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The Validity of Partition as a Solution to Ethnic Conflict

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Introduction

Of the twenty-one civil wars since WWII which have resulted in partition, eighteen were ethnic conflicts while only three were ideological (Sambanis, 2000: 446). Of the few cases that were not resolved by de facto partition, military defeat or third party intervention/occupation, one of the belligerent groups was highly localised and granted a degree of autonomy (an example would be the Basque insurgency in Spain) (Kaufmann, 1996: 159-161).

Kaufmann argues that in ethnic conflicts the transparent and rigid criteria by which one is deemed an ally or enemy means that combatants seek to win only the support of their 'community' and redefine the state, often via secession or the expulsion of other groups (*ibid.*: 139-140). Furthermore issues of security arise in ethnically mixed areas. Firstly any individual from another ethnicity could be an extremist. Secondly ethnic rivals or minorities could prompt their co-ethnics to invade in order to protect them if they are deemed under threat (*ibid.*: 148). This phenomenon occurred in Croatia during the Croatian War of Independence, when the Belgrade controlled Yugoslav Army (JNA) intervened on the behalf of the Serbs of the Krajina region, who were perceived as being under threat from the new Croatian government (Grandits and Leutloff 2003: 34-35). Then when Croat forces retook the Krajina region in Operation Storm columns of Serb refugees and Serb settlements were bombed (Stitkovac, 2000: 169-170). Croatian President Franco Tudjman perhaps realising the security risk a Serb minority would pose if it remained was recorded saying "we have to inflict such blows that the Serbs will to all practical purposes disappear" (Trifkovic, 2010: 219-221).

Kaufmann argues that these issues disappear when homogenous areas of antagonistic ethnic groups are separated by an organised force (Kaufmann, 1996: 149-151). Nagorno-Karabakh and Cyprus are cited as examples of areas where a homogenisation and partition of areas has eliminated the violence (*ibid.*).

In spite of the validity of these arguments, there are cases where partition will not eliminate violence and in some cases may increase it. This is because in many cases ethnic conflicts arise out of a congruity between political and ethnic cleavages, allowing ethnic identity to be politicised (Wigmore-Shepherd, 2012). I previously illustrated this process with an agent based model. The simulation used in this paper will expand upon the previous model. The primary hypothesis of this paper is that when ethnic conflicts arise out of political disputes with a low congruence between ethnic and political identity, the political schisms that were eclipsed by interethnic violence can reassert themselves when official or de facto partition occurs.

The model and methodology

Before the simulation runs, agents are given both an ethnic identity (numerical: 1, 2 etc.) and a political identity (alphabetical: A, B, etc.). The agents are split according to their ethnic identities and then are given a particular set of political identities granted by pre-prescribed percentages: for example 30% of group 1 will have political identity A and 70% political identity B. Agents are also assigned antagonism ratings relevant to their political and ethnic identity which comes into play when agents of different groups interact.

During a run, agents are randomly placed on a board in which they move randomly. When agents are next to each other in a Moore neighbourhood they can only perceive each other's ethnic identity. However, each agent can assess the likelihood of its neighbour's political identity based on its ethnic identity (K), to quote an earlier example there is a 70% chance that a 1 is a B ($K_B = 0.7$) and a 30% chance that a 1 is an A ($K_A = 0.3$).

If agent X is adjacent to agent Y, X will calculate its ethnic antagonism for Y, and if Y is of the same group this is guaranteed to be zero. X will then take the K_A and K_B of Y and multiply both of them against its own political antagonism against A (P_A) and B (P_B) respectively. The larger of the two results (Res_1) is chosen and compared to the ethnic antagonism X has for Y (E_{XY}). The larger of these two (Res_2) is then compared to a randomly rolled number (Rand) between 0 and 10. If $Rand < Res_2$ then X will attack Y, otherwise X will amicably interact with Y.

After an interethnic attack, regardless of motivation, the ethnic antagonism of the victim's ethnic group against the aggressors group increases by 1. After an interethnic assist, the opposite occurs with the recipient's ethnic group decreasing its antagonism against the assister's ethnic group by 1.

The board is also divided between enclaves, one for each ethnic group. Up to the 499th turn, agents move freely throughout the board. At the 500th turn, agents begin to migrate to their respective enclaves and then move around freely within the boundaries of the enclave. The borders of each enclave are entirely separated from each other, meaning that after the migration is complete, interethnic interaction ceases. The simulation runs for a total of 1000 turns.

In each run there were two ethnic identities, two political identities and two enclaves, each taking up just under half of the board. A hundred runs were conducted for each ratio of ethno-political congruence. In congruence ratio 100:0, 100% of Group 1 believes political position A while 100% of Group 2 believes political position B. In ratio 90:10, 90% of Group 1 and 10% of Group 2 believes political position A and vice versa. A hundred runs would be completed on congruence ratios of 80:20, 70:30, 60:40 and finally 50:50.

A separate program was used to average the results of the hundred runs of each of the time steps and write the averaged results onto an Excel file.

Results

Predictably the enforcement of an impassable partition causes the total ethnic attacks to drop to zero, as shown by figure 1.

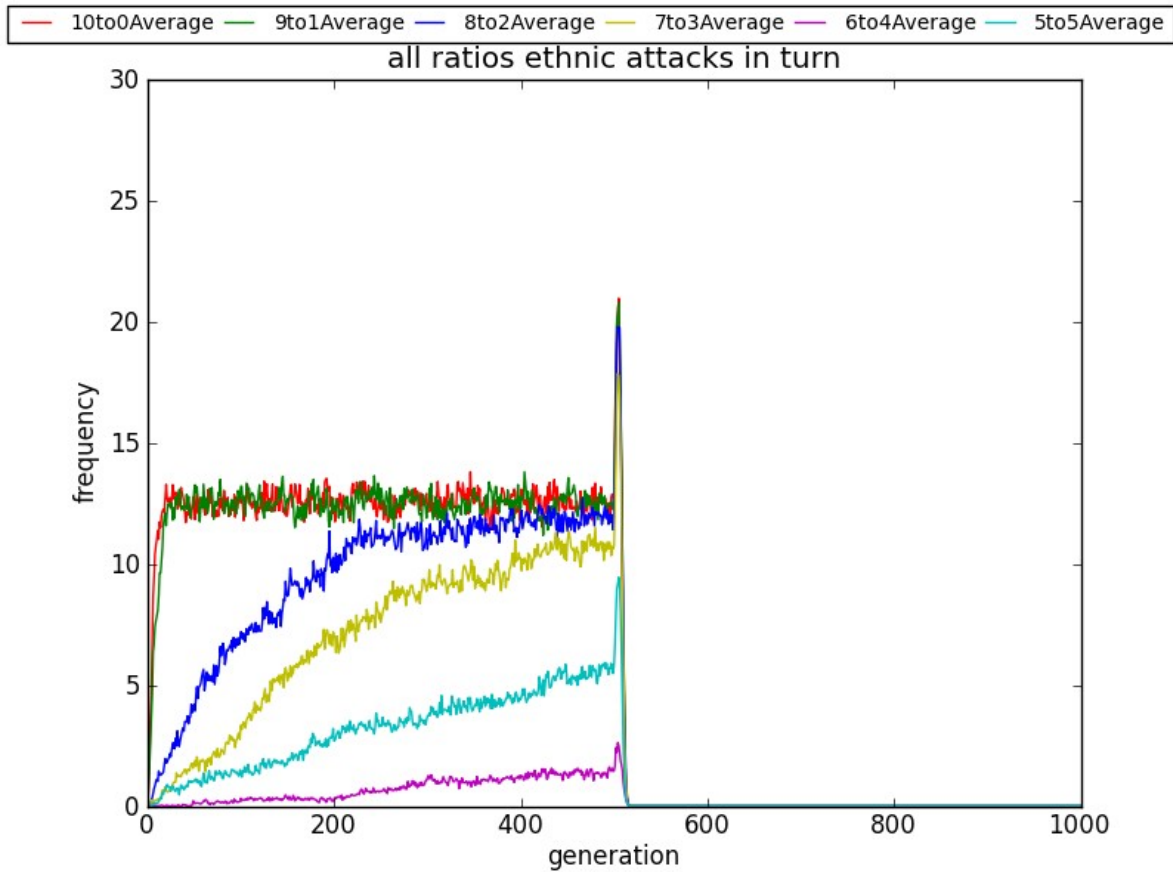


Figure 1: Partition model all congruence ratios – ethnic attacks in turn

What was not predicted however was the spike in ethnic attacks that precedes the cessation of all ethnic attacks. This is probably due to the concentrated directed movements of each ethnic group. As each group enclave is at opposite areas of the grid, streams of agents of differing ethnicities come into contact. The severity of the spike increased with the level of ethno-political congruence.

However it is important to note that a cessation in ethnic attacks does not necessarily mean fewer attacks overall. Figure 2 shows the amount of total attacks pre and post-partition for all congruence ratios. At lower ratios of ethno-political congruence, 50:50 and 60:40, total attacks per turn actually increase post partition. At the 70:30 ratio the general level of total attacks per turn post-partition remains similar to the total number of attacks just before partition (generation 400-499).

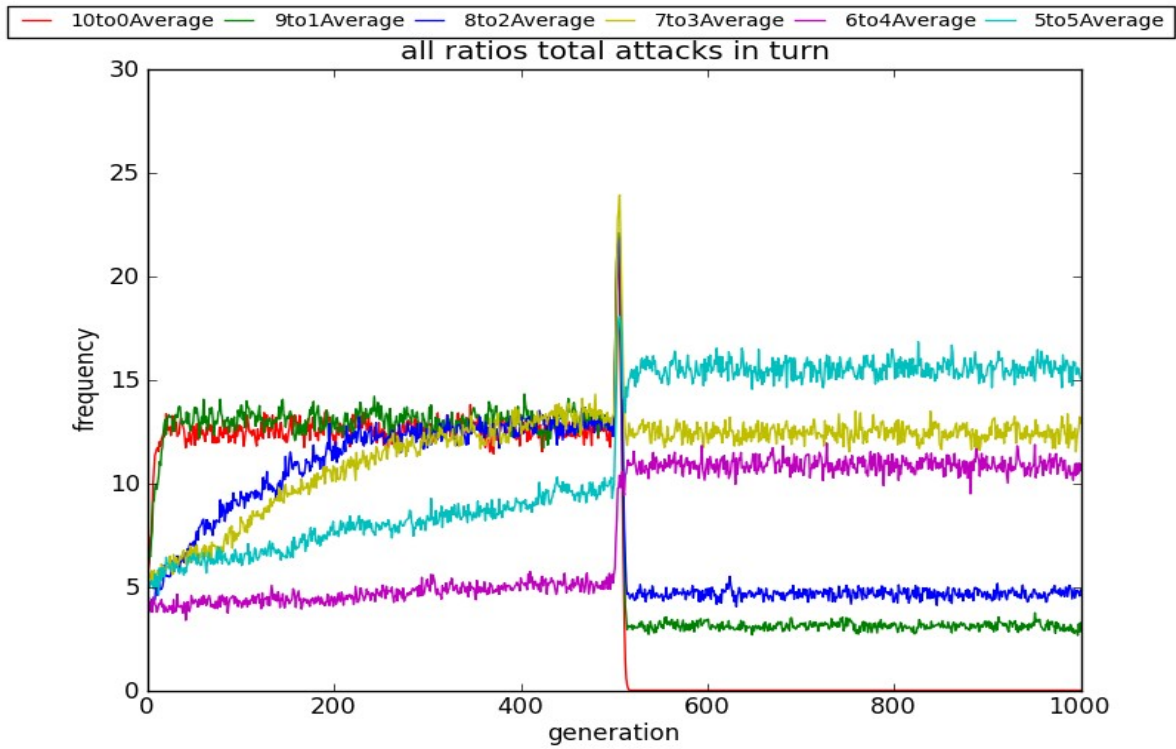


Figure 2: Partition model all congruence ratios – total attacks in turn

Figure 3 illustrates that all congruence ratios apart from 100:0 show a marked increase in the number of political attacks post-partition. The increase is especially pronounced in the

50:50 and 60:40 ratios and explains how the total number of attacks increased after partition.

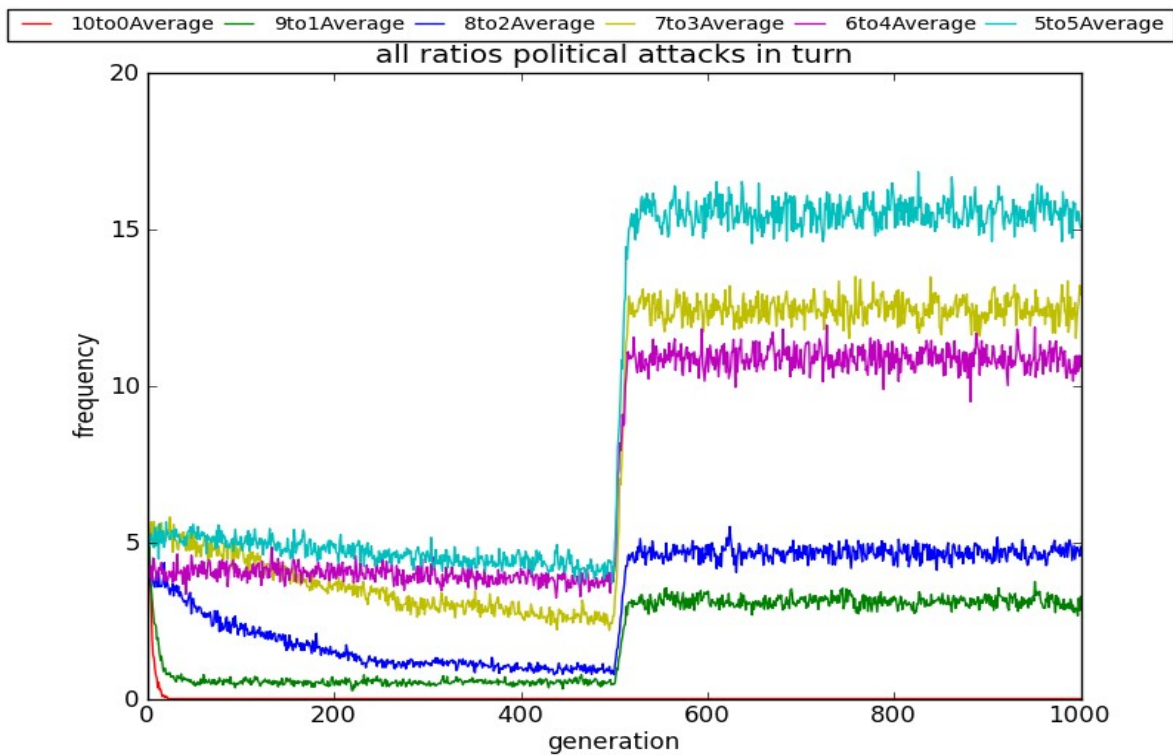


Figure 3: Partition model all congruence ratios – political attacks in turn

The model shows a pattern in which political violence is sidelined by ethnic violence, especially at the higher congruence ratios in which political attacks quickly begin to comprise a minority of total attacks, as shown by figure 4. However post-partition the dominance of ethnic attacks changes because interethnic interaction, including violence, is impossible. As a result at all ratios apart from 100:0, political attacks make up 100% of total attacks. This pattern is illustrated by figure 4.

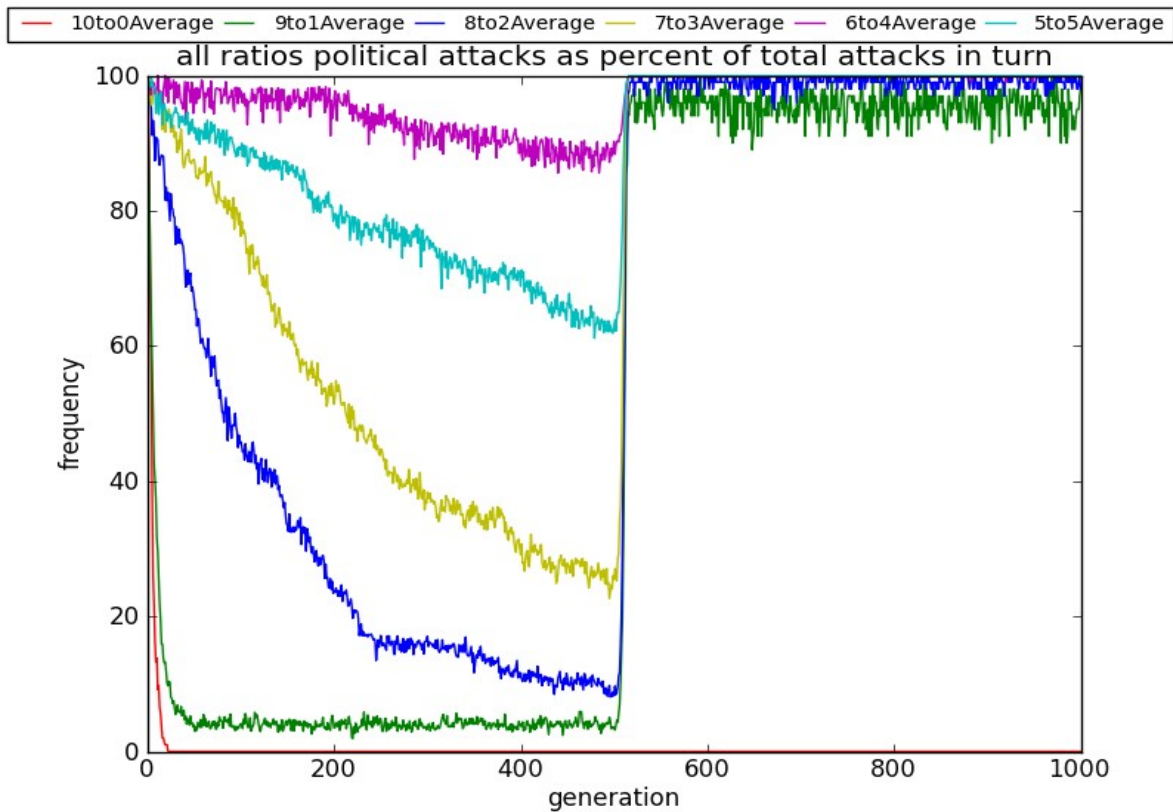


Figure 4: Partition model all congruence ratios - political attacks as a percentage of total attacks

Lastly, a cessation in inter-ethnic interactions enforced by partition eliminates the possibility of future amicable or violent interactions which determine interethnic antagonism. As a result interethnic antagonism remains frozen at the rate it was just prior to partition. Figure 5 which represents group 1's ethnic antagonism against group 2 illustrates this:

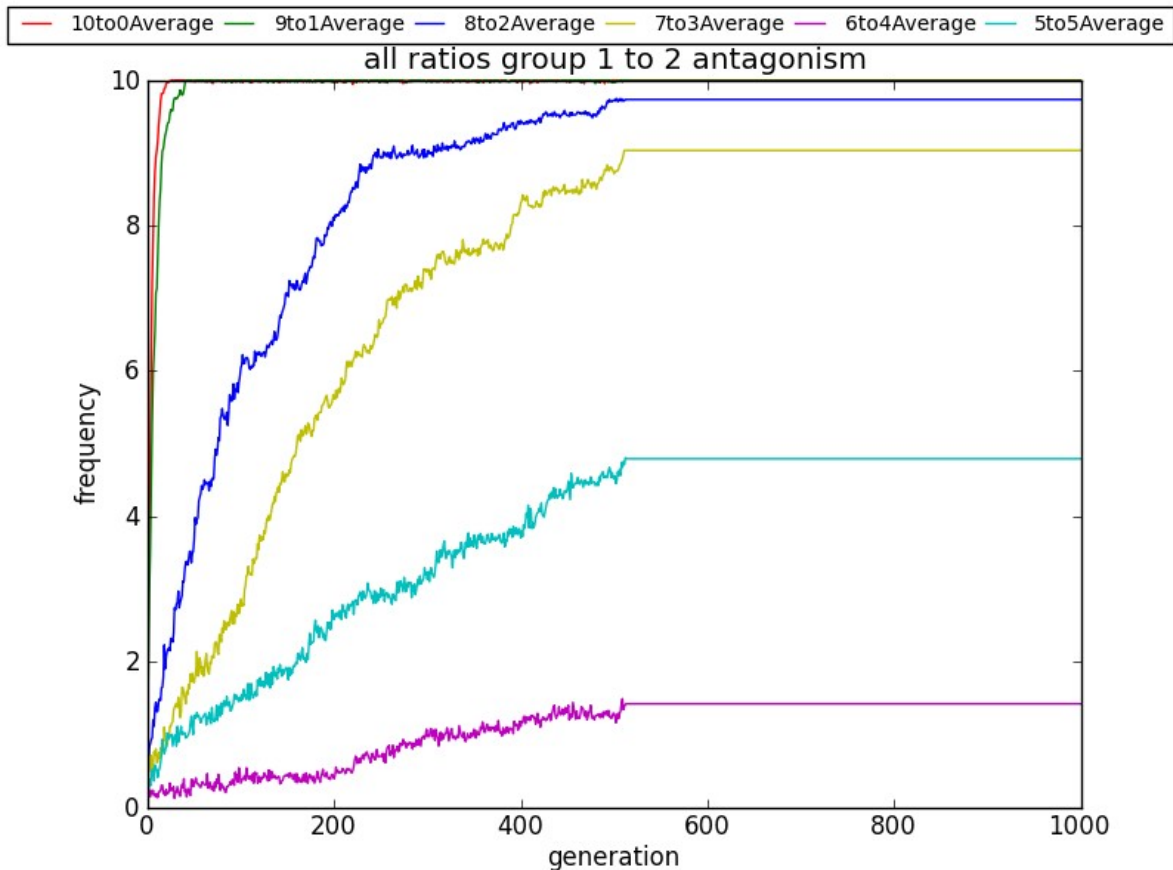


Figure 5: Partition model all congruence ratios – group 1 ethnic antagonism to group 2

Discussion

Ethnic conflict has been portrayed as a symptom of political cleavage between groups rather than the re-emergence of a timeless antagonism. Thus the model itself infers that even when the ethnic dimension is resolved by partition the political schism, in all but one set of tests, will remain as a potential source of conflict.

There are numerous examples of political disagreement becoming a new source, or indeed re-emerging as the original source, of a conflict after a large degree of ethnic homogeneity has been accomplished.

In the Lebanese Civil War was started over the political polemic of the nation's identity, whether it was a Western nation or part of the Pan-Arabist movement. Central to this ideological split was support for the Palestinian guerrillas who operated out of south Lebanon and the replacement of Lebanon's confessionally balanced government with a secular one (Wigmore-Shepherd, 2012). As the conflict progressed, sectarian atrocities caused Lebanon as a whole to divide into homogenous confessional enclaves (Stork, 1983: 9; Silver, 2010: 350).

As Lebanon became an enclave society, political fissures within certain communities created intra-ethnic conflict. This was most pronounced in the nation's Shiites. Amal was a Shiite

group formed as an armed wing of al-Sadr's Movement of the Deprived in the de facto Shiite enclave of South Lebanon (Stork, 1985: 4). The militia was initially aligned with the pan-Arabist Lebanese National Movement (LNM), however, unlike the anti-confessionalist LNM, Amal did not seek the destruction of Lebanon's confessionalist political system but rather sought merely to increase the Shiite's power in the Lebanese government to what they deemed a fair share (*ibid.*: 4-6). Shiites had suffered disproportionately from Israel's retaliatory strikes against Palestinian guerrilla activity in Lebanon (who were confined to their own enclaves within South Lebanon) and as a result Amal also politically disagreed with the LNM's unconditional support of the Palestinians (*ibid.*). Nevertheless the LNM retained support from a large section of South Lebanon Shiites (*ibid.*). In 1976 members of Amal orchestrated, with help from the Phalangists, the invasion of a Shiite neighbourhood which was politically supportive of the LNM (*ibid.*).

Amal would later clash with Hezbollah, another Shiite militia which was supportive of the Palestinian cause, in a set of skirmishes known as the War of the Camps (Usher, 1997: 63). As Amal laid siege to the camps Hezbollah helped Palestinian guerrillas defend their territory and provided humanitarian assistance (Gambil and Abdelnour, 2002). Hezbollah, since its creation, had been siphoning off Shiite political support from Amal and eventually the movement came to dominate Shiite enclaves in South Lebanon and Southern Beirut (*ibid.*). Amal in 1988 would try to reassert its political dominance by invading Shiite enclaves loyal to Hezbollah (*ibid.*).

Although generally non-violent, political disunity crippled the Serbian enclave Krajina in Croatia during the Croatian War of Independence. By 1992 plans and agreements prepared by the international community were being floated to Krajina leaders to resolve the conflict with the Croat government (Caspersen, 2010: 103). These opportunities for accommodation and concession invariably caused political conflict between moderates willing to compromise and hardliners.

Two members of the Krajina government were tried for treason and imprisoned for negotiating the return of some Croat refugees to their homes in Slavonia with the Croatian government (*ibid.*: 103-104). Furthermore when Martić, one of the leaders, was offered the 'Z-4 Plan' by Croatia in 1995, which proposed an autonomous police force, and separate currency and parliament from Croatia, Martić rejected it as he feared rebellion and violence from more hawkish members of the Krajina elite (*ibid.*: 109).

In all the ratios there is a decrease in politically motivated attacks and a corresponding increase in ethnically motivated attacks up until the 500 generation mark. Thus as ethnically based retaliations become more prevalent, the political nature of the conflict is sidelined.

Gagnon argues that in ethnic conflicts elites use ethnic violence to politically demobilise the population and cast focus upon a potential 'ethnic threat' (Gagnon, 2004: 8). This analysis can certainly apply to the Serbian conservatives who controlled the government in the early 1990s. Milošević and the conservative wing faced threats from economic reformist PM Marković who had successfully lowered inflation and was pushing for legislation allowing for the privatisation of state owned firms and multi-party elections (*ibid.*: 91). In 1990

Markovic formed his own party to implement these reforms and in June 1990 mass rallies were held in protest to force the Belgrade government to allow a multi-party system (*ibid*). The resulting war against Croatia and the plight of the Krajina Serbs effectively buried these issues and ensured Milosevic's continual control of the government and retention of the status quo (*ibid*: 87-88).

Similarly in Lebanon, sectarian atrocities meant that militia volunteers began to join groups that matched their sect, not their politics (Kreidi and Munroe, 2002: 20-30). This meant that the political centre of the conflict became eclipsed by interethnic antagonism and it became it became "impossible to talk of a political left and right in Lebanon when most extreme forms of communalism motivated the vast majority of fighters and many of their leaders" (Johnson, 2001: 67).

Even Kaufmann's example of Cyprus exhibits the pattern of political violence becoming prominent post-partition. Cyprus became an enclave society after the inter-communal violence of the late 1950s and 1960s forced a de facto partition between Greek and Turkish communities, but political schisms and violence continued (Papadakis, 1998: 152). The source of the political disagreement was the issue of reunifying with Greece while it was under the control of a right-wing military junta (*ibid.*). The Cypriot President, an archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church by the name of Makarios, wanted to focus on Cyprus' internal problems and declare an independent Cypriot state while the communist AKEL party wanted to avoid reunifying with Greece while it was staunchly anti-communist (*ibid.*). General Grivas, previously an ally of Makarios and leader of the independence militia EOKA, sought to reunify with Greece immediately and formed EOKA B which launched a campaign of violence against the government and AKEL culminating in a coup in 1974 against the Makarios regime (*ibid.*). In response Turkey invaded, officially partitioning Cyprus into the Turkish north and the Greek south and formalising the pre-existing de facto partition (*ibid.*; Kumar, 1997).

Figure 4 illustrates a pattern that corroborates with Gagnon's theory: political conflict and political antagonism, often intra-ethnic, is gradually sidelined by ethnic conflict, only to resurface as ethnic groups enter their enclaves. The creation of enclaves removes the politically demobilising effect of potential ethnic violence and the threat of extinction which allows for a resumption of political conflicts.

A further issue is that a complete segregation of ethnic identities prevents further interaction, including amicable interactions that would lower interethnic antagonism. Figure 5 shows that post-partition ethnic antagonism rates are predictably frozen. This is not just a quirk of the model but a phenomenon observed in partitioned communities. Shirlow studied the lingering antagonisms in Ardoyne, a Northern Irish ward in which the Catholic and Protestant sides of town are separated by a 'peace line', preventing interethnic violence (Shirlow, 2003: 81). A survey found that pensioners were the least likely to possess extreme sectarian opinions as most had amicable relationships with members of the opposite sect that predated The Troubles or the construction of the peace line (*ibid*: 85). In contrast the 18-55 year olds, who

were either born after or were young when the conflict began and the peace line was built, were more likely to be antagonistic to the other sect (*ibid*).

Similar findings were reported in Massey et al's survey of 13,422 adults in post war Yugoslavia (Massey et al, 1999: 678). Individuals living in ethnic enclaves were found to be more intolerant of other ethnic groups than those in more cosmopolitan areas (*ibid*).

Thus while partition can resolve interethnic violence it does not resolve interethnic intolerance and antagonism. This has serious policy implications. Northern Ireland which has intra-state partitions is planning to remove the peace lines (BBC, 2012). However if antagonism remains high there will be a high likelihood of renewed sectarian violence. Furthermore, if partitioned enclaves become new states, interethnic antagonism merely becomes interstate antagonism. India and Pakistan remain the most prominent example of this.

Even disregarding the model's results Kaufman's proposed tactic of partition is highly idealised. There are numerous examples of partitions resulting in the creation of ethnic minorities. Tudjman and the HDZ, in trying to create a nation for the Croats, also created a sizable Serbian minority which could be easily radicalised by political entrepreneurs such as Babic and Martić. More importantly, it was this Serbian minority in the new Croat state that prompted Milosevic to adopt the policy of including all the Serbs in one state (Sell, 2002: 110). This ultimately legitimised the JNA's intervention on behalf of the Serbs in Krajina.

Similarly in Ireland the partition created a Protestant majority who could only maintain political hegemony if the partition remained in place and were thus suspicious of the Catholic minority who would become a majority if the partition was lifted. Partition in effect became the political issue that divided Northern Ireland along ethnic lines. The existence of the Catholic minority inspired the IRA to launch the Border Campaign from the Irish Republic to eliminate the partition that marginalised their fellow Catholics (O'Leary and McGarry, 1996: 157).

Secondly, the ethnic homogenisation of space often only occurs after violence has broken out. Boal found that segregation in Belfast increased significantly after episodes of violence and experienced jolts during the sectarian violence of the 1920s and late 1960s (Boal, 2002). East Beirut became 'Christian Beirut' due to Christian-against-Muslim violence such as Black Saturday, the Karantina massacre and the assault of Tel-Zaatar which prompted Muslims to flee from the area (Kliot, 1986: 210). Christians in turn fled to East Beirut from Tripoli and West Beirut to escape reprisals and violence from Muslims (*ibid*). Thus partition is not a preventative solution but rather a crude curative resolution that can only be adopted after the conflict has become intractable.

Lastly figure 2 shows a spike in all attacks just after the 500 generation mark for all ratios. Figure 1 shows that there is also a spike at the same time for ethnically motivated attacks before all ethnic attacks cease. This is probably because the move-to-enclave function that comes into effect at 500 time-steps leading to agents of different ethnic identity coming into contact as they migrate to their respective enclaves. This is reinforced by the fact that the spike in ethnic attacks is largest for the ratios that ensured a high level of ethnic violence

prior to migration and partition (100:0, 90:10, 80:20), while the spike is smallest for the 60:40 ratio which had the lowest prevalence of ethnic violence prior to migration.

These results bring up an important point concerning the danger of partition: it requires a population transfer of people, often in diametrically opposed trajectories, who may have been radicalised by previous episodes of interethnic violence. The best example of such a population transfer is the Partition of India in which six million Muslims and four and a half million Hindus and Sikhs became refugees trying to get into Muslim dominated Pakistan or Hindu/Sikh dominated India (Sarkar, 1983: 434). During this period refugees fleeing violence from one confession would find refugees of that same confession travelling to an enclave where they could dominate. Such encounters often sparked extreme episodes of violence. For example in mid-September 1947 between 121,000 and 164,000 Muslim refugees were preparing to leave Delhi and at the same time 150,000 Hindu/Sikh refugees were arriving in Dehli (Pandey, 2001: 122-124). The subsequent clashes between these two groups caused 20-25,000 deaths (*ibid.*).

Conclusion

The results of the simulation show that the total separation of two groups engaging in ethnic violence does not always cause a cessation of all violence. Instead divergence in political opinion becomes the primary motivator in violence. Thus partition works as a solution to violence if there is a complete political consensus within the warring ethnic groups. Furthermore while partition reduces or eliminates interethnic violence, it does not eliminate interethnic antagonism but rather preserves it by preventing amicable interaction between the two sides. Thus partition is a contingency plan rather than a solution. Lastly the simulation exhibits that the process of migration necessary to partition itself encourages interethnic violence. All of these factors reduce the validity of partition as a solution to ethnic conflict.

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