach has been used primarily in the business world and to a lesser extent as a tool for municipal planners, scenario planning has also been used as a peacebuilding tool, most prominently in South Africa. An evaluation of this program will be useful in understanding why the CASES approach can make a contribution to the peacebuilding field.

⁸ Harold H. Saunders et al., “Interactive Conflict Resolution: A View for Policymakers on Making and Building Peace,” in *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, edited by Paul C. Stern and Daniel Druckman (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2000) 259-263.

⁹ This conclusion regarding the desire of local conflict managers for information about other regions was confirmed to me by an official at the United States Institute of Peace who has conducted dozens of trainings worldwide. Personal conversation, January 2004.

¹⁰ See <http://www.gbn.org/AboutScenariosDisplayServlet.srv>. This is the website of the Global Business Network, which is largely responsible for the popularization of the scenario planning approach.

¹¹ Innovators of Digital Economy Alternatives (IDEA), <http://edie.cprost.sfu.ca/~idea/scenarios.html>.

From 1991-1992, the Global Business Network facilitated a scenario planning exercise in South Africa.¹² The Mont Fleur Project, as it came to be known, “brought together a diverse group of 22 prominent South Africans. . .to develop and disseminate a set of stories about what might happen in their country from 1992-2002.”¹³ In total four stories, or scenarios, were developed:

- Ostrich: no settlement to the crisis. The South African government continues to be non-representative.
- Lame duck: settlement is achieved, but implementation is slow and indecisive.
- Icarus: settlement is achieved, but government’s pursues unsustainable, populist policies.
- Flight of the Flamingoes: settlement is achieved and the government adopts sustainable policies, thereby moving the country toward inclusive growth and democracy.

These four scenarios were turned into brief narratives and distributed throughout South Africa, both by way of the mass media and through presentations with over fifty organizations in the public and private sectors.

We have not been able to find independent assessments of the projects. So as with many conflict management and development projects, it is difficult to know exactly what it accomplished. In its report, GBN claims that the South Africa project helped the participants:

- Establish a common vocabulary and mutual understanding regarding the nature of the crisis.
- “Reach a consensus on some aspects of how South Africa ‘worked’.”
- “Find and enlarge the common ground” regarding the participants views of the future of South Africa.¹⁴

¹² From 1996-1999, GBN facilitated a similar process in Colombia, entitled Destino Colombia. For information on this program, see Global Business Network, “Destino Colombia: A Scenario-Planning Process for the New Millenium, *Deeper News* 9 (1998).

¹³ Global Business Network, “The Mont Fleur Scenarios: What will South Africa be like in the year 2002?” *Deeper News* 7 (1996): 1. For another discussion of The Mont Fleur Scenarios, see Julie Allan, Gerard Fairtlough, and Barbara Heinzen, *The Power of the Tale: Using Narratives for Organizational Success* (West Sussex: John Wiley, 2002) 178-184.

¹⁴ Global Business Networks, “The Mont Fleur Scenarios,” 2-3.

As those who have worked in conflict-affected areas would attest, these are not trivial accomplishments. This raises the question of why these projects seemed to work, or at least meet the goals they set for themselves.

It is interesting that Kahane reports not just a change in attitudes, but a gain in empirical knowledge as well. Below, the importance of causality in a narrative will be discussed. A scenario, as a form of narrative, must have an internal logic that allows the reader to understand the progression from beginning to middle to end. It was reported that in the Mont Fleur scenarios, this need for logic helped focus the participants on what was plausible.¹⁵ First, this requirement of plausibility, the causal skeleton, is what allowed participants to analyze and reach consensus on how South Africa “worked”. It is important to understand that this is an empirical accomplishment.

Related to this, is the idea that these types of scenarios are future-oriented, as well as open, in the sense that several possible futures are seen as plausible. This moves the conversation in a more creative, less-threatening direction, and away from potential dialogue killers such as presenting a series of demands, lectures on past injustices, or debates over core values. As Kahane writes, “Building scenarios can be creative because the process is ‘only’ about telling stories, not about making commitments.”¹⁶

Finally, Kahane noted that the stories used in South Africa, were holistic. They were able to, “encompass all aspects of the world: social, political, economic, cultural, ecological, etc.” It is only because narratives are able to distill complexity so efficiently that this was possible. This also allowed the Mont Fleur stories to be transmitted throughout the country in the second phase of the project as part of a nation-wide consensus-building effort.

As should be clear, the CASES approach is quite similar to the scenario planning approach used in South Africa. The key difference is that the CASES approach uses scenarios based on other similar cases of conflict. Why this different strategy? First, as people in a society experiencing violent conflict become focused on the day-to-day survival of themselves and their families, their horizons narrow. Moreover, the self-perpetuating nature of violence, and the vicious circles it creates, often makes it difficult

¹⁵ Global Business Network, “The Mont Fleur Scenarios,” 3.

¹⁶ Global Business Network, “The Mont Fleur Scenarios,” 3.

for people to simply create alternative visions of society. It is partly for this reason that local conflict managers are so eager for information about other conflicts. They understand the insularity that violent conflict creates. The CASES approach, by drawing on other cases of conflict, provides partially-formed, but empirically-grounded scenarios. This gives participants some raw material to work with as opposed to having to create a vision of the future from scratch.

Second, conflict-affected societies are almost by definition highly-polarized. This means that there is little room for neutrality or objectivity. In many interactions, the messenger becomes more important than the message. The use of narratives based on actual cases helps refocus the discussion on the content of the narratives as opposed to the speaker, primarily because the scenario is not created entirely by the speaker. Of course, case-based scenarios remain open to interpretation; they do not completely solve this problem. Nonetheless, we would argue that real cases of conflict provide a more compelling vision of the future, either a desired future or a future to be avoided, than scenarios developed entirely by the workshop participants.

Finally, the use of actual cases to construct scenarios creates opportunities for empirical analysis that don't exist otherwise. Experience has shown that it is important to involve different audiences at different stages of the analysis process. If ownership and buy-in is crucial, then the scenarios would be created, and the analysis conducted, with the maximum involvement possible of local actors. If buy-in is less crucial, the scenarios and the report could be produced with a less input from the target audience. A senior policymaker, for instance, might simply want conclusions. They may not want to understand the scenario-planning methodology or participate in workshops. The empirical content of the case-based scenarios makes it possible to produce valid conclusions without conducting a fully-fledged, scenario-planning process.

IV. A Prototype CASES Report: The Kurds in Turkey

What follows in this section is a prototype CASES report that analyzes five possible futures of the Kurds in Turkey. The Kurdish situation in Turkey, as is discussed in the report itself, is at a critical juncture. If the CASES project at CIDCM were up-and-running, the following report would have been produced for the various individuals

within the international community and within Turkey who are working for a peaceful and sustainable solution to the conflict between the Kurds and Turkey.

CASES REPORT: THE KURDS IN TURKEY

Overview

This section would contain an overview of the CASES approach. As it would be a distillation of the rest of this paper, it will not be included here.

Purpose of the Report

This CASES report is designed to be used by as part of a Track II peacebuilding process, including problem solving workshops and interactive conflict resolution efforts.¹⁷ It does not give general advice to facilitators on how to structure Track II efforts. There are plenty of other resources available on that topic. Instead, it presents scenarios generated by using the CASES approach, including information on how those scenarios were generated. It then describes how the scenarios can be used as part of a Track II process. The target audience of the report is those individuals and organizations tasked with organizing and implementing Track II peacebuilding efforts.

Comparison Case Selection

The comparison cases were selected from the 285 minority groups in the Minorities at Risk dataset.¹⁸ One of the first tasks we confronted was establishing a method by which to winnow down this universe of possible comparison cases. The first step in this process consisted of selecting cases that allowed us to control for the effects of variables on which our research agenda is not particularly concentrated. Since our

¹⁷ For information on Track II conflict management, see Kaufman, et. al., John Davies and Edward Kaufman, eds., *Second Track/Citizen's Diplomacy: Concepts and Techniques for Conflict Transformation* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). For a good case study, see Judy Large, *The War Next Door: A Study of Second Track Diplomacy during the War in ex-Yugoslavia* (Stroud: Hawthorn Press, 1997).

¹⁸ The MAR project at the University of Maryland monitors and analyzes the status and conflicts of politically-active communal groups in all countries with a current population of at least 500,000. The project currently provides information in a standardized format on over 285 minority groups. For more information, go to <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/about/types.htm>.

approach focuses primarily on the effects of policy interventions, we wanted to control for historical factors, group characteristics, and contextual elements that scholars have shown to be significant in the genesis and unfolding of ethnic conflict. Most of these factors are outside the purview of policy manipulation by the government or international actors in the state in which a group resides. In order to focus the scenario analysis on factors that were subject to intervention, the comparison cases were selected on the basis of similarity across these more structural variables.¹⁹

Selection Variables

Territorial concentration facilitates ethnic mobilization through the easier building of communication networks and shared identity.²⁰ Additionally, certain policies of accommodation – such as autonomy agreements – may be more viable when groups are territorially concentrated.²¹ Therefore, we control for this factor in our selection of cases using the group concentration variable (GROUPCON) in MAR. Groups are coded as widely dispersed, primarily urban/minority in one region, majority in one region with others dispersed, or concentrated in one region. Kurds in Turkey are coded as a majority in one region (the south of Turkey) with other group members dispersed. We chose to eliminate as possible comparison cases all groups that were not likewise coded.

The strength and cohesiveness of group identity is another facilitator of ethnic mobilization. Groups that are fragmented are less likely to be able to overcome their collective action problem. Also, when a group is factionalized, it may be easier for the government to co-opt certain factions while isolating others. The group cohesion variable (COHESX) in MAR is used to measure the strength of group identity. Cohesion “refers to the extent to which group members have an active, self-conscious sense of group identity based on their defining traits.” The MAR cohesion variable is coded on a five-point scale, with 1 signifying no evidence of collective identity to 5 signifying a strong

¹⁹ In traditional scenario analysis, these are often referred to as “pre-determined elements.” See Peter Schwartz, “The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World,” (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1996) 109-114.

²⁰ Stephen M. Saideman, et al, "Democratization, Political Institutions, and Ethnic Conflict: A Pooled, Cross-Sectional Time Series Analysis from 1985-1998." *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (2002) 103-129. Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century* (Washington DC: USIP, 2000).

identity group. Kurds in Turkey are coded as a factionalized group, a 3 on the scale. Since this variable is highly subjective, we decided to eliminate only those groups whose cohesion was considered lower than that of the Kurds in Turkey, keeping those groups coded as factionalized groups, weak identity groups and strong identity groups.

Current group strategies and government attitudes towards groups are influenced by the history of state-group relations. Groups that have given rise to separatist or autonomy movements in the past are more likely to pursue such goals in the present. Additionally, governments tend to be more cautious in dealing with groups which have sought autonomy or separation in the past and may be less willing to accommodate political demands in part because of fear of the “slippery slope”. The MAR dataset includes a separatism index (SEPX) that codes whether a group currently contains a separatist or autonomy movement, has given rise to such movements that persisted at least five years since World War II, or has had autonomy in the past. Kurds in Turkey are coded at the highest level – as a group which currently contains a separatist or autonomy movement. We chose to include only those groups which currently contain such a movement or have given rise to one since World War II.

The Minorities at Risk Project also categorizes groups by type, distinguishing two broad classes of groups, each consisting of three types. Ethnonationalists, national minorities and indigenous peoples are classified as national peoples, while ethno-classes, communal contenders and religious sects are classified as minority peoples. Group type is related to the goals that groups pursue and to the strategies they employ, with national peoples more likely to pursue separatist and autonomy-related goals and strategies.

Ethnonationalists and national minorities are very similar, the only difference being that national minorities have ethnic kin who are in control of an adjacent state. In contrast, indigenous groups form a quite distinct category, defined as, “conquered descendants of earlier inhabitants of a region who live mainly in conformity with traditional social, economic, and cultural customs that are sharply distinct from those of dominant groups.”²² Since Kurds in Turkey are ethnonationalist, we decided to consider

²¹ Gurr.

²² See <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/about/types.htm>

for comparison only groups that fell into the ethnonationalists or national minorities category.

Finally, we decided to include for possible comparison only those groups that shared similar levels of cultural difference from the dominant group in their states. This decision was based primarily on the knowledge that the demands of Kurds in Turkey have a large cultural component. MAR codes for cultural difference based on a scale of 0 to 4 derived from the coding of six cultural and demographic traits (ethnicity, language, historical origin, religion, social customs, residence). A zero on the cultural differentials scale denotes no socially significant difference is noted; slight differentials (1) is coded when socially significant differences exist in one or two of the traits listed previously; for differences in three traits, a substantial differentials (2) is coded; major differentials (3) is coded for differences with respect to four qualities; and extreme differentials (4) denotes differences in regard to five or six traits. Kurds in Turkey are coded as having major differentials from the dominant Turkish culture. We chose to consider as possible comparison cases only those groups which scored between a 2 and a 4 on the cultural differentials index.

A Range of Outcomes

The above criteria yielded 32 contenders for inclusion as comparison cases with the Kurds in Turkey.²³ These cases are listed in the Annex. It was necessary to select a smaller number of cases from this list in order to develop a manageable number of scenarios.

The goal of any scenario-analysis exercise is to examine a range of possible futures. The most important aspect of these futures in regard to our research agenda is the relationship between the state and the minority group. Specifically, we wanted to look at the degree of violence between the minority group and the state, including how much protest the minority group is engaged in and how repressive the state is. We also wanted to look at the level of social and cultural integration between the minority group and the majority society in the state. We therefore chose cases that provided variation along these

²³ This is similar to a traditional scenario-planning approach. The participants in the Mont Fleur Scenarios originally developed 30 scenarios. Global Business Network, “The Mont Fleur Scenarios.” 8.

dimensions. Finally, we needed to select cases there that had produced some research in English. This research is required to produce the scenarios. Using these criteria, we selected the following cases as comparison cases:

1. Palestinians in Israeli Occupied Territories: “Intractable Conflict.”

Outcome: The conflict between Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and Israel is a good example of an intractable conflict. As with other intractable conflicts, the conflict concerns fundamental issues of identity, dignity, and justice. Mutual perceptions have become zero-sum, with many on each side perceiving the other as a threat to its very existence. Moreover, the violence between the sides has become self-reproducing – violence begets more violence and a conflict spiral is created. Despite its intractable nature, the conflict is a low-intensity conflict that has not escalated to full-scale civil war.

2. Tibetans in China: “Successful Repression.”

Outcome: China has successfully established political control over Tibet. As a result, there is very little in the way of visible resistance to Chinese rule from within Tibet. It is difficult to know if there is active resistance within Tibet that is being successfully repressed or if past repression has removed any source of resistance. Regardless, it is the case now that virtually all protests of Chinese rule comes from outside of Tibet, from the exile community, from foreign governments, and from NGOs.

3. Basques in Spain: “No War, No Peace.”

Outcome: The situation in the Basque region of Spain at the moment can best be described as no war, no peace. The ETA, the most militant Basque nationalist organization declared a unilateral cease-fire in 1998, but ended that ceasefire in 1999 after little progress was made toward establishing a dialogue process. Currently, the ETA and its supporters continue to engage in small-scale violent resistance. All indications are that the vast majority in the region support a peaceful resolution to the conflict involving some form of territorial autonomy. The current autonomy arrangements grant the Basque country a wide range of powers including the right to levy taxes, establish its own police force, and to establish Basque-language education and media.

4. Québécois in Canada: “Triumph of the Moderates.”

Outcome: The movement to gain more autonomy for Quebec within the Canada emerged during the 1960s. The Parti Québécois (PQ) came into power in the late-1970s on a platform of sovereignty for Quebec, although they argued for a form of sovereignty that would include a continued association with Canada. Referendums on Quebec sovereignty were defeated in 1980 and 1995. Recently, support in the province for sovereignty and for another referendum has declined.²⁴ In 2003, the PQ was defeated in provincial elections in Quebec by the Liberal Party, an outcome that was widely-viewed as evidence of the change in public sentiment on Quebec sovereignty. At the same time, there is little controversy over the designation of Quebec as a “distinct society” within Canada and there is widespread support for Canada’s policy of official bilingualism.

5. Azerbaijanis in Iran: “Complex Integration.”

Outcome: In both 1920 and 1946, Azerbaijani groups launched violent revolts against the central government in Iran in an attempt gain greater political autonomy for the predominately Azerbaijani provinces in northwest Iran. Both revolts failed as a result of being unable to win broad support among Azerbaijanis in Iran. The outcome of these rebellions is illustrative of the current situation of Azerbaijanis in Iran. Although, there is undoubtedly a politically-relevant Azerbaijani, ethnic identity, Azerbaijanis are well-integrated into Iran at all levels of society. Azerbaijanis in Iran participate at the highest levels in both the government and religious arenas. The consensus view is that the many Azerbaijanis in Iran have little sense of a separate identity and those that retain a separate identity consider themselves both Azerbaijani and Iranian see little or no contradiction between these two identities.²⁵

²⁴ See, Daniel Salée, “Quebec, Forty Years Later,” *Canadian Dimension* 37 (Sept./Oct. 2003): 28.

The Empirical Present

Every scenario analysis exercise begins with an analysis of the current situation, or the empirical present, as it is sometimes called. The empirical present provides the foundation upon which the potential futures are constructed, thereby grounding the analysis in reality. The following is a synopsis that represents the empirical present in regard to the case of the Kurds in Turkey.

Note to Facilitators: This may prove to be a difficult phase of the project as it is unlikely that individuals from different sides of the conflict will agree to a single description of the current situation. However, construction of the scenarios can be based upon several descriptions of the current situation. There is no need for the group to agree on a single version. We recommend circulating an outside analysis of the current situation prior to the workshop. Each participant can use that analysis as a starting point to produce their own version of the current situation. Depending on the time available and the contentiousness of the group, the facilitator may wish to spend some time attempting to consolidate these versions down into one to three synopses of the current situation.

*The Kurds in Turkey: The Current Situation*²⁶

The situation of the Kurds in Turkey as of the end of 2003 is marked by two seemingly contradictory trends. On the one hand, the Turkish government policy toward the Kurds has become more conciliatory. Turkey's desire to join the European Union has led the government to take several concrete steps to soften its policies relating to the Kurds. In 2002, the state of emergency in southeast Turkey was lifted allowing Kurds to travel freely in the region. Language policy has been softened, allowing more Kurdish language publications and privately-run language courses. Kurds have also been allowed

²⁵ See Brenda Shaffer, "The Formation of Azerbaijani Collective Identity in Iran," *Nationalities Papers* 28 (2000): 449-477. Hooshang Amirahamadi, "A Theory of Ethnic Collective Movements and Its Application to Iran," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (1987): 363-391.

²⁶ The summary below was compiled by reviewing recent reports appearing in: Agence France Presse, the Associated Press, *Economist*, Human Rights Watch World Report 2003, *The New Statesmen*, *The New York Times*, *NZZ Global*, *Turkish News Line*, and *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*.

to bring court cases against the Turkish Army for crimes allegedly committed during the war against the PKK. The Turkish government has introduced an amnesty program for former PKK fighters and has agreed to provide compensation for civilians who suffered as the result of military actions during the war with the PKK.

The fate of the amnesty program, however, is symbolic of a more ominous trend. As of August 2003, only eight PKK members have accepted the amnesty offer. Many Kurdish groups have complained that the changes instituted by the Turkish government, regarding the Kurdish language for instance, exist only on paper and that the situation on the ground has not changed. Moreover, there have been sporadic incidents of violence, including small firefights between the Army, policemen, and Kurdish militants, apparently from the PKK, now renamed KADEK. In September 2003, KADEK ended its unilateral ceasefire and threatened renewed violence if the Turkish government does not agree to a more comprehensive peace process.

The economic situation in southeast Turkey, which is predominately Kurdish, has seen little improvement. The Turkish government continues to implement a large-scale development plan for the region, the Southeastern Anatolia Project, known by its Turkish initials GAP. The plan is widely seen as designed to better integrate the Kurdish populations of the southeast Turkey into the Turkish state.²⁷ Nonetheless, the unemployment rate in the region is estimated to be between 35% and 50%. Kurds in other regions besides the southeast are often well-integrated into Turkish society and face little economic discrimination.

Finally, both the war in Iraq and the terrorist bombings in Istanbul in November are likely to strengthen hardliners within the Turkish government. The threats posed by domestic terrorists and the political gains of Kurds in Iraq could be used to help justify a crackdown on Kurdish dissent within Turkey.

The Scenarios

The scenarios should be seen as seed narratives. They can be presented to participants in a workshop setting in order to spark discussion of various potential

conflict trajectories. The participants should be allowed as much time as is feasible to revise and rework the scenarios. If time allows, new scenarios can also be created from the cases presented in the Annex.

Kurds as Palestinians: Intractable Conflict

Small-scale violence between KADEK and Turkish Army and Police has escalated. The origins of the escalation are unclear, but increased violence on one side sparks a violent reaction on the other and a cycle of violence is begun.

As the result of the strength of the Turkish army and the support it receives from the United States, the Kurdish militants increasingly turn to unconventional tactics including terrorist attacks in Istanbul and Ankara. Emboldened by the international war on terror, the Army responds to these attacks with a harsh counterinsurgency campaign, including the destruction of numerous Kurdish villages. The state of emergency in southeastern Turkey is reinstated.

The renewed cycle of violence halts any progress toward the amelioration of Kurdish grievances. Moreover, both the terrorist attacks and the counterinsurgency campaign eliminate any political space for moderate Kurds. Kurds are forced to either integrate into Turkish society as best they can society or support the Kurdish militants. This strengthens the cycle of violence as a greater percentage of Kurds within Turkey become disaffected and radicalized.

The Kurdish militants are supported internationally by the Kurdish diaspora and other states and non-state groups opposed to U.S. influence in the region. This, combined with the increasing level of grievance among Kurds within Turkey, indicates that the militants will be able to sustain their campaign indefinitely.

Attempts by international actors are made to resolve the conflict, but are hampered by several factors. The U.S. cannot be left out of a peace process, but the U.S. support for Turkey makes it difficult U.S. policymakers to be considered honest brokers; the viciousness of the attacks by the militants in conjunction with the “war on terror” makes it difficult for the international community to invite Kurds to the negotiating table;

²⁷ See Leila Harris, “Water and Conflict Geographies of the Southeastern Anatolia Project,” *Society and Natural Resources* 15 (2002): 751.

the continued failure of cease fires and peace initiatives makes it increasingly difficult to get parties to the table. Finally, any progress toward peaceful reconciliation is often undercut by acts of violence on both sides. The cycle of violence has, in effect, given hard-liners a veto over any peace process.

Kurds as Tibetans: Successful Repression

The international war on terror, the terrorist bombings in Istanbul, and the continued small-scale violence between KADEK and the Turkish Army and Police combine to spark a large-scale counterinsurgency effort on the part of the Turkish state against Kurdish groups. The effort receives widespread support from the Turkish public.

The banning of all types of Kurdish associations, the large-scale arrests of suspected militants, and the destruction of numerous villages follow. The state of emergency in southeastern Turkey is reinstated. Turkey uses the state of emergency to increase its political, military, and economic control over the region.

While the Kurdish militants attempt to resist, the strength of the Turkish Army and Police eventually eliminate virtually all forms of overt resistance. The support from the Kurdish diaspora that reaches groups within Turkey is insufficient to support the Kurdish resistance. Kurdish groups form an exile government in Iraq, but are unable to mount an effective political or military response to Turkish policy.

The economic and geopolitical importance of Turkey, and the power of its allies, makes states wary of calling for a change in Turkey's Kurdish policy. The actions of international human rights and social justice NGOs can neither sway the actions of Turkey, weaken the support for Turkey by other states, nor provide enough support to Kurds to mount an effective resistance.

The counterinsurgency effort halts any progress toward the amelioration of Kurdish grievances. Moreover, both the terrorist attacks and the counterinsurgency campaign eliminate any political space for moderate Kurds. Kurds are forced to either integrate into Turkish society as best they can or society engage in passive resistance. Due to the absence of overt resistance and the level of Turkish control over the area, over time it becomes unclear exactly how much Kurdish resistance remains. This emboldens Turkey to declare the Kurdish problem solved.

Kurds as Basques: No War, No Peace

Although small-scale violence between KADEK and the Turkish Army and Policy continues, several dynamics decrease the level of support for the radical Kurdish groups.

First, the Turkish state avoids any large-scale, provocative response to the small-scale attacks. Second, the government grants a measure of political autonomy to the municipal governments in the region. Language and cultural restrictions are also relaxed. The economic development plan for southeastern Turkey continues and begins to create greater economic opportunities for Kurds in the region.²⁸ Although the implementation of these policies is messy and haphazard, they do help to ameliorate many of the grievances of the Kurdish population in southeastern Turkey.

Third, the possibility of joining the European Union shifts the attention of many Kurdish individuals within Turkey. The idea of a transnational Kurdish ethnic group existing throughout Turkey and the European Union begins to gain support at the expense of the idea of a territorial Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey.

Despite these trends, a hard core of Kurdish militants remain, primarily individuals who fought with the PKK against the Turkish state during the 1990s. Support for these militants waxes and wanes in response to different developments both inside and outside of Turkey, but always remains relatively low. Nonetheless, this support is sufficient to sustain the militant groups, because their numbers are small and they primarily engage in small-scale attacks using guns and bombs.

As a result of these dynamics, several moderate Kurdish political organizations emerge with the goal of protecting and expanding the rights Kurds have gained within Turkey. While there is always a measure of controversy surrounding these groups because of the more radical Kurdish groups, these organizations do create a legitimate means for Kurds to express their concerns from within the Turkish political system.

²⁸ In the Spanish case, the economic development in the Basque region has already occurred. I use improving economic conditions as an analogue in the Kurdish case, but the parallel is not exact.

Kurds as Québécois: Triumph of the Moderates

While continuing to hunt Kurdish militants, the Turkish state avoids any large-scale, provocative counter-insurgency efforts. Turkey continues to harmonize its domestic policies toward the Kurds with international norms of democracy and minority rights.²⁹ The Turkish state grants a substantive basket of cultural, linguistic, and political rights to the Kurds in the southeast. The economic development plan for southeastern Turkey continues and begins to create greater economic opportunities for Kurds in the region.

Both a cause and effect of these changes is a more civic version of the Turkish identity, which is able to tolerate greater pluralism. Moreover the political and economic changes in the southeast, over time, begin to break down the differences between the Kurds in the southeast and the more integrated Kurds in the rest of Turkey. This helps create a Kurdish-Turkish identity that is inclusive of Kurds throughout Turkey.

As a result of these changes, several moderate Kurdish political organizations emerge with the goal of protecting and expanding the rights Kurds have gained within Turkey. This creates a legitimate means for Kurds to express their concerns from within the Turkish political system.

Over time, Turks come to realize that the Kurds had significantly more loyalty to the Turkish state than was previously believed.³⁰ While extremist groups remain, they are almost completely marginalized, and have no impact on Kurdish groups or Turkish politics.

Kurds as Azerbaijanis in Iran: Complex Integration

Although small-scale violence between KADEK and the Turkish Army and Policy continues, several dynamics decrease the level of support for the radical Kurdish groups.

²⁹ In Canada's case, these democratic norms were already established. In the case of Turkey, the consolidation is coming as the result of European Union standards. The parallel is not exact and analysts should keep in mind the different dynamics created by a transitioning political system as opposed to a consolidated democracy.

³⁰ In the Canada case, this came about as the result of the failed referenda in Quebec. Such a referendum is unlikely in Turkey. As a result, this latent loyalty would be expressed in different ways.

The Turkish state avoids any large-scale, provocative response and continues its economic development plan in southeastern Turkey. The Turkish government does not grant any form of political autonomy to predominately Kurdish areas and still imposes restrictions on Kurdish cultural and linguistic practices, although these restrictions are not vigorously enforced. Kurds are able to produce some work in their own language and to interact with Kurds in greater Kurdistan.

This regional dynamic in southeastern Turkey takes place in a larger context in which identities throughout Turkey are shifting. Although claims of economic discrimination remain, many Kurds in Turkey rise into the economic elite. As the result of the successes of these integrated Kurds Turkey, a viable Kurdish-Turkish identity begins to emerge. The stake these Kurdish-Turks have in the Turkish system make them politically moderate in relation to the Kurdish militants in the southeast. At the same time, the Turkish state begins to promote a more civic version of the Turkish identity that allows for more pluralism.³¹

This identity shift is primarily the result of domestic factors, in particular the nature of the evolution and interaction of the Kurdish and Turkish identities within Turkey. As a result, diaspora Kurdish groups and Kurdish groups in neighboring states become more radical than Kurdish groups within Turkey. While they remain a potential threat, these outside groups have been unable foster any significant protest or resistance within Turkey.

Over time, as the result of the lack of provocation by the Turkish state and the shift in underlying identity patterns, militant Kurdish groups cannot maintain a violent resistance movement. Kurdish political organizations remain, but they are content to work through established channels to demand greater cultural, political, and economic rights.

³¹ In the Iranian case, this is facilitated by the distinction between the more ethnic “Persian” identity and the more civil “Iranian” identity. Azerbaijanis in Iran are able to claim Iranian identity without relinquishing their Azerbaijani ethnic identity. This would be harder for the Kurds in Turkey to do. See Brenda Shaffer, *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002) 211-12.

How Are the Scenarios Used?

After the scenarios are developed and revised, the participants in the workshop, should be led through a three-step process.

1) *Driving Forces*: The first step is to identify what scenario analysts refer to as “driving forces”. Peter Schwartz describes driving forces as,

the elements that move the plot of a scenario, that determine the story’s outcome. . . . Without driving forces there is no way to begin thinking through a scenario. They are a device for honing your original judgment, for helping you decide which factors will be significant and which factors will not.³²

In particular, it is important to discern which driving forces seem to be a turning point from one scenario to another. For instance, the effectiveness of external support for militant Kurdish groups seems to be a crucial factor in determining whether the “Intractable Conflict” or the “Successful Repression” scenarios emerge, given a strong counterinsurgency effort on the part of the Turkish state. In our review of the scenarios, a few of the driving forces that emerge are:

1. The provocativeness of the Turkish state’s counterinsurgency policy.
2. The level and effectiveness of external support for militant Kurdish groups.
3. The economic situation in southeast Turkey both in absolute terms and relative to Turkey’s overall economic situation.
4. The nature of the relationship between Kurds in the southeast and the more integrated Kurds in the rest of Turkey.
5. The emergence of moderate Kurdish interest groups that are considered legitimate both by the Kurdish population and the Turkish state.

Again these are provided as examples and as catalysts to spark discussion in the workshop. Participants in the problem-solving process should work on revising this list, both in terms of adding or removing driving forces, but also in terms of reshaping the driving forces to better capture the dynamic being represented.³³

³² Schwartz 101-2.

³³ Even the notion of a list is arbitrary. The driving forces could be represented by, for instance, a matrix or a flow chart.

Once a list is developed participants should spend time understanding the nature of the driving forces on the list. Several questions could be asked, including:

- What is the trend in relation to the driving force? For instance, is the overall economic situation improving or getting worse in southeast Turkey?
- What are the links between the forces? Are they interrelated? For instance, does the level of external support for Kurdish militant groups affect the relationship of Kurds in the southeast to Kurds in the rest of Turkey?
- What are the underlying factors that shape the driving forces? For, instance, what are the internal-political dynamics affecting the nature of counterinsurgency policy.

Facilitators may also wish to use traditional conflict analysis techniques with the participants, such as conflict mapping or the conflict tree, to better understand the nature and impact of the driving forces.³⁴

2) *Potential Interventions*: It is important at this point to distinguish two different purposes of scenario analysis. The first, which might be called a reactive approach, is to design robust strategies to reach a goal that will be successful across a wide range of scenarios. The second more proactive approach is to develop strategies to make it more likely that one or more preferred scenario emerges. This former model is most often used by corporations. The goal of most corporations is to remain profitable regardless of what the future holds. Therefore, they desire strategies that will be effective across a wide-range of future scenarios. Responding effectively to future scenarios can be distinguished, however, from attempting to shape the future.

The proactive approach, however, is most often used when scenario analysis is applied to social dynamics with an inescapable ethical component. Clearly, peacebuilding activities fall into this category. The fundamental goal of any peacebuilding process is to create sustainable peace. Thus, the goal of a scenario analysis project which is part of a peacebuilding process must be to identify interventions that make it more likely that certain scenarios will emerge, namely scenarios that draw society closer to the ideal of sustainable peace.

³⁴ For a good description of these and other conflict analysis techniques, see Simon Fisher et al, *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action* (London: Zed, 2000) 17-36.

Thus, the second step in the process is to identify specific interventions that may help to bring about the desired scenarios. These interventions should flow from the driving forces identified by the group. It is difficult here to say what these interventions might be. Much depends on who is involved in the problem-solving process. Academics can do different things than senior policymakers who can do different things than grassroots activists and so on.

For instance, let us assume that the participants, who are primarily members of civil society organizations, have focused in on the economic situation in southeastern Turkey. They could develop interventions that promote participatory development in southeastern Turkey, thereby ensuring that Kurds benefit from economic growth in the area. Alternatively, let's assume the participants are senior-level academics and researchers who have focused in on the state's counterinsurgency policy. They could develop an intervention to educate military and political leaders on effective, non-provocative counterinsurgency strategies.

3) Action Plans and Next Steps: This step is optional. It is often important in Track II processes to remove the commitment to act. In this way, participants are more free to discuss a wide range of possibilities. On the other hand, in some situations participants have "workshop-fatigue," and become very frustrated if no plan of action is developed. If the facilitators judge that the participants wish to take concrete steps, they should work with the participants develop an action plan, including both an overall implementation strategy and a set of concrete next steps. Of course, the action plan should flow from the scenarios and the proposed interventions.

Iterated Analysis

The analysis of the driving forces and the development of potential interventions can be aided by an iterated scenario analysis process that generates comparison cases related to issues raised by the participants about specific driving forces or specific proposed interventions. For instance, a set of comparison cases could be generated that provide a range of outcomes on the specific issue of counterinsurgency strategies or external support for militants. A set of comparison cases could also be generated related to the success of participatory development strategies as a peacebuilding tool in regions

where the majority of the population belongs to an ethnic minority group. The scenarios represented by these comparison cases would be nested within the macro-scenarios created by the initial analysis. Assuming sufficient time and resources, these more focused analyses could be developed between workshops as part of an ongoing problem-solving process.³⁵

Annex: List of Potential Comparison Cases

Group Name	Country
Québécois	Canada
Basques	France
Corsicans	France
Basques	Spain
Catalans	Spain
South Tyrolians	Italy
Sardinians	Italy
Kosovo Albanians	Yugoslavia
Hungarians	Yugoslavia
Diolas in Casamance	Senegal
Baganda	Uganda
Zanzibaris	Tanzania
Somalis	Ethiopia
Basters	Namibia
Saharawis	Morocco
Southerners	Sudan
Nuba	Sudan
Azerbaijanis	Iran
Kurds	Iran
Turkmen	Iran
Arabs	Iran
Kurds	Iraq
Palestinians	Israel
Tibetans	China
Kashmiris	India
Sikhs	India
Baluchis	Pakistan
Karens	Burma
Shans	Burma
Sri Lankan Tamils	Sri Lanka
Malay-Muslims	Thailand
Moros	Philippines
Acehnese	Indonesia

³⁵ The datasets at University of Maryland could be used to create many of these more focused sets of scenarios. In some cases, other resources would have to be used.

IV. The Methodological and Theoretical Foundations of the CASES Approach

The CASES methodology lives and dies by the claim that the comparative analysis of scenarios creates *insight*, that it allows conflict managers, whether they be a UN envoy or a mayor of a small town in a war-torn country, to better understand the conflict(s) they are confronting. Eventually, this claim will be evaluated solely by the utility of the CASES reports to these practitioners and by the success of the peacebuilding strategies it suggests. The reader may already have produced a judgment on this question by reading the prototype report presented above. However, because it is early in the project, it is important to be explicit about why we *expect* that the CASES report will produce this improved understanding of conflicts. To do this, this section will discuss some of the intellectual underpinnings of the scenario analysis approach that CASES employs.

Futures Research and Countersystem Analysis

In an overview of “futures methodology” conducted for the United Nations, Jerome Glenn, writes:

The purpose of futures methodology is to systematically explore, create, and test both possible and desirable future visions. Future visions can help generate long-term policies, strategies, and plans, which help bring desired and likely future circumstances in closer alignment.

Asking people to cooperate in building a better tomorrow is not reasonable without a shared, multi-faceted, and compelling image of the future.³⁶

This is a near-perfect summary of the goal of practitioner-oriented futures research. But as Glenn’s piece is designed for practitioners, it delves little into the intellectual underpinnings of the futures methodology. A recent article by Gideon Sjoberg, Elizabeth Gill, and Leonard Cain (SG and C), is important in this regard, as it provides the most sustained analysis of the methodology’s foundations that we have been able to find.

SG and C use the term countersystem analysis to describe social research that relies on the analysis of multiple, potential futures, or as they put it, “sociological

³⁶ Jerome Glenn, “Introduction to the Futures Research Methodology Series,” AC/UNU Millennium Project, 1994, 1.

construction of alternative futures.”³⁷ Each of these futures represents an alternative, social arrangement that may emerge. The basic premise of countersystem analysis, the reason such an analysis is needed, according to the authors, is that there is a greater contingency between present and future than positivist social science assumes.³⁸

Such contingency, from the perspective of the countersystem analysis, renders a linear methodology, in which data on the past is used to predict the future, suspect. Instead, countersystem analysis employs a circular movement from the present to the future and back. It uses the “empirical present”, what is, as the basis for the description of several possible futures. These futures are then analyzed to critically assess presently existing institutions, social practices, and so on.

Proponents of countersystem analysis use the contingency argument to defend the methodology on empirical grounds. Specifically, they claim that countersystem analysis provides a method, which remains empirical, but allows the analyst to cope with the contingent relationship between the present and the future. SG and C, for instance, argue that countersystem analysis is necessary to understand the emergence of new, large-scale institutions, such as the European Union or the World Trade Organization, neither of which is, “the mere extension of what was.”³⁹

While countersystem analysis can be defended on empirical grounds, the method normally has a normative component as well.⁴⁰ Once one acknowledges that multiple futures do exist, there is a strong tendency to evaluate these possible futures in ethical terms. Thus, argue that countersystem analysis can, “not only can greatly assist researchers in empirical investigations but can also lay the basis. . . for envisaging (and eventually constructing) alternative social or cultural arrangements.”⁴¹ It is at this point

³⁷ Sjoberg, Gill and Cain 210. For a good example of this method being applied, see Stephen Lyng, *Holistic Health and Biomedical Medicine* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).

³⁸ Niklas Luhmann, for instance, argues that contingency is the “defining attribute of modernity.” See *Observations on Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) 44-62. See also, Heikki Patomaki, who defends this premise his drawing on the works of methodological realists, such as Roy Bhaskar. Patomaki writes, “In open systems, within which social actors possess generic powers, social predictions are not possible, but qualitative changes and emergence are. Realist ontology implies that history is and will remain open.” Heikki Patomaki, “The Challenge of Critical Theories: Peace Research at the Start of New Century,” *Journal of Peace Research* 38 (2001): 733. See also Lyng 11-12.

³⁹ Sjoberg, Gill and Cain 232.

⁴⁰ Glenn distinguishes futures methodology into explanatory forecasting and normative forecasting.

⁴¹ Sjoberg, Gill and Cain 214.

that countersystem analysis often blurs into critical theory, be it Marxist, feminist or some other variant.

What is interesting is that, Hayward Alker, Johann Galtung and others in the peacebuilding field have recognized that the goals of countersystem analysis must also be the goals of any empirically-minded, conflict resolution analyst or practitioner.⁴² As Alker argues, “The goal of emancipatory research is to use empirical data to understand how more just, peaceful futures can emerge from the range of possible futures immanent in any historical moment.”⁴³ While the pure social scientist might object to such a formulation, the conflict manager is virtually defined by the belief that his or her interventions can create more “just, peaceful futures”. This implies that any particular juncture in time is capable of producing multiple, possible futures. The methodology described above emerges from our belief that the conflict management field needs approaches that acknowledge and provide ways of analyzing this multiplicity.

The Utility of Narratives

One of the weaknesses of much futures research is that it leaves largely uninvestigated the epistemological standing of the alternative futures that they produce. As was discussed above, these alternative futures are created through an analysis of the empirical present. Consequently, they occupy an interesting middle ground between simple speculation about the future and the predictions of positivist social science. They are empirically-grounded stories. For this reason, it is important to understand more about how narratives work, and in particular, why they can be useful as a conflict analysis and conflict management tool.

The literatures on narratives and narrative analysis, from a variety of disciplines, are vast and complex. Any kind of substantive review of these literatures is well beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we will describe a few of the reasons that make

⁴² For a useful discussion of Galtung’s thinking, see Patomaki 723-737.

⁴³ Hayward Alker, “Emancipatory Empiricism: Toward the Renewal of Empirical Peace Research,” in *Rediscoveries and Reformulations: Humanistic Methodologies for International Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 332-354. See also Johan Galtung, “Science as Invariance-Seeking and Invariance-Breaking Activity,” in Johan Galtung, *Methodology and Ideology* (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, 1977) 72-95; Patomaki 731, 733.

narratives a particularly useful way for practicing conflict managers to represent information about a conflict.

Narratives are both Structured and Open

As opposed to linear, causal models of conflict processes, the structure of narratives is grammatical. A grammatical structure imposes rules on what can be produced by the grammar – there are rules on how to produce a well-formed sentence as well as a well-formed narrative. But while a grammar creates structure, it does not create closure – there are an infinite number of well-formed sentences. In terms of a narrative, this means that a given narrative can follow an infinite number of trajectories, but *not* any and all trajectories. It must be a trajectory that can be produced using the generative rules that compose the grammar.

In addition, the grammatical structure of narratives has a causal component. Narratives must contain an internal logic in which events follow one after the other as the result of actions taken by the characters. This allows the narrative to provide not only a recounting of events, but an explanation of events. As Paul Ricoeur argues, “Every story, we have said, in principle, explains itself. In other words, narrative answers the question ‘Why?’ at the same time it answers the question ‘What?’ To tell what has happened is to tell why it happened.”⁴⁴ When narratives are about potential futures, as opposed to the historical narratives that Ricoeur is discussing, the demand placed on the internal logic is one of plausibility as opposed to explanation. The narrative must recount a set of events that is plausible. These two features of the grammatical structure allow a narrative about a conflict to be something new, perhaps even something previously unthinkable, while still allowing the narrative to be assessed empirically as to whether it or not it is plausible. The participants in the Mont Fleur process rejected some scenarios because they were considered implausible.⁴⁵ The fact that not all endings are possible, but there is always another ending that *is* possible allows the conflict managers to avoid both a, “conflict-breeds conflict” pessimism as well as a “wishing-makes-it-so” optimism.

⁴⁴ Ricoeur 152.

⁴⁵ Global Business Networks, “The Mont Fleur Scenarios,” 2-3.

Narratives Distill Complexity

Narratives are an effective way of transmitting complex information in a form that is fundamentally easy to remember. Julie Allan, Gerard Fairtlough, and Barbara Henizen, put it this way: . . . “stories work because they are memorable. Most people find it difficult to remember a list of more than seven items; but tell a well-made story and your listeners will be able to recount the tale effortlessly, with twenty or more events.”⁴⁶ The complex historical, sociological, and cognitive reasons why this is so are beyond the scope of this paper. It is sufficient here to simply state that individuals from virtually all cultures are better able to comprehend complex social information if it is structured in narrative form.

Moreover, narratives seem particularly effective at distilling the type of complexity inherent to violent conflict. First, many researchers have argued that conflicts should not be analyzed in isolation. Instead, conflict should always be understood as nested within larger conflict processes.⁴⁷ Second, in a violent conflict, complex dynamics such as conflict (and peace) spirals, self-reproducing violence, tipping points and cascades, and internal reinterpretations⁴⁸ are the norm. These types of nested, recursive, reflexive processes are very difficult to represent using linear cause and effect sequences. In contrast, narratives have built in structures to represent this type of complexity. There can be stories within stories, stories about other stories, stories in which the storyteller is embedded in the story, and even stories that are aware of their status as stories. As a

⁴⁶ Power of the Tale 6. See also Alker 287. Alker argues that simple fairy tale narrative structures are a part of virtually every culture because they present information in a way that is especially easy to remember.

⁴⁷ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: USIP, 1996) who applies Marie Dugan’s nested foci paradigm. See also, Thomas Schmalberger and Hayward Alker, “A Synthetic Framework for Extensible Conflict Early Warning Systems,” in Hayward Alker, Ted Robert Gurr, and Kumar Rupesinghe, eds. *Journeys through Conflict: Narratives and Lessons* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) 354-396. Also relevant is the literature that focuses on the importance of previous conflict, or low-level conflict in understanding the emergence of civil war. See for example, Mark Lichbach, Christian Davenport and David Armstrong, “Contingency, Inherency, and the Onset of Civil War,” unpublished paper, 2003. Available at: <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/davenport/cioc.pdf>. Nicholas Sambanis and Annalisa Zinn, “The Escalation of Self-Determination Movements: From Protest to Violence,” Paper prepared for the 2002 American Political Science Association Meeting; Gurr 70.

⁴⁸ Schmalberger and Alker argue that in the Guatemala case, various internal reinterpretations of the conflict were responsible for its resolution. See Schmalberger and Alker 343-50.

result, narratives provide effective mechanisms for representing the non-linear elements of conflict trajectories.

Finally, from a more pragmatic perspective, the fact that narratives are easy to remember also make them easy to transmit. This is a crucial feature for conflict managers who are working at the Track II level. Most Track II efforts are devoted either to building advocacy networks designed to pressure leaders to resolve a conflict or designed to create reconciliation among large numbers of “ordinary” people. In either case, there has to be a way to easily and rapidly transmit complex understandings of the conflict among a large number of individuals. As Glenn notes, “Asking people to cooperate in building a better tomorrow is not reasonable without a shared, multi-faceted, and compelling image of the future.”⁴⁹ It is not an exaggeration to say that narratives were invented to transmit shared, compelling images of society and are therefore a perfect vehicle for doing what Glenn suggests.

V. Conclusion

The goal of this paper was three-fold. First, it sought to show how large-scale datasets on conflict, such as Minorities at Risk, can be used to produce a set of scenarios which represent the plausible future trajectories of a given conflict. Second, the paper discussed how such scenarios might be used as part of a Track II process in which various types of local conflict managers are brought together in order to analyze the conflict, develop a common understanding of the conflict, and develop potential peacebuilding initiatives. In particular, the paper sought to show how more traditional scenario planning exercises, particularly those that have been used as part of a conflict management process, can be improved by constructing scenarios based on actual cases. Third, the paper investigated some of the intellectual foundations of a scenario-analysis approach in order to defend our belief that such an approach is a useful conflict analysis and conflict management tool.

As we have already mentioned, this project is in its early stages. We have two primary goals as the project moves forward. First, the methodology needs to be field tested. CIDCM is currently planning to initiate one or two pilot projects in which the

CASES methodology is used. It will only be after these pilot projects are completed that the CASES methodology can be truly assessed.

Second, while this paper has focused on how the CASES methodology can be used as part of a Track II process, we also believe that such an approach can be used as part of an external conflict analysis exercise. We are currently investigating various ways that scenario analysis can be used to produce defensible conclusions about the conflict being analyzed. The goal of these efforts is to create policy analysis tools that can produce guidance to policymakers independent of the participatory processes of workshops and consultations described above.

Both goals are driven by the belief that the current set of conflict analysis methods used by practitioners does not provide tools capable of efficiently drawing lessons from similar cases of conflict and conflict management. The man in Guyana was right to ask about Trinidad. Knowing how Trinidad “fixed it” might have helped and we should have been able to give him that information.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Glenn 1.

⁵⁰ The “we” here refers to Andrew Blum and the other organizers of the workshop in Guyana. Amy Pate did not participate in the Guyana project.