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Introduction

Violent conflict and control of the state

R. Brian Ferguson

No one expected it. In 1988, the Cold War died. The main frame of global political orientation disintegrated, and talk turned to how to spend "the peace dividend." Yes, there were a few lingering "hot spots" around the world that needed to be "tidied up," but the United Nations (UN) was taking care of that (Loomis 1993: 125). Like any moment in time, you had to be there. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, strange and especially brutal conflicts erupted in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa and elsewhere. The linkage of "nation" and "state," long unquestioned as the irreducible unit of global politics, suddenly seemed very questionable indeed. In some places, the future existence of a state, at least as we *thought* we knew it, was in doubt. Optimism gave way to bleak scenarios of collapse and carnage fed by nothing more than cultural difference. The term "civil war" seemed inadequate for mass violence carried out by irregular forces, deliberately targeting civilians. New labels were coined: "wars of the third kind" (Holsti 1996), "non-trinitarian wars" (non-Clausewitzian) (Van Creveld 1991), or simply, "new wars" (Kaldor 1999). Not the end of history that one scholar had predicted (Fukuyama 1992), to many it looked more like the end of civilization, "the coming anarchy" (Kaplan 1994). What was happening to the world? This book was started during that time.¹

In retrospect, the situation was less extreme than it seemed. Bloody intra-state wars, often involving cultural divides, had in fact been increasing for decades, especially since the 1960s (Gantzel 1997). There was indeed a sharp surge with the end of the Cold War, peaking in 1992. Perception of this violence was amplified in its contrast to the suddenly deflated great power rivalry, and if local bases of "low intensity conflicts" had been overlooked while subsumed to the East/West rivalry, they became very apparent in its absence. But the number of ongoing internal wars quickly fell back to the long-term trend line, and by 1995 was around the level of 1988 (Gurr 2000: 30-34; Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1997: 339). Some scholars have found grounds for optimism about further reductions in the future (Byman and Van Evera 1998: 45), while others point out the great number of potential eruptions still stewing out there (Aklaev n.d.; Gurr and Marshall 2000). In 1998 and 1999, the number of major internal armed conflicts surged back up to the 1992-93 level, primarily due to new fighting in Africa (SIPRI 2001). No one expects such conflicts to disappear in the near future.

Many of these conflicts hit anthropologists like a train, engulfing field situations which at the start of their research had been peaceful. That too was not new – it had happened in the 1980s, especially in South and Central America. As discussed in this volume by Warren, those earlier situations gave rise to an analytical framework focused on government repression and popular resistance. But the newer violence was different, commonly pitting one broad category of people against another, rather than targeting politically active opponents to the status quo. Although the contrast between struggle along lines of identity versus those of ideology can be drawn too starkly (e.g. Kaufmann 1996), ignoring overlaps and obscuring origins, in general terms the difference is quite real (Van den Berghe 1990: 13), and this challenges us to develop new paths toward understanding.

Over the past fifteen years, anthropologists have produced a substantial literature on violence within states, including monographs (Brown and Fernandez 1991; Daniel 1996; Feldman 1991; Kapferer 1988; Lan 1985; Markakis 1990; Richards 1996; Tambiah 1992, 1996; Taussig 1987; Taylor 1997) and edited collections (Carmack 1988; *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 1994; Das 1990; Fukui and Markakis 1994a; Halpern and Kideckel 2000; Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997; Nordstrom and Martin 1992; Nordstrom and Robben 1995; Rich 1999; Riches 1986; Robben and Suarez-Orozco 2000; Sluka 2000a; Turton 1997a; Villalon and Huxtable 1998; Warren 1993a; Young 1993a; and see Nagengast 1994). Most of this work reflected new theoretical interests quite independent of the established anthropology of war (see Ferguson 1984, 1999; Haas 1990; Otterbein 1973; Reyna and Downs 1994; Simons 1999; Van der Dennen 1995). Although a wide variety of theoretical perspectives are employed in these works, prominent among them are efforts to understand violence through explication of local systems of meaning. In several, actual physical violence, bloodletting, is looked at as only one part of a range of conflicts, along with more routine injuries of structural and/or symbolic violence.

The cases collected here complement but do not duplicate that perspective. This volume aims to develop a new anthropological approach, one that emphasizes the anthropological premise of *holism*. Our approach to political violence integrates structures, processes and beliefs ranging from the world system to the grass roots, from the most global trends in political economy to the most local subsistence and symbolism. In the cases discussed here, the late 1980s and 1990s saw a fundamental challenge to existing states which went far beyond routine politics, and which in one form or another played out along lines of contrasting identities. Born during what seemed like a global political meltdown, the goal of this collective effort is to develop a new anthropological framework for understanding internal political struggles *in extremis*. It provides a guide to the big picture, and how the parts fit together for all those future situations where a state implodes into identity-linked violence.

In Peru, Linda Seligmann shows how the Maoist Shining Path emerged out of rural social and political contradictions, and tried to mobilize Quechua peasants against urban, mestizo rule to create a radical communist regime. Johanna

Lessinger portrays the fundamentalist Hindu challenge to the secular charter of India, and its orchestrated “mob” violence against Muslims and other targets before and after its capture of government. Bette Denich discusses the historical moment when Yugoslavia came apart, setting the stage for ethno-nationalists to use terror and war in attempts to carve out new “pure” states. Anastasia Karakasidou focuses on what happened when “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” tried to cultivate a new national identity, and thus provoked intense opposition from Greeks who perceived yet another threat to their painfully constructed sense of nationhood. Liberia, the oldest republic in Africa, was torn apart by irregular armies which, as Diana Brown describes, took on ethnic identifications. Similar “ethnicized” wars occurred in the post-colonial states of Angola and Chad (discussed by Helio Belik and Stephen Reyna respectively), leading to chronic territorial fragmentation that obstructed central rule. In Somalia, Catherine Besteman considers escalating warlord violence which draws on an existing structure of clans to destroy any semblance of central government. In the culturally diverse highlands of Papua New Guinea, Andrew Strathern and Pamela Stewart discuss how a central government that never had administrative control is attempting to use popular reaction against rampant criminal violence as a unifying national quest.

Arranged in this order, these studies illustrate a rough progression from situations where the future existence of the state seems secure (if politically contested), through ones where states are fragmenting into smaller states, to areas where the sovereignty of a national government is in serious doubt. Other cases could certainly fit in this collection. Studies of Cambodia, Afghanistan and Tajikistan were sought, but proved impossible to include. Time has brought new candidates – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Kosovo. Any additional cases would bring in a different mix of factors and processes, but even a complete compilation of crises would only raise the issue of situations where conflict was not so extreme. The goal of this work is not to exhaust all possibilities. Indeed, one might say that a problem of current research in political science is the proliferation of an unwieldy number of categories and factors applicable to different situations (see Ayooob 1998: 46; Brown 1997; Van Evera 1997: 128–130).² Our collective goal, rather, has been simply to gain a better understanding of recent struggles by comparison of several cases, to identify factors in common within the variation, and thus to get a handle on the mind-boggling particularities of specific situations. The objective was not to create an encyclopedia, but rather to help develop a general framework that could be applied, always with caution and modification, to other and future contests.

A few themes were identified in advance as particular concerns, and are discussed in the five commentaries following this introduction. Eric Wolf gives us a brief history of the “nation-state,” and considers the special problems of being peripheral in today’s global capitalist economy. Joseph Tainter makes us examine our preconceptions and prejudices about complexity and collapse. Yale Ferguson, a political scientist, cautions us about the use of “the state” as a category in fact and theory. David Maybury-Lewis examines issues of states as they

relate to the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples. Kay Warren emphasizes the need to understand local struggles in terms of the distinctive cultures of the participants. In this Introduction, I will present one view of the conclusions supported by all these discussions and cases, a preliminary map of the interrelationships between global connections, control of the state, nationalist programs, ethnicity and culture, "ethnic violence," and identity politics. Before closing, the Rwandan genocide is considered as a unified application of the synthesized findings. The opinions stated are not necessarily shared by other authors in this volume.

Global connections

The signal importance of outside connections for generating and shaping local violence among "tribal" people has recently received much attention in the anthropology of war (Blick 1988; Ferguson 1990, 1995a; Ferguson and Whitehead 2000a). On a parallel track, world system theorists have explored external factors aggravating warfare in the global periphery (Boswell and Dixon 1990; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1993; Nagel and Whorton 1992; Schmidt 1990; White 1990). The authors in this volume were asked to consider how recent global processes were affecting the local violence they encountered.

Discussion may begin with the global system of states, its historical rise and its restructuring after World War II, as described by Wolf. The United Nations became the gatekeeper for international recognition, and protector of the norm that the state was the only legitimate basis of sovereignty, as discussed by Maybury-Lewis. As far as established powers, great and small, were concerned, all land area and much of the sea was under at least the nominal authority of some state (Herbst 1997: 375–378; Holsti 1996: 73–79; Taylor 1995). As often noted, the breakup of old empires often led to newly created states, with no prior political coherence. Writing about the weak political integration of post-colonial countries, especially in Africa, Herbst (1990; 1992; and see Ayoob 1995: 173; Southall 1974) notes that one of their most important supports was the tacit agreement of both superpowers that existing boundaries should be upheld. Should internal controls weaken, one superpower was always ready to move in where the other's client faltered, preventing collapse in a way highlighted by Tainter. But with the geostrategic rivalry ended, there was a sharp retraction of political and material support to that end.

The post-Cold War era began in 1988 with the collapse of the communist system which preceded the break up of the USSR.³ It had two primary dimensions: the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the end of Cold War polarization and superpower support and control over client states. The crumbling of Soviet central control opened the door to new kinds of politics within its former borders, contests that went beyond normal jockeying for power to the more rare and critical issues of defining new polities, creating new boundaries and new rules for playing the political game (Rubin and Snyder 1998). Violence in Tajikistan and Chechnya illustrate one kind of outcome. But it must be

remembered that most areas of the former Soviet Union went non-violently, if chaotically, to new forms of governance. Most crises occurred in two areas, Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus regions, where political elites clung to more authoritarian political and economic structures (see Motyl 1997).

The breakup of Yugoslavia parallels the fall of the Soviet Union, and probably would not have occurred if the USSR had remained unified – it had been both a perceived threat holding Yugoslavia together, and capable of intervening if it fell apart. Such an enabling of disintegration happened on a more global level as well, as weak client states lost their powerful patrons. This was most apparent in Africa. As one indicator of this, combined military assistance from the US and the USSR to African governments, which ran at \$3,287 million per year from 1980 to 1988, dropped to \$332 million per year from 1992 to 1994, leaving many African national armies in disrepair (Byman and Van Evera 1998: 38; Herbst 1997: 377). But again, most of Eastern Europe and many African states have not experienced an upsurge in internal violence since 1988, and in Central America and other Cold War hot-spots the effect has been just the opposite.

At another level, the end of the Cold War has had varying implications for domestic politics in many countries. As described by Seligmann in relation to Peru, it upset political alliances along the anti-communist fault line, which actually gave Sendero more room to maneuver. In India, on the other hand, Lessinger describes anti-communism as alive and well, in fundamentalist Hindu form. In other chapters the issue is not discussed directly, but around the world it has been observed that the collapse of communism and its opposition has encouraged ethnic identification as a fallback ideology in power politics (Brubaker and Laitin 1998: 2). In sum, the "decompression effect," as international relations theorists call it, has been a critical factor encouraging violent conflict in some areas but not others (Acharya 1998: 169–180; Ayoob 1998: 32) – in this volume, in the former Yugoslavia, Greece/Macedonia, Liberia and Somalia. The fall of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War are essential facts for understanding the surge of violence around 1992, but they do not explain where, when and why war broke out, and where it did not.

In many cases, the later history of the Cold War itself is an important consideration for understanding violence. While "realist" strategic thinkers (see Y. Ferguson, in this volume) lament the lost stability of a bipolar world order, it was bipolar disorder in much of the less-developed world (Acharya 1998: 165–171). Many of the wars that have torn apart states are continuations of struggles initially supported by the US or USSR, as in the cases of Angola, Chad and Somalia, discussed in this volume. The Cold War poured lethal weapons into many regions (Hartung 1994). In Uganda in 1995, an AK 47 cost as much as a chicken (Byman and Van Evera 1998: 39). The huge amounts of small arms (responsible for 90 per cent of recent casualties) circulating in both legal and black markets makes any concept of arms control very difficult (Cooper 1999)⁴ – aggravated at the time of this writing by US opposition to UN efforts at small-arms limitations (Crossette 2001).

Less dramatic, less well-studied, but probably more important than any "decompression effect" are global economic trends. The new possibilities of political disintegration came on top of what for much of the less developed world was the "lost decade" of the 1980s, the global capitalist weakening that set in after the 1970s oil crisis, and falling prices for primary products (Herbst 1997: 376). Globally, the connection between major national economic setbacks and mass violence is so strong that Brown (1997: 20–23) concludes that the former is a necessary condition for the latter. Conversely, there are few cases where violence erupts in a booming economy. Indonesia is a classic illustration. Except for the long running struggle in East Timor, Indonesia was calm while it remained a World Bank success story. But when predatory international currency speculation combined with a corrupt and inefficient government to create a major crisis in standards of living, several latent social cleavages suddenly turned violent (Estrade 1998; Langhorne 2001: 32–33).

Peru and India, as discussed in this volume, experienced deepening ties to the world economy, yet their exports were so marginalized that growth was little or none. As IMF restrictions tightened, much of the population experienced increasing immiseration and uncertainty, directly setting the stage for violence. The "superfluity" of Yugoslavia's economy was masked by loans of petrodollars, but this just made the eventual decline even sharper. Greece constructed the Macedonian threat contemporaneously with a series of economic setbacks, but let it fade as economic benefits from regional trade grew. African countries faced with desperately weak markets for their desperately few exports had little basis for developing national economies or tax bases. Access to government has been, in some places, one of the very few arenas for tapping into wealth (Nyangoro and Shaw 1998; and see Southall 1974: 157–159).

In this context, three other aspects of the current global economy come to the fore. First is aid. The poorer the country, the more reliant on aid it tends to be. In Liberia, the Doe regime was utterly dependent on US government support, and fell when that was cut off. Somalia illustrates broader problems associated with humanitarian assistance, from governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (de Waal and Omaar 1993). Warlords' guns diverted its flow, which was then used to feed irregular soldiers and otherwise pay supporters. At the same time, those in local power abdicated responsibility for basic governmental services, leaving the job to NGOs. In these and other ways, humanitarian assistance and NGO presence have come to be major factors in the course of local conflicts, and not always for the better (Anderson 1999; Shearer 2000).

Second is the extra-official way products now enter international trade. This is not just a matter of free trade, but its militarization. As detailed studies in Berdal and Malone (2000) show, this must be recognized as an aspect of contemporary globalization that directly encourages internal wars and other violence.⁵ Increasingly multi-national corporations protect their enclaves with corporate mercenaries (Reno 1997), or through agreements with warlords. This includes legal acquisitions of petroleum, woods, etc., but also precious contraband such as "blood diamonds" in Liberia, as discussed in this volume, and of course, drugs,

as in Peru. In the past decade, several African countries have become transshipment points in the Asian–Euro–American drug trade, providing major support for local warlords (Segell 1999).

The disruptive impact of this trade is amplified by a third trend. The transnationalization of capital and workers weakened the economic power of governments, as discussed by Wolf. Latitude of government economic policy is even more sharply curtailed by conditions imposed by the IMF, three little letters which appear repeatedly in this book. Thus governments are often not able to respond to pressing needs or provide the patronage that brings internal support, while extra-governmental and often illegal operations, not recognized or constrained by the IMF, are increasing their wealth and power (Reno 1995; Richards 1996).

Other global processes affect recent domestic conflicts. The expanded role of the UN intervention in conflicts is obvious, but fraught with the potential to make conflicts worse (Thakur 1994). In a larger sense, the UN's avowed role as defender of state sovereignty – "[T]he U.N. seeks to preserve the nation-state as the very foundation of international life" (Boutros-Ghali 1993) – as discussed by Maybury-Lewis, is increasingly problematic (Thakur and Newman 2000). The expanding role of NGOs, beyond providing aid (see Fisher 1997), is a major part of what some see as the key development of contemporary globalization: the growth of horizontal cross-national connections, and the erosion of hierarchical national systems of control (Langhorne 2001: 10–35; Ury 1999: 92–98). Of special significance here are diasporas. Those who have moved away from their homeland can play a crucial role in developing a sense of national identity, and in various ways may increase agitation for independent national homelands (Appadurai in Gledhill 2000: 161–163). International religions, of course, may also play such a role, as Lessinger's discussions of India illustrate well. Also of signal importance is intensifying global communications. Concerning war in Sierra Leone, Richards (1996: xvii) makes a strong case that violence is shaped by and plays to "the media flows and cultural hybridizations that make up globalized modernity."

Finally, below the level of global process but linked to it is the increasing significance of regional developments in affecting internal challenges to states. This takes several forms. In parts of Africa, and in Chad and Liberia specifically, the old Francophone–Anglophone fault line has been re-energized with direct implications for military support (although France now sees its interests challenged more by the US than the UK) (Schraeder 1997). That same western African region sees increased influence of regional powers, Libya and Nigeria. Regional security arrangements are becoming more active and interventionist (Acharya 1998: 182–188; Talbot 2000), but can further complicate hostilities, as Brown discusses in relation to ECOMOG in Liberia (and see Schnabel and Thakur 2000 on NATO in Kosovo). Around the world, domestic political violence becomes a regional issue, through cross-border refugees, insurgencies, trans-border trade, and arms networks (Duffield 2000; Premdas 1991: 10–13), giving rise to what are being called "bad neighborhoods" (Kaldor 1999: 107–109).

Regional connections to national conflicts are dramatically illustrated in south Asia. The collapse of the USSR and its withdrawal from Afghanistan led not only to internal war there, but also to "blowback" (a CIA term applied to its former pupils) training of Islamic fighters for new central Asian states and elsewhere around the world. There was a surge of arms and fighters to Pakistan which spilled over into Kashmir, the course of which struggle will affect India's stance in dealing with its many other identity-linked conflicts, not to mention its nuclear face-off with Pakistan. Currently, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and central Asian states are very actively involved in prolonging the civil war in Afghanistan (Ganguly 1997: 203, 227; *Human Rights Watch* 2001; Rubin *et al.* 2001; Weiner 1994). "Internal violence" often does not stay that way.

Global connections are unmistakably significant, but the specific character and salience of external ties for understanding recent violence within states varies greatly. Generally, external connections shape local conflicts indirectly, working through domestic agents, institutions, interests, processes and collectivities, which themselves are products of earlier colonial processes (see Jenkins and Shock 1992: 180–181; Southall 1974: 160). This has led some to argue that recent violent conflict should be seen as internally, rather than externally, generated (Ayooob 1995: 189; 1998: 48; Holsti 1996: 128–140). Without disagreeing that it is local actors who make the violence, I believe that this should not be seen as an either/or question. Many aspects of the political game have been shaped by global connections. These may be foregrounded by those on the inside, who with substantial justification can blame current situations on a history of outside meddling. If agencies of the more developed world hope to ameliorate violent struggle in less developed regions, it is important to keep these interactions in the conceptual foreground. They are factors that the outside world can affect to shape the future. And at present, they seem to be dangerously misunderstood in important circles.⁶

The state

This volume is distinguished by an explicit focus on the state. But the state itself is a problematic concept. Wolf recounts that forms of states differ radically over a long history of state-building projects. Y. Ferguson cautions about the danger of reification, learned the hard way in political science and international relations theory. "The state" is not a unitary thing. It has no interests, it does not act. States are made up of a variety of individuals and institutions, which may have competing or even contradictory concerns. Ferguson sees the problems inherent in this concept as so great that theory might be better off without it. Wolf also appreciates those dangers, but sees value in conceptualizing states as multi-dimensional political arenas, with important tasks including management of the conflicts generated by capital accumulation, and construction of hegemonic national cultures (see also Anderson 1991; Evans *et al.* 1986; Giddens 1985; Hobsbawm 1994; Mann 1988; Tilly 1975).

At least some of the dispute about the meaning and utility of "the state" is semantic, a product of ambiguous phrasing and connotations inferred from past

associations with different schools of thought. Abrams (1988: 69–72), following Miliband, recognizes a "state system" made up of all the institutions and personnel of political and executive control – what I would call government – but distinguishes this set of powerful structuring agencies from the fiction of an interested, acting entity called "the state." Yet that fiction keeps creeping into and distorting analyses, so better to dispense with "the state" and use more precise descriptive terminology. Skocpol (1985: 3, 9), in contrast, sees the term "government" bringing along functionalist notions of a neutral space where different interests work out their disagreements. The state, for her, is a "weighty actor" made up of "organizationally coherent collectivities of state officials," which structures relationships both between civil society and public authority and within civil society itself. Thus it is most important to "bring the state back in" to comparative and historical analysis. It is hard to see much substantive disagreement between these seemingly opposed positions. As another example, in this volume, Tainter and Y. Ferguson start off very differently in conceptualizing the state, but end up not that far apart as they progress through discussions of current trends.

Anthropology has its own history of this debate. In the preface to *African Political Systems*, Radcliffe-Brown (1940: xxiii) concluded "The State ... does not exist in the phenomenal world; it is a fiction of the philosophers." In *The Evolution of Political Society*, Fried (1967: 227–229) took issue with similar conclusions, and described "a state" as a *kind of society*, where governmental institutions of coercion maintain a stratified social order. Major anthropological theorists on political evolution have continued to see states in this way (Carneiro 1970: 28; Haas 1982: 76, 172; Harris 1995: 151). Government, a set of institutions superordinate over ties of kinship, maintains – by force, if necessary – a social system where order goes from the top down and extraction from the bottom up. Unlike developed governmental institutions among, for example, the Cheyenne (Hoebel 1978) or the Iroquois (Morgan 1972), governments of states *rule*. Although this supports the validity of "the state," in contrast to Abrams, it dovetails with his most important insight (1988: 75–76): what is very real about "the state" is the myth of its independent existence. Belief in the state is acceptance of being ruled. The *idea* of the state legitimates the compulsory control of a population by a political elite.

Missing from the discussion up to this point has been the idea that states are territorially bounded, with a capital that at least theoretically exerts sovereign rule up to those borders (Buzan 1991: 90–96; Ruggie 1993). Even as internal political systems collapse, borders by and large remain acknowledged, if not respected, by neighbors. The world is divided into territorial "countries," a meaning of "state" that is accepted even by Y. Ferguson. International political culture demands it. This is hardly a trivial meaning. The bounded character of states makes them "containers," enabling a government to concentrate its allocative and authoritative resources, thus increasing its administrative power (Giddens 1985: 13) – even if those resources have recently been undercut by globalization (see Wolf, this volume; Comaroff 1995). Within state boundaries,

that power is applied in a spatially structured way by spatially constituted administrative organizations (Rubenstein 2001; Taylor 1994; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995). It is the boundedness of a state that makes government such a "weighty actor," and social geography within those bounds structures how that weight is thrown around. Seen this way, "government" loses any functionalist tint of neutrality. Governments develop policies which affect the course of lived history within their borders. Peru's agrarian reform, seen as critical by Seligmann, though reflecting broader international trends, was particular to Peru.

It is the fact that so much violence is happening within the borders of states that has caused so much consternation among policy makers, who are far more accustomed to dealing with good old-fashioned international war. Conceptualization of the state is a critical factor in efforts to develop new policy. "Realist" international relations theory is premised on an unexamined idea of the state as the indivisible unit of politics (see Y. Ferguson, in this volume; Ferguson and Mansbach 1991). From this premise, recent problems of internal violence are the result of "weak states" (see Migdal 1988) or "state collapse" (see Zartman 1995a), and the solution is international support to build up these states (Holsti 1996; Zartman 1995a). Ayoob (1995, 1998; and see Buzan 1998) criticizes standard realism for neglecting the problematic character of Third World states, comparing their current status to an "earlier stage" of state construction such as that described by Tilly (1975) for fifteenth-seventeenth-century medieval Western Europe. But Ayoob's "subaltern realism" reiterates that state weakness is the problem, and its strengthening the solution.

Anthropologists, on the other hand, are much less likely to envision "the state as the security guarantor for a populated territory" (Zartman 1995b: 5). In their sharing of the lived experience of peoples around the world, it is the local authorities who are often the source of violence and *insecurity* for the population (Nagengast 1994: 114-116; Sluka 2000b: 1-6; Van den Berghe 1990: 3-4; and see other citations on page 2 of this chapter). The state as a system of compulsion and exploitation is nakedly evident. As Rummel (1997a, b) has quantified, "death by government" has been several times more likely than death by war in this century. Too often "the greatest threat to most of the people in the Third World comes not from internal war, but from their own leaders" (David 1998: 93).

Nor are anthropologists likely to be persuaded that wars within Third World states can be understood as an early stage in a unilinear scheme of state evolution. The economic and political structures forged in violent struggle are reacting to very contemporary global inputs previously discussed, and promise more war without leading to increasing integration (Berdal and Malone 2000; Rich 1999; Kaldor 1999: 90-111). Elites associated with government may avow global norms about state sovereignty, as Ayoob (1995: 71-77) stresses, but that is because such norms support their own control and interests, and it is pursuit of those interests which commonly takes precedence over considerations of state building (David 1998: 87-90; Herbst 1997: 393).

The idea that it is state weakness or collapse that is the cause of fighting ignores the fact that it is government itself which is the object of struggle. The

institutions and instruments of government, though not unitary, are pinnacles of the structural landscape, magnetized nodes of wealth and power. This is especially true in post-colonial states, as summarized by Villalon (1998: 11-14; and see Fukui and Markakis 1994b: 8-9) for Africa but with application beyond that continent. Even if "weak" compared to some others, these governments are often "overdeveloped" or "swollen" in terms of employment, they play a critical role in domestic reallocation of available resources, and they claim the major benefits of mineral and other resource extraction. Sometimes, the struggle involves a widespread movement of people who want the government off their backs. Other times, it involves a range of actors who use force to wall off government authority so they can pursue their own profit through violence and patronage - warlords (Rich 1999). Commonly, the goal is to keep or gain control of government. As Reyna notes for Chad in this volume, internal wars "have involved officials, ex-officials, and would-be officials killing each other ... for control over the state." Discussions which stress the weakness of governments as the cause of internal violence, with the policy implication that external powers should do more to prop them up, ignore the fact that in most cases the government is what the fighting is all about. The more resources and power channeled through it, the more valuable a prize it becomes.

Reno (1998, 2000) has developed the concept of the "shadow state," a version of patrimonial rule attuned to current global political economy. The shadow state is a network of elite power and patronage that exists alongside the official government institutions. Those at its pinnacle exploit the facade of government, but personally "call the shots" and appropriate as much wealth as they can by tapping foreign aid and enclave-based production of valued commodities. The beneficiaries of this system, Reno argues, have a vested interest in promoting insecurity (hence the need for patrons) and a war economy (smuggling, arms trade, etc.), and are against diversion of resources to public goods. Old-style capital accumulation via exploitation of peasant production is too limited, and would require counter-profitable expenditures on security. As Reno points out, such systems are unlikely to create peace or develop functioning institutions of government. Brown discusses this concept as it applies to Liberia, and raises the question of what violence transpires when the established shadow network and official government are separated by an usurper.

Always and forever, there is competition over who controls government, or parts thereof, and what the government controls. But this volume focuses on struggle that goes well beyond normal politics (see Bailey 1969), and which lays siege to constituting elements of a state. One type of siege challenges basic premises of government, such that the old state persists, but under a radically different regime. A second type challenges the territorial bounding of a state, more by partition than conquest, but rule by *some* central government is not in doubt. In the third type, there is real doubt whether *any* centrally dominating government will establish any semblance of control over its official borders in the future. The case studies reflect these categories and this order.

Peru's war since the mid-1980s superficially resembles the insurgencies

common in Latin America since the 1960s, fueled by oppressive conditions endured by much of the population. But the nature of the challenge to the state and the government response has been unique, perhaps even postmodern. The Maoist strategy of people's war was transferred to the Andes, carried on while international communism collapsed, funded by drug money, and finally put on the defensive not by a fascist general, but by a "politically neutral" technocrat. What was at stake in this struggle was not the future existence of Peru – Sendero was defined by its borders – but rather the basic character of the Peruvian state, which the rebels promised (or threatened) to utterly transform.

India faces multiple challenges, including international boundary conflicts and insurgencies along regional, tribal and other lines which could lead to some boundary changes. But the challenge described by Lessinger comes from a movement which is adamant about preserving current territorial integrity. Hindu fundamentalists aimed to (and did) succeed the Congress Party which had ruled since independence with a commitment to secularism. Secular government had not delivered the goods for many people, and its increasing debility was such that it was incapable even of attempting force against orchestrated mobs. The Hindutva combine's goal is a state which supports their vision of Hindu culture as the basis of society.

Yugoslavia, paralleling processes in the Soviet Union, also had a party identified with government, which also failed as a provider, but with a suddenness that created a new opening for those already in power. Here men, often previously Communists, framed a governmental crisis in terms of ethnonationalism – to carve up the old state territory. The breakup of Yugoslavia was followed by serial warfare to create new, "pure" states. The state is dead; long live the state.

Greece is one of the strongest states discussed in this book. Its imagined adversary, which became officially known as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, is most fragile, virtually forced into statehood by the course of events in Yugoslavia and seeking to consolidate its position via historical self-definition. ("FYROM" illustrates Tainter's point that states are unlikely to collapse completely when other states are in the neighborhood.) But the construction of contemporary Greece, against several other possibilities, is too recent even to let potential alternatives go unchallenged. Taking all the above cases together, we see that different constructions of historicized identity can be used to overthrow, divide, reinforce or generate states, as will be discussed later. But in all cases, the future existence of *some* central government dominating within defined borders seems assured.

Liberia is one of the oldest of the contemporary states of Africa. For a century and a half, the USA supported a patrimonial, repressive government. US aid papered over existing cleavages and tensions, even after the fall of the Americo-Liberians. But when the superpowers lost interest, and regional powers became more active and divisive, the center could not hold, and violent struggle broke out over who would rule. Still, as Brown observes, there is no move for division or secession. All participants in the conflicts accept the existence of a Liberian state, and expect it to solidify again in the future.

The future of states is more ambiguous in other parts of Africa. Post-colonial states in Africa were weak to begin with, created by pronouncement along arbitrary colonial borders, and lacking both evolved instruments and experience in government (see Wolf, in this volume). Angola exemplifies this fragility – given no preparation at all for self-government, torn apart by wars since its inception, at no time has it constituted a single state at peace. Much of that fighting directly involved one of the hottest superpower confrontations of the late Cold War. But unlike other former superpower hot spots (e.g., Nicaragua), the Angolan war kept going when the Cold War ended. The continuing turmoil reflects both the weakness of the central government in anarchic Luanda, lacking even a functioning currency, and the wealth to be had by whoever could control the regions into which Angola had fragmented.

The brief history of independent Chad is another tale of woe. State breakdown in Chad is not so much territorial fragmentation as it is an oscillation of governmental expansion and collapse. A relatively fixed political center which represents the only avenue for rising above subsistence labor periodically gains control over its nominal territory, but never truly consolidates this position. Taxes go unpaid, roads crumble. Soon a regime is falling back before shifting coalitions, powered by internal and external interests, which develop "autarkic institutions of violence." This has happened five times.

Somalia was not a typical post-colonial creation. Seizure of power by the "scientific socialist," Siyad Barre, profoundly altered the character of the state. First with Soviet and then US support, this government set out to forcibly remake society in its desired image. The state was more a predator than servant to most Somalis. Local resistance grew just as superpower interest and support lapsed, and the Somali state blew away. It is hard to imagine any central government reestablishing control over diverse locally grounded powers, and in fact a major region has declared its independence. According to Besteman, Somalia today may be one of the "most stateless places on earth."

Highland Papua New Guinea might be characterized as one of the "last stateless places on earth." Government control, as measured by the prohibition of local warfare, arrived within living memory, and proved fragile, crumbling as Australian authority receded. Government since then has been a constant negotiation with local tribes, with the latter often setting the terms. "Tribal violence" returned, but in forms that changed with the highlands' changing connections to electoral politics, government, and the world beyond (see Strathern 2000). High levels of violent crime and brigandage in the highlands testify to the effective absence of government authority, yet some of the offenders seem politically well-connected. Violent crime itself has become an issue upon which government and local peoples can try to negotiate some new form of contract.

The cases collected here illustrate the great variation which exists across challenges to states. The cumulative effect of these and other internal crises and carnages created, in the early 1990s, the fear that some general political sea-change was underway. But there was something else that made the violence of the early 1990s so frightening. In stark contrast to the cool calculus of national

interests invoked by realist descendants of Clausewitz to explain modern warfare, these wars seem *driven* by apparently irrational personal attachments, primal loyalties and conflicting identities (see Van Creveld 1991). They were a challenge to the very idea of the modern nation-state, which for decades had been so fixed in our political firmament that we could blithely overlook the blatant problem of that hyphenated construction. Today those two meanings of "nation" are butting heads. Struggling contenders within one country advance radically different ideas of what the nation is or should be.

Nationalist visions

The word "nationalism" first appeared in 1774 (Hechter 2000: 5). It is a modern, Western invention, which like so many others has swept over the world. Many meanings have been ascribed to this malleable term, often tied to the political agendas of specific practitioners or analysts (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1997; Hechter 2000; Hobsbawm 1994; Rossel 1997; Smith 1983; Van Evera 1997; Young 1993b). The core idea, however, is that a bounded sovereign country should be associated with a "nation," an identifiable people, contrastable to other peoples. "[A] broad consensus does exist in the scholarly literature that ... nationalism consists of political activities that aim to make the boundaries of the nation – a culturally distinctive collectivity aspiring to self-governance – coterminous with those of the state" (Hechter 2000: 7). Comaroff and Stern (1995: 4) add a second very important meaning: "the authoritative claim of a nation-state to expressions of common sentiment and exclusive commitment, of loyal attachment and joint responsibility, on the part of its citizens." The *sine qua non* of nationalism is a defined territory. You cannot be a nationalist without it (Hechter 2000: 13–14; Smith 1983: xiii, xxxv). Thus, territory assumes symbolic value beyond the material worth of what it contains. Recognized boundaries so provide an analytic bridge from nationalist movements through states to the global system.

Nationalists take the existence of a state for granted, it is a premise of their program. The idea of "the state" legitimates the fact of rule, nationalism legitimates who controls the state, for whom, and to what general ends – even if it means killing those who do not fit in. To the degree that a nationalist vision confers *legitimacy* on a movement or government, it reduces, but does not eliminate, the need for punishments or rewards to secure compliance. A successful nationalist program increases the security and power of a regime.

Nationalist visions are collective, employing unifying tropes such as "family," "community," "folk," or "the people," yet nationalist visions typically privilege some social categories over others. They are supposed to encompass all people within state borders, but often are associated with one region, such as the coast and not the interior as described in this volume by Belik. They make a claim for unification of city and country which would have seemed absurd in earlier epochs (Eriksen 1993: 102), but typically find most advocates in cities, especially capitals. National identity is said to transcend class, but it is typically supported by the intelligentsia (Smith 1983: xxii). Political elites often identify *their* culture

with *national* culture (Van den Berghe 1990: 8). Particular nationalisms may be identified with one generation, as seen in Africa with the passing of the leaders of nationalist movements whose personal charisma had been a foundation of regime stability (Villalon 1998: 12). Nationalism often is forwarded as a defense of traditional womanhood, but commonly results in the suppression of women's movements and freedoms (Enloe 1989; Sapiro 1993: 42–45). Generally, particular nationalist visions are likely to benefit the core group which propounds them, and to be well received by those larger numbers who can anticipate personal benefit (Hechter 2000: 30, 123–124).

Given such contradictions, it is not surprising that advocates of new nationalisms may proselytize them with an enthusiasm suggestive of millennial movements, well-known for their capacity to unify disparate groups. Indeed, in some cases, nationalist and religious missions are one (Lessinger, in this volume; and see Mahmood 1996: 20). But as Smith (1983: xxiv–xxix) concludes, usually this is "a matter of stylistic affinity, of a common fervor and rhetoric, not of doctrine or organization." Nationalism comes not from a prophet, but from calculating political entrepreneurs; not from revelation but from self-serving interpretations of established knowledge. And it does not spread purely because of its appeal, but is imposed through violence and political control of education, publications, and other media. In a more general sense, however, nationalism *can* be seen as being like a religion (Kapferer 1988), as a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals which draws on local political culture to, in Geertz's (1979: 79) words, "establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations" that impel action – for instance, the hierarchy of Sri Lankan nationalism versus the egalitarianism of Australian nationalism.

The very term "nation-state" can be seen as an expression of faith. The concept derives from a France–England model of national unity, which Y. Ferguson and Maybury-Lewis remind us has precious few exemplars in the real world (see Buzan 1991: 72–77). Recent events have focused attention on two fundamentally different meanings of "nation": an "imagined community" which comes together through unifying civic institutions within a state, *e pluribus unum*; or some collectivity recognized as culturally distinctive in its own right. This distinction has been glossed as "civic" or "assimilationist" nationalism, versus "particularistic" or "ethnic" nationalism (Brown 1997: 8–9; Hechter 2000: 6; Tambiah 1996: 11–12; cf. Comaroff 1995: 262–267). Until recently, these two meanings of "nation" could be elided, if not in the present, at least as an inexorable future development.

For decades, both socialist and capitalist powers propounded different versions of the trinity of economic development, sociocultural modernization, and a mildly patriotic nationalism. Elites and scholars the world over, even non-aligned ones, espoused the faith that rising prosperity would wear away "pre-modern" social institutions and identifications in favor of a secular individualism. Enlightened self-interest and participation in the spreading, beneficial institutions of civil society (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1999) and the state would foster new allegiances to governments which effectively mediated relations

with the world outside, to the benefit of all. There was "a religion of modernization" (Smith 1983: xxviii, 41-64). Instead, the opposite happened. Modernization and the increasing power of governments created more to fight over, and the need for regional bases of mobilization. Commentators from very different perspectives agree that, contrary to expectations, the modern state and nationalism have generated or intensified, rather than diminished, ethnic identification (Geertz 1963: 120; Guidicri *et al.* 1988: 8; Horowitz 1985: 5; Smith 1981: 18-20; Stack 1986: 6; Tambiah 1988: 3, 1996: 12-18).

These sub-national identifications can be tolerable while the modernization paradigm is backed with increasing or at least anticipated prosperity. In some places, the dream came true, at least for some people, at least for a while. Several East Asian countries stood out in this way until recently, whereas they now illustrate how quickly economic decline can lead to identity-linked violence. But for many, prosperity never happened at all. Worse, economic reversals threatened even the status quo. Aspirations were raised, then dashed. Assaults on the purveyors of modern nationalism have been mounted by segments of society which were stranded while others prospered. The cases in this volume well illustrate permutations on nationalist visions.

In Peru, the Velasco reforms were formulated by urban intellectuals to bring the rural population more actively into national society, with education a key instrument. Rural folk responded with enthusiasm for education, but found it wanting. They found the nationalist vision meant progress for some but not others, dividing the countryside into winners and losers. Much of the rural middle class, including teachers, saw their aspirations first lifted and then blocked. These failures opened the door for Sendero's revolt. In the struggle that ensued, rural peoples, besieged at times by both Sendero and the government, managed to hammer together their own civic institutions and networks, with strong ties to the towns and cities. It is this more cohesive civil society that is being targeted by new nationalist visions from politicians wearing Inka symbols. The political future remains most uncertain, with increased rural integration creating new and not entirely untroubling potentials.

The national idea of India remains firm, though challenged by numerous local movements. But which nationalism will triumph? The Congress Party which had ruled since independence was firmly committed to development and a secular, modernized country. But its impact over decades had been highly uneven. The Hindu nationalists assembled a cross-caste coalition of the left-behind. Ideological opposition to Westernization was tied to a promise of economic relief. Now Hindu nationalists have gained control of government. Their loose network allows anti-Islamic and other violence to continue while government disclaims responsibility. But the BJP's ideology limits its potential political base, and global economic realities force them to follow paths trodden by their predecessors. All these tensions stretch forward into the future, for a governing party which found that detonation of a nuclear bomb was a great unifying national symbol.

Yugoslavia was until recently a model of modernizing, integrating nationalism, with its geographic integrity accepted on faith up until the moment it fell

apart. With all that has happened since, it seems surprising that Milosevic began as a technocrat, an economic reformer. But with the sudden, dramatic failure of development, official transcripts of nation and progress crumbled, and hidden ones burst forth. Politicians seeking survival hit on ethnonationalist themes as a fallback, reinforced by rapidly polarizing views in different regions. European recognition of initial claims to national independence triggered a cascade of mobilizations, dramatically illustrating that acceding to new ethnic boundaries may only set off new warfare.

The history of Greece provides an insight into the long difficult process and the human costs of construction of national identity. It shows the role of commerce, church, and state, in not only fending off competitors, but in stifling local alternatives. Historians are very much a part of this process. In Greece, it worked. But when the economic prosperity which had encouraged assimilation stumbled, "slavo-macedonians" found a minority approach linked to FYROM appealing. The reaction was strong and delved deep into the grass roots, with Greek identity proclaimed from t-shirt to bumper sticker. Macedonia itself is another story, and its rocky road to national identity is at present the stuff of newspaper headlines.

Liberia takes us into all the problems of nationalism built on Africa's colonial past. Its national elite is "civilized" - English-speaking, literate and Christian. As its patrimonial government gradually extended rule away from the coast, it fixed the cultural variation it encountered into tribes, and developed an enclave economy which did not unify the country. The 1970s efforts at modern, de-tribalized nation-building held sway primarily in the capital. Doe's coup came from the tribal areas, and once in power he and his opponents effectively used these cleavages to divide and rule. Yet the war did not destroy the intersubjective sense of Liberians that Liberians they were, above their own more particular identities. Ironically, the fact that so many became cross-border refugees reinforced their Liberian identity even more.

Angolan nationalism is even more problematic. Divided into tribes by colonialism, given independence with no preparation, unified only by past anti-colonialism, coping with fragmentation from territory through ideology, it grapples with what is "genuine Angolidade." When elections produced thirteen political parties, there were thirteen views on the subject. While Savimbi and the UNITA rebels espouse an assertively African version (Heywood 1998), Belik shows us some of the gyrations in the capital, the plumbing of history and myth, the funding of national authors, the use of ambiguous and double-edged symbols - such as a Russian tank on a pedestal, or the sinking "Angolan Tower of Pisa" - and above all, the claim that the authentic Angolan must be a Christian.

In Chad, nationalism is again at center stage. As in Angola, there have been strenuous efforts from the center to develop a national identity. Tombalbaye's vision was first based on modernization, then Islam, then "Tchaditude." The sequential opponents from the hinterlands also pressed nationalist visions for the "grande famille tchadienne," as their justifications to govern. But analyzing events in sequence shows that the nationalist visions are *ex post facto* rationalizations of quests for power already begun.

Somali nationalism was championed by "scientific socialist" Siyad, who invaded Ethiopia in an irredentist campaign to unify Somalis. Internally, his drive to modernize the nation meant an attack on "tribalism" by literally outlawing clans, even as he covertly used their old structures to solidify support and weaken enemies. Rapacious predation on societal resources by Siyad and those who followed in his wake devastated civil society, setting the stage for warlordism which seemed unneeded of unifying visions. Now we see efforts to reconstruct a workable social order from the ground up, but what nation may emerge from this is very much open to question.

Papua New Guinea is both similar to and different from Somalia. In its great diversity there had been no national narrative, but local clan loyalties remained strong. Given the weakness of government (lacking the categorical support of key players in the Cold War), no direct suppression of clan activities was possible. But roads have been joining areas together, and new wants and possibilities (and perhaps not yet enough failures) have stirred aspirations for progress. Integrating factors such as Christianity and Tok Pisin, the *lingua franca*, are being used creatively and symbolically in careful negotiations between local groups and with government to create a more civil society, less rent by violence. If a meaningful PNG nationalism emerges, it will be through transactions such as these.

In these cases and others, there is no argument against modernization, development, education, or democracy. Problems associated with modernization or political openings tend to be associated with abrupt changes from older systems, and/or the *failure* to deliver what was promised. In the long run, however, they offer the surest safeguards against internal violence (Brown and de Jonge Oudraat 1997; Kaldor 1999; Rummel 1997c). It is true that new democracy and press freedom may be used to whip up hatreds (Premdas 1991: 14–15; Snyder and Ballentine 1997), but not in most transitions to democracy (Acharya 1998: 175–176). Developed democracy provides the best, though not foolproof, protections against internal state terror (Sluka 2000a: 7) and interstate war, as two democracies rarely if ever go to war against each other (the "democratic peace") (Russett 1990). Moreover, for some time there has been increasing global consensus that democratic elections are the only valid basis of legitimate governance (Gottlieb 1993: 20–24).

But failure of development and democracy bring ideological vacuums. For those passed over by the dream of modernization, there was both a loss of faith in the brightly constructed future, and a need for some other vision to replace it. That brings us to ethnicity.

Ethnicity and culture

As Eriksen notes (1993: 100), despite "the remarkable congruence between theories of nationalism and anthropological theory of ethnicity ... the two bodies of theory have largely developed independently of each other" (cf. Smith 1981, 1983). Within academia, and anthropology in particular, ethnicity has become a virtual industry (Alonso 1994; Ausenda 1997; Cohen 1978; Gonzalez and

McCommon 1989; Hall *et al.* 1996; Vincent 1990; Williams 1989). There are serious differences in the way that terms are used. In the sub-Saharan Africa literature (e.g. Vail 1989), for instance, "tribe" is commonly used for what I would call "ethnie." As I use the terms, "ethnie" refers to a people who are perceived by themselves or others as being *culturally* distinctive – who are seen as having a distinctive way of life – whether or not they have any political organization as a group (see Eriksen 1993: 10–12). A tribe, in contrast, is a *polity* – a political organization uniting different local groups (see Ferguson 1997; Fried 1975; Haas 1990: 172; Southall 1970). Ethnies may encompass one, many, or no tribes; tribes may amalgamate people from more than one ethnie – a variable relationship not unlike that of nation and state. A related term is clan, one division in a wider and multifaceted system of social organization, based on constructed descent, which can act as a basis for political cohesion at different, more-or-less inclusive levels of organization. If one fairly broad level of clan organization regularly acts as a political unit, this may be called a tribe.

Theoretically, from the work of the past thirty years there has emerged a widely accepted synthesis – with plenty of argument remaining, of course – of three basic views of ethnicity (Gurr 1993: 3–5; Smith 1983: xxviii–xxxii; Tambiah 1996: 21; Turton 1997b: 6–14; Young 1993b: 23–25): (1) ethnies are socially constructed, their defining characteristics and boundaries a product of dialectical interactions with others ("constructionist"); (2) ethnic identity is used instrumentally, to obtain political and material advantages in competitive or conflicted situations ("instrumentalist"); and (3) ethnic identity can be a powerful psychological factor strongly affecting perceptions and actions in political struggles, beyond instrumental advantage ("primordialist").

The term primordialist has two meanings, which must be clarified. As often applied to recent conflicts, it is a shorthand way of saying "ancient loyalties and animosities," the idea that current fights are continuations of a grudge match going back centuries (e.g. Kaplan 1993; or a *New York Times* headline about Indonesia, from 24 March 1999: "Ancient hatreds, new battles"). The other meaning, as originally proposed by Geertz (1963: 109; and see Stack 1986), refers to ascribed identities with a powerful emotional hold. The operative word is not "ancient," but "givens." It is the original meaning which can be synthesized with constructionist and instrumentalist approaches to ethnicity. What I will refer to as the "ancient animosity" perspective contradicts them – ethnicity is *not* constructed but ancient, the conflict is *not* about political and economic interest but about identity before all else. Although the ancient animosity lives on in popular discussions, it has been widely considered and uniformly rejected (Ayoob 1998: 48; Brown 1997: 3–4; Comaroff 1995: 247–248; Hamburg *et al.* 1999), as it is in this volume.⁷

In this current synthesis, ethnic identification is anything but natural. Ethnies are not timeless, unchanging social groups – although it is important to note that their boundedness, fixity at birth, and salience varies greatly from situation to situation (Bell-Fialkoff 1996: 80). They are inherently relational, the product of historically fluctuating "dialogues" with people who are not of that ethnie –

either horizontally layered and ranked, or unranked parallel divisions, or some combination of both (Horowitz 1985: 21–24). To be sure, cultural variation is entirely real, but sharp breaks between cultures are far more the exception than the norm, and more often than not internal differentiation within ethnics provides the raw material for additional or other divisions. (In a sense, the situation is quite similar to that of "race."⁸) That is, until ethnic identity is used for political mobilization. Crystallization of ethnic boundaries is promoted "from above" by state agents and agencies and "from below" by local representatives and brokers. In their interaction, ethnic identity becomes crucial, a categorical filter strongly affecting a person's life circumstances and chances. Recognized identities, as Wolf, Seligmann and Brown each discuss in this volume, are labels and gateways for interacting with power centers. In atmospheres of political competition, salient ethnicities come, go, and are transformed with astonishing swiftness, however fixed and ancient they may seem at any one point. Examples of instrumental ethnogenesis are legion (Ferguson and Whitehead 2000; Fukui and Markakis 1994a; Hill 1996; Vail 1989).

The impermanent, contingent, relational character of ethnicity in no way diminishes the significance of local culture, although local culture is itself continually being transformed by connection to larger global processes, and by violence itself. As emphasized in the contributions to this volume from Warren, Seligmann, Denich, Brown, Strahern and Stewart, local culture provides distinct phenomenologies, different ways of perceiving and reacting to events (and see Nordstrom and Martin 1992; Warren 1993a). Local culture is a system of meaning, providing the cognitive material essential for political definition, communication and mobilization. The very existence of a collective identity is expressed and bounded by adherence to commonly held symbols (Bell-Fialkoff 1996: 80–89; Linke 1999). The symbol of a group is a passage to the self. Collective identity is integrated with individual identity (a point stressed by new social movement theory, drawing on established understandings from social psychology (Tarana *et al.* 1994; Morris and McClurg Mueller 1992)).

Critical symbols are dense, multi-layered, and ambiguous (Ortner 1973; Turner 1967), and symbols linked to group identity can mean many things to different people. By their nature, they are suited to ongoing reinterpretation by leaders, even though they may be experienced as "unconditional, inescapable, and timeless" (Turton 1997b: 21). It has become axiomatic that ethnic leaders manipulate critical symbols to fashion a self-serving vision of "us." But while the autocratic, manipulative, top-down generation of these bloody visions should never fade from sight, it is not enough, as Warren reminds us. It may be comforting to conclude that it is a few bad men, rather than "the people," who are to blame for the carnage, but along with coercion there is undeniably a passionate, deadly commitment to the cause by many of those carrying out the orders. It is important to understand how promulgated messages resonate with lived experience to truly motivate killing and atrocity. Local belief systems must be understood in order to understand how individual persons take a message and act on it, make sense of it, live with it, resist it, and recover from it, as

Hinton (1998a, b) details regarding the Cambodian genocide. Here is where it is important to get down to local cultural texts and tropes.

One criticism from outside anthropology of "culturalist" approaches to "ethnic violence" is that they cannot predict or explain when and why it actually occurs.⁹ But the eminent historian of war Jeremy Black (1998a) has concluded that *in general*, "cultural suppositions about the use of force" are critical in determining when bellicosity is rational, "why some disputes lead to war and others do not." Ideas about violence are crucial to the way it is acted out, who it is acted out by, and who it is directed against. Violence is among other things a performance, a ritual, a symbol, a communication in itself, deeply related to one's sense of self and other (Ferguson and Whitehead 2000b: xx–xxviii; Kapfner 1988; Mahmood 1996: 15–16; Tambiah 1996: 309–311; Taussig 1987). It is "a unified language of material signification, circulating between and formative of antagonistic blocs" (Feldman 1991: 1). This should be self-evident with regard to suicide bombers of various persuasions, or mass rape as occurred in Bosnia (Enloe 1998; Rujali 1998; Stiglmeier 1994). Without understanding the roles of culture, torture, mutilation and other atrocities – elements which undeniably shape the course of violence and the possibilities of reconciliation – the study of ethnic violence will remain just a mind-numbing glimpse into the heart of darkness.¹⁰

The sense of its part is also an important part of any culture. In situations where peoples have long shared close contact and become quite similar, a belief in different histories may be the biggest distinguishing feature between them (see Horowitz 1985: 52). Popular history is the ultimate symbol of collective identity. It is the becoming, "how we came to be who we are." Other symbols are enfolded within a version of the past, gaining their power from perceived historical association with the group. Along with political leaders themselves, idea workers in education and the media play a crucial role, emphasizing, ignoring, and recasting events in the past. They shape and disseminate highly partisan constructions, usable in political struggle, particularly (in this volume) in the cases of India, Yugoslavia and Greece. To any historian not engorged with partisan passion, these narratives may seem transparently inadequate – mytho-histories – but they are not made up of whole cloth.

Constructed, manipulated histories must be true enough to the known past, and responsive enough to present anxieties, to be believable, to become compelling to those involved in struggle. As with all symbols, power comes not from objective reality, but from this shared belief. Cries to "our history" then evoke strong if variable images for each person. They may be especially powerful for the young, still in the throws of identity formation, and particularly to socially superfluous young men, who otherwise find themselves adrift, unwanted and disrespected. Not knowing any better, they may rally when those who *do* know, those with *power*, tell them of their historic mission, which also allows otherwise unattainable gratifications. It is the internalization of these mytho-histories by combatants themselves that has led so many outside commentators to accept the explanation of ancient loyalties and animosities.

Beyond "ethnic violence"

Having discussed the meaning and importance of ethnicity and culture in political struggle, it is now imperative to critique the idea that contemporary violence can be explained as "ethnic conflict." While many eminent students of the subject use the word "ethnic" to apply to almost any group imagined to have a common origin (e.g. Horowitz 1985: 53; Maybury-Lewis, in this volume), in my opinion, indiscriminate application of that label to conflict situations impedes our understanding. "The very phrase 'ethnic conflict' misguides us. It has become a shorthand way to speak about any and all violent confrontations between groups of people living in the same country" (Bowen 1996: 3; and see Brubaker and Laiton 1998: 4-5). As Gantzel (1997: 123, 136-138) notes, it is analogous to the concept "proxy wars," which muddied our understanding of collective violence in previous decades. In his survey of internal wars from 1945 to 1992, very few began in ethnic confrontations (the Rwandan genocide is one), though many took on ethnic dimensions as they progressed. Moreover, the great majority of ethnically oriented conflicts within nations have not led to violence (Licklider 1998: 126). A related idea, that cultural difference itself gives rise to violent conflict, although it does receive credence in high-policy circles (Huntington 1993), is contradicted by so many ethnographic examples of symbiotic coexistence that it is hard to see how anyone could assert it. There is no necessary connection between actual cultural diversity and violent conflict. Heterogeneous peoples get along well, and nearly identical peoples can be riven by factional strife (Bowen 1996: 10-12).

Even careful scholars tend to apply the label "ethnic conflict" more widely than is strictly warranted. Eriksen (1993: 2) writes that "most" of the thirty-five major armed conflicts in the world in 1991 "could plausibly be described as ethnic conflicts," including violence in Northern Ireland. In a massive current study of state failures initiated at the request of Vice-President Gore and Secretary of State Allbright, "ethnic wars" are one of four categories of intra-state violence, accounting for fifty-nine of 233 instances between 1954 and 1996, including "violent contention among clan-based warlords" in Somalia (Gurr *et al.* n.d.: 3-5). Gurr and his colleagues certainly understand the variable, complicated, and changing nature of identifications, which elsewhere (Gurr 1993) are more accurately referred to as "communal groups" or minorities. Perhaps Gurr *et al.* fall back to "ethnic" in frustration over the mismatch between our limited vocabulary and an extremely complicated reality, a problem with which this author is very sympathetic. People "know what ethnic conflict means." But our inadequate language may be seriously misleading.

"Ethnic" is a multivocalic *symbol*, meaning different things to different people, and expressing and eliciting strong reactions. This makes it perfect for political discourse in arenas where policy is made. Lately, "ethnic" has taken on negative tones, like the old "tribalism" with which it is often interchanged.¹¹ It conjures up the idea of "ancient loyalties and animosities". The image that violent conflict bubbles up from the people themselves once central restraining power has weakened is persuasive. It epitomizes the Hobbesian myth-charter justifying

coercive government, and acts as a magnet for widely disseminated pop-science speculations about an evolved instinct of "in-group amity, out-group enmity" (Fukuyama 1998: 33; Shaw and Wong 1987).¹² The label can be a way of objectifying and delegitimizing others, an excuse for washing one's hands of the matter. Casual or even studied application of "ethnic conflict" may actually close minds and make it more difficult to understand what is really going on. We need to rethink "ethnic conflict."

As Y. Ferguson reminds us in this volume, there are a great many bases of political identity formation, and the analytic task is to understand why certain ones become salient at a particular moment (see also Bell-Fialkoff 1996: 74-106). The cases presented here suggest a set of variables which in different combinations structure struggles along identity lines. These include cultural difference or ethnicity, but also distinctions based on geographic region, rural versus urban living, class or caste position, race, language, religion, tribe, clan, generation, and gender. Not all or even most are involved in any given case, at least as described in these chapters, but some combination of several is evident always. This section discusses such compound identities as portrayed in the chapters to come.

In Peru, speakers of Quechua languages vary considerably in culture, and historically they have lacked a sense of common identity, but the Quechua became an ethnic - at least in the eyes of *mestizos* - through a common history of oppression. Since it has been *mestizos* who have done the oppressing, this can also be seen as a racial divide. Since those being squeezed have tended to be peasants and agricultural laborers, Quechua identity has a major class and rural character - indeed the insurgents' strategy was to strangle the cities. Sendero Luminoso arose among a frustrated rural middle class, with special appeal to those women who were additionally constrained by conventional gender relations. It saw itself as a vanguard leading Quechua, and had some success in recruiting the economically dispossessed; but eventually it created even more indigenous opposition by its racism, its violation of rural norms of consensus and equality, and its terror. Through this conflict, the state-encouraged, extremely un-indigenous rural civil defense structure, by bringing together local leaders and fostering common approaches to common problems, may have contributed to the development of a new pan-Quechua sense of ethnic identity.

In India, we see similar elements combined in very different ways. "Hindutva," or Hindu-ness is an ideological system which converts political issues into religious ones. It is not so much matters of faith that are at issue, but rather a competing vision of culture. Hindu fundamentalism is arrayed against a government which has enshrined secular administration. The religious call emanates from the cities. Its source is high caste/class Hindus left behind by modernization and threatened by claims of women and those of low caste. But the new divinely ordered world they envision appeals to many - high and low, rural and urban - who justly feel victimized by "progress." Poor young men with no future are especially attracted to this alternative, and provide much of the muscle used against the movement's enemies. Hindutva also appeals to Hindus

in diaspora, cultivating an international identity and support network. Muslims are Hindurva's prime scapegoats (despite centuries of coexistence and mutual influence), but religious animosity is also very serviceable against Christians, regional separatists, leftists, and any other political opponents.

Understanding the breakdown of Yugoslavia begins with exploring the standard Leninist pattern of local administrations linked to local ethnic majorities (see Aklav 1992; Barfield 1994; Rudensky 1992). When regional economic disparities between the north-west and the south-east developed through government policies, this took on a distinct, though officially suppressed, ethnic character. When Communism suddenly lost legitimacy and living standards crashed, political and intellectual elites quickly tapped these suppressed critiques, constructing ethnonationalist histories complete with scapegoats. Strictly controlled media conjured up new "realities," with each crystallizing group portraying itself as the righteous victims of perfidious others. A deliberate policy of "ethnic cleansing" hardened the boundaries, as "Muslim" went from a religious preference to an ethnohistorical divide. Again, young men with little hope provided the shock troops (see Enloe 1998). However recently these oppositional identities were constructed, atrocities, many by deliberate policy, gave them an emotional immediacy that fueled further hostilities.

In Greece, we see the historical heritage of an earlier empire, the Ottoman, which used religion as its basis of administrative divisions, over a variegated cultural tapestry. With the breakup of the Ottoman empire, an earlier wave of nationalism spread out from cities into the more Slavic countryside, both offered and imposed by Church, government and school. Slavs became Greek. This case also illustrates the relevance of anthropological efforts to provide more accurate constructions of culture and history. Karakasidou's term "slavo-macedonians" in itself challenges Greek claims to the heritage of Philip and Alexander, so much so that one publisher dropped her book for fear of violence against their employees. At the time of this writing, Macedonia also illustrates the internal political differences among Serb and Albanian peoples, and the polarizing effect of calculated violence.

Liberia has a very different but equally complex history of mixed and shifting identities. A convoluted historical process installed former US slaves in government, who in typical colonial fashion imposed cultural and political divides on the natives. The Americo-Liberians were distinctive in terms of language, culture, religion and racial characteristics. They were identified with the state from its creation, and used their position to subjugate others. Ethnic and/or tribal identities were forged in the city, then transferred to the countryside and institutionalized in political districts that channeled access to resources, law and power. After the fall of the Americo-Liberians, the Doe government – though officially pluralist – played the ethnic game, entrenching oppositions. When politics turned into war, contenders adroitly used the regional ethnic terrain to their advantage. Ethnicity thus configured the war, just as war radically altered the meaning of ethnicity. But as Brown emphasizes to great effect, the application of ethnic labels, often erroneously, by those waging war must not be mistaken for

self-perception primarily in ethnic terms, versus terms of clan, village, economic position, etc. When the fighting died down, so did the salience of ethnic labels. Here again, gender and even generation appear in twisted form – as Brown related at the conference which gave rise to this book – with boy soldiers who rape old women because "that's what men do."

Angola's seemingly endless war is structured by the ethnic and racial division (of "mulatto") imposed and played upon by the Portuguese. From the anti-colonial struggle into the Cold War superpower maneuverings, three military movements emerged, each associated with geographic regions with substantial economic autonomy and dominant ethnic identities. In each, elite elements of local ethnics developed their own identities and ideologies for war. Two interior-based movements challenged the ruling MPLA, which they saw as promoting a mixture of Portuguese and Umbanda as the Angolan national culture. The appeal of the more persistent rebels, UNITA, was both racist and anti-urban, against the stereotyped mulatto elite of the capital Luanda, thus generating more middle-class support for the MPLA. Problematic populations became "others" to be blamed, such as the Luandans returning from Zaïre with French accents, while suspected criminals were brutally killed by dwellers of shanty towns unreachable by law.

Chad offers variations on the same themes. In the repeated cycle of region-based rebellions against the political center, local elites used local cultural themes in mobilizing local followers. However, Reyna demonstrates, first, that these conflicts cannot, in any analytical sense, be seen as "tribal," as they did not involve existing tribes, or disputes between tribes, or use tribal institutions. Nor can they be understood as "ethnic," since they did not arise out of "primordial" loyalties, or privilege as a class some particular ethnic group(s). What Reyna sees involved here are factions seeking wealth and power through government, backed by various outside powers for their own geostrategic interests.

If cultural differences were the source of violent conflict, Somalia should have enjoyed peace, being entirely Islamic and ethnically more uniform than any other country in Africa. But if the violence cannot be ethnic, is it "tribal," or clan-based? Siyad outlawed tribal (clan) institutions, thus destroying their normal functioning and internal authority. Yet he continued to rely on men from clans closest to himself, thus intensifying rivalries. The region-based rivals who brought him down of course reflected the major clans of their areas. While a northern region succeeded with little notice, the main game was in the south. There, urban elites intensified their predation on rural groups, relying especially on an African "racial" division at the occupational bottom of southern clans. In this situation, wardords rose by mobilizing marginal young men, set loose from clan constraints, whose guns earned them both food and power over their seniors. In a sense, this is a *negotiation* of clan-based conflict.

Papua New Guinea illustrates the non-correspondence of cultural differences and conflict from the opposite direction. Extreme diversity – 700 languages for three and a half million people – actually impedes development of regional movements.¹³ Of two kinds of conflict discussed in relation to Papua New

Guinea, one actually does involve clan issues and institutions, most notably the sanction of violence for failure to live up to clan obligations, but with very new elements and inequalities mixed in. New economic disparities between individuals and regions result in efforts to extract wealth through compensation payments. Backing candidates for island elections entails new animosities and costs. (At our meetings, Strathern described a practice of enemies demanding opponents' votes as homicide compensation.) The other kind of violence is criminal, associated with "raskals," usually young men who operate outside clan institutions, but are often connected with businessmen or politicians. In both these and other kinds of violence, such as that involving assault sorcery or elections, women are often the victims.

Although the authors in this volume were given no checklist of topics to cover, generalizations still emerge. All the conflicts described in this volume have a strong spatial dimension involving some combination of geographic region and position in the rural-urban continuum. Nationalist and other identities, along with critical governmental decisions, emanate from central cities, especially capitals (see Herbst 1997: 376, 385) to meet counter-nationalisms and identifications that dwell in or emerge from the hinterlands. Location situates people in relation to ecology, resources, production regimes and markets, and places them in the hierarchy of controls that flow from cities to towns to villages and countryside. Where people live in most cases determines how they make a living, how well they live, and how they relate to whatever is being contested.

Interests are further specified by broad social divisions. Social class, especially middle-class status, shapes political allegiance in several cases. Other major categories are elites associated with the state, food producers (versus everyone else), and a "lumpen" element of those with little prospect of permanent employment who are easily recruited for violence.¹⁴ Caste and "race" outline important categories with class correlations, at the same time bringing in major markers of social identity. More generally, throughout the cases there is a rough division between those benefiting and those suffering from the status quo, and this in part reflects people's connections to those in power. Political elites and those who seek to replace them typically attempt to create a coalition of supporters that crosses class lines.

Gender, generation, and age are primary identities which strongly shape one's lived experience, interests and perceptions. Armies and women's movements around the world are only the most visible expressions of these ordering principles. Educated women of rural Peru, raised a little only to be obstructed and repressed, gave strength to Sendero Luminoso. Elsewhere, women are special targets of violence, and polarized violence unsurprisingly will overwhelm agendas of women's rights (see Warren 2000: 228-229). More commonly, poor young men, powerless and sometimes disparaged by both women and elders, have been those more easily turned to violence. This has emerged as one of the great commonalities of recent conflicts - young men without prospects, isolated from regular politics, are regularly recruited and launched by the powerful when there is dirty work to be done (Abdullah 1998; Enloe 1998; Tambiah 1996: 17).

As Collier (2000: 94), an economist, points out, the success of a rebellion depends in part on the cost of attracting recruits, and uneducated, young men with no other income opportunities, come cheap.¹⁵

Religion and language are very well-suited to mass organization. Flexible and able to encompass people who differ in many other ways, both provide a basic aspect of personal identity which can hook up with structuring parameters of interests. Like ethnicity, a recognized common language is not a given, as exemplified by the ideological breakup of Serbo-Croatian into four putatively distinct languages in the 1990s (Hudson 2000). Religion, and sometimes language, can be an imposition of urban centers on hinterlands. Language, and sometimes religion, can be regional, and thus integral to ethnic identity. Ethnic identity itself typically crystallizes in urban interactions, and then in one way or another is applied to restructure the country (see Enloe 1980). This social and symbolic geography is only partially aligned with, and sometimes in opposition to, grounded social reality. This creates a big potential for all sorts of problems - if someone is looking to pick a fight. Where routine interaction with the land, the neighbors or the state has given rise to bounded clans or tribes, these confer an immediate political identity, and a ready-made though highly malleable basis for organization, as do no doubt a host of more modern local social structures which are less likely to receive anthropological notice.¹⁶

It is important not to reify any of the analytical categories used in this discussion. They morph into each other, as clan becomes tribe, as religion becomes ethnic identification becomes anyone in a region, etc. Endless combinations come and go, all with endless variations in their social construction by active political agents, each with distinctive implications for political action. It is also important to think about how these categories apply to individual persons. Ethnic identity, however important it may be in a given situation, is only one dimension. Individuals as described in this volume have multi-dimensional, compound social identities. A person is not just a member of a particular ethnicity, but an individual of specific gender, age, residence, occupation, religion, etc.

Each dimension of a person's position in society can affect their practical interests, the way they interpret the world around them, and the symbols they respond to, as well-described in relation to Afghanistan by Canfield (1986, 1988).¹⁷ In many cases, what is interest and what is self-identity may become a purely academic distinction. Interest and identity are not separable, but fused, and any issue can take on identity overtones. When identity is involved, issues will always be about more than interests, since one's sense of self opens the door to passions beyond material concerns. A successful pitch for mobilization will play to existing material needs, and threaten tangible punishment for recalcitrance, but it is much more compelling if it becomes a matter of identity. The identities involved, however, are anything but simple and uniform.

A growing political force will not be constructed upon ethnicity or any other single factor. It will bring together an initially amorphous and shifting constellation of compound identities and interests. Far from resuscitating some ancient social collectivity with ancient animosities - however much those symbols may

be invoked – the coalition which goes into political combat is itself *new*, and responding directly to issues of here and now. How can we refer to such a thing? If “ethnic” is misleading, is any other term more accurate? None that I know. Thus I would suggest coining a new term: “identerest.” An *identerest group* is an ad hoc amalgamation of different kinds of people who, in a given historical and political situation, come together to pursue common material and symbolic gain. An *identerest conflict* is one in which at least one such group targets what it perceives as another such group said to pose a collective threat.

This term and idea calls attention to another fact repeatedly shown in this volume, that collective violence is a *process*, with a developmental history. Political entrepreneurs who seek to create a following will construct a message that appeals to the interests and identities of different kinds of people, and appeals to each person in different but congruent ways. Those who hear the call are likely to respond differently, according to how well the message plays to their total, compound sense of self and self-interest, and what potential for action is associated with who they are. Some will support from the sidelines, some will rush to the core, some will reject the message. As Warren emphasizes, we must not lose sight of counter-narratives, which may provide a crucial means for resistance, for communicating across conflicted boundaries, and for re-establishing peace.

The critical role of political leaders or “ethnic entrepreneurs” seeking to maximize their own wealth and power has been recognized in many studies of internal political violence and war (see, for example, Carnegie Commission 1997; David 1998: 87; Kahl 1998).¹⁸ Even when social collisions are driven by mass demands and fears rather than instigated from the top down, leaders secure their elevated position through progressively more confrontational “ethnic outbidding” (Kaufman 1997: 176–177). This is a dialectical process. As Warren, Seligmann, and the “identerest” concept highlight, self-interest is culturally and situationally constructed. Political leaders catalyze, but are also products of, prevailing ideas about others (Lake and Rothchild 1997: 109–111). “The challenge for elites is therefore to define the interest of the collective in a way that coincides with their own power interests” (Gagnon 1997: 137). A key conclusion of the Carnegie Commission was that since political leaders are so critical in fomenting strife, “the methods and insights of psychiatry and of cognitive, clinical, and social psychology must be brought to bear” to understand that role (Hamburg *et al.* 1999: 7). But presumably such individuals have always been with us. If we want to understand how their psychology is translated into collective violence, it is most important to understand how their messages fit with local culture and conditions.

Forging an identerest coalition is phase one. Abstractly at least, three other phases can be identified. Phase two is creation of an internal “security dilemma.” As realists try to adapt their theory to recent events, a key bridge has been to posit that in “weak states,” the security dilemma at the heart of their theories of international “anarchy” exists within a state – that is, since the state cannot guarantee security, one group has good reason to fear another, and that is where conflict begins (Lake and Rothchild 1997; Posen 1993), a perspective

which dovetails with influential earlier theories of ethnic conflict (Horowitz 1985: 179–180). But such fear is hardly automatic or universal (nor are ethnic groups equivalent to states (Brubaker and Laitin 1998: 12)), and promotion of such fear is one of the best documented roles for ethnic entrepreneurs (Kaufman 1997: 167–170). Still, where lived experience, current conditions and relentless propaganda lead people at the grass roots to conclude that old authorities will not protect them, and that others who have victimized them in the past may be doing it again soon, there will be a strong tendency to fall back into local networks – of kinship, clientage, neighborhood, faction, sect, etc. – and get ready to fight (Denich, in this volume; Simons 1997: 82–85).

Phase three is polarization. This social dynamic has been well studied (Gagnon 1997: 137–140; Lake and Rothchild 1997: 109–112), as has the process of psychological projection which demonizes others (Robben and Suarez Orozco 2000: 30). Some of the emotional power may be *because* new enemies were previously so close, activating themes of treachery and betrayal (Appadurai 1996: 154–155). The most critical and clear phase shift is to actual violence (Brubaker and Laitin 1998: 3–4). Nothing is a better indicator of carnage to come than the sudden appearance of small organized groups of violent men (Posen 1993: 33). Once one side begins to kill others because of some categorical identity, when atrocities stain a social distinction in blood, then that single dimension – be it ethnicity, religion or whatever – becomes the overriding identity. As Ignatieff (1997: 38) described in relation to Croatia, once the killing began, all the variations and nuances of local co-existence were swept away, leaving participants themselves to wonder at how, in such a short time, one became “only a Serb.”

Violence hardens sides, undercuts middle ground, poisons reconciliation (Kaufmann 1996: 63, 1997: 268–273). Yet realists such as Kaufmann may overstate the universality and permanence of such effects, for even where much blood has been spilled, in places such as Sarajevo (Halpern and Kideckel 2000: 14) or the center of Sikh nationalism (Mahmood 1996: 2), and through the pages of this book and the daily newspaper, we find those who struggle against further violence and continuing polarization.

Summary and an application: Rwanda

The substantive conclusions of this introduction can be summarized as follows. An international system has required and supported the universality of territorially defined states. The end of the Cold War, after many years of Cold War aggravations and weapons proliferation, sharply curtailed external supports to central governments, and in some cases encouraged aggressive challengers. Global economic processes play an even more central role, including over a decade of increasing economic immiseration of populations linked to changing commodity markets, the rising importance of humanitarian aid capable of diversion or control, new forms of transnational trade that skirt established channels, and regulation of local government activities by international financial

organizations. Together these forces have undermined the control of many governments.

States are bounded units with political centers, and government administration is socially and spatially biased. Within this total context, it is local political actors (not external forces) who create actual violent conflicts, seeking to alter who controls a government, who a government controls, and/or how a government rules. Thus internal violence is not just a matter of the weakness of government; rather the government itself is the prize that is being contested. Often, a parallel network of the political elite controls and uses the official institutions of a government for its own power and profit, and they may actually promote instability, war, and government dysfunctionality. Conflicts over control of government play out in three main ways: radically altering or replacing the social base of those who rule and the premises of government; tearing apart old states into new domains with different geographic centers of rule; or retracting the rule of a center away from peripheral areas.

Those who would rule develop a nationalist ideology for control of a territory and state, which justifies themselves and hopefully persuades others to join in their project, although its appeal will vary according to the characteristics and circumstances of different people in their arena. In recent years nationalist visions followed a creed of modernization and development which commanded respect only as long as it delivered the goods, or seemed likely to in the future – a creed which has lost its following in many places. Modernizing nationalism, like any other, was spatially and socially rigged to favor or harm different kinds of people, and it inevitably generated counter-ideologies, whose strength grew as development failed.

Spatially structured inequalities are often keyed into local populations with distinctive cultures, or ethnies. Local cultural identities are not fixed but socially and historically constructed. They are manipulated for political advantage, and yet local culture and identity are very important to the way people perceive themselves, their situations and their interests. Ideas about violence affect its usage, and its usage is itself an expressive, communicative act that redefines a conflict situation. Ideas of historical origins are also critical in providing lessons and symbols that can be used to define collective identity, and to variably construct understandings of current circumstances and options.

But cultural difference or ethnicity is only one of several important aspects of identity. Others include region and rural/urban location, political-economic position, religion, language, caste, race, tribe, clan, gender and age. Variable mixes of such features will produce variable responses to any calls for mobilization. As identity and interest are often fused, or can be made that way in conflict situations, I suggest that the groups and conflicts which involve them be called by the neologism "identerest," rather than labeling them all "ethnic." Identerest conflicts have four distinguishable opening phases, although these will overlap in practice: (1) formation of a core identerest group; (2) creation of mutual fears or a "security dilemma"; (3) polarization and projection of negative attributes; and (4) calculated violence. From that point, full scale war may

ensue, although there is also the possibility of countervailing constructions halting the escalation.

To illustrate how this summary perspective can be applied, I will consider the Rwandan genocide, frequently cited as the epitome of ethnic violence, and a case not otherwise discussed in this volume. In April 1994, thousands of Hutu went out to deliberately slaughter Tutsi. Around 800,000 Tutsi died, in an orgy of violence that stunned the world. But the closer one looks, the less Rwanda seems to illustrate ancient loyalties and animosities, and the more it seems a product of the forces and processes discussed in this Introduction. This overview does not offer any new information. It is based on the thorough research already undertaken, by de Waal (1994), Gourevitch (1998), Hintjens (1999), Lemarchand (1994), Longman (1998), Mamdani (2001), McNulty (1999a), Percival and Homer-Dixon (1995), Prunier (1995, 1997), Taylor (1999), and Turton (1997b). (Direct citations will be provided only for the most focused discussions of particular topics, or specific points not frequently reported.) My goal here is to illustrate the feasibility and utility of approaching mass political violence as a layered problem, with contributing factors running from the most global to the most local, and from subsistence to symbol.

Factors external to Rwanda set the stage for genocide. Before the colonial era, autonomous political developments created a centralized state which saw the Tutsi superordinate over Hutu. German then Belgian administrations and the Catholic Church, however, rigidified this formerly fluid distinction, increasing Tutsi exploitation of Hutu, and fixed it as *racial*, with profound consequences. As the global wave of decolonization approached in the 1950s, radical tendencies within the ruling Tutsi minority prompted both colonial and Church administrators to shift support to Hutu, who overthrew the Tutsi elite in a social revolution in 1959–1961, with independence following in 1962. After that, the east/west divide of the Cold War had little impact on this non-strategic area, but the French moved into the vacuum left by departing Belgians to bolster their Francophone sphere in central Africa. In the 1970s, Rwanda became a showcase of externally supported modernization, development and democracy, the "little Switzerland of Africa." In 1986, however, plunging prices for its main export coffee began the downward slide. Lost income meant soaring international debt, leading in 1990 to an IMF/World Bank structural adjustment program that severely curtailed government spending on welfare and services. Famine in southern Rwanda and rising death rates without major government response aggravated social tensions.

At this point, regional politics moved center stage. In the violence that accompanied the revolution of 1959, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi fled to neighboring Uganda and elsewhere. In the 1980s, they helped overthrow a Ugandan government that was trying to push them back out. In 1990, the Ugandan regime they had helped to install turned against them, giving impetus to a military invasion of Rwanda in late 1990 by the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Localized slaughters of Rwandan Tutsi began at this time. The RPF received support from Tutsi in diaspora in Africa, Europe and North

America. Meanwhile, the French government began a massive increase in military support for the governmental Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), which grew from 5,200 in 1990 to 35,000 in 1993. The French also trained an elite Presidential guard, which in turn trained many of the lead killers in the genocide (see McNulty 1999a). Regional tensions were vastly exacerbated in 1993 when Tutsi officers in the Burundi army led a coup, killing a popularly elected Hutu president, along with an estimated 50,000 Hutu. International pressure forced them back to their barracks, but without further punishment. Burundi developments precipitated fighting between Hutu and Tutsi in the neighboring North Kivu area of Zaire (Prunier 1997).

In this volatile, violent context, intense pressure by the UN, the Organization of African States, Rwanda's main financial donors, and NGOs combined with RPF military advances to force President Habyarimana to the bargaining table in Arusha. Plans for a coalition government were signed, with a cease-fire in August 1993. Continuing pressure kept Habyarimana to the timetable, with the transitional government due to be installed on 8 April 1994. A Structural Adjustment Program payment of \$30 million was conditional on political progress, and set to expire on 23 April (Hintjens 1999: 258, 262). According to de Waal (1994: 4), up to this point Rwanda "was a model for a transition to democracy and the peaceful resolution of armed conflict," with international supervisors inattentive to the extremist factionalism that was building against Habyarimana within his own government. On 6 April, President Habyarimana and the President of Burundi were killed when a ground-launched missile destroyed their plane as it returned to Kigali. The genocide began immediately.

At this point, international response was notable for its absence. After debacles in Somalia and Angola, no one was willing to intervene. The humanitarian price was not just the death of 800,000 people in Rwanda. The genocide, and the RPF's subsequent defeat of the Rwandan army, set the stage for a drawn-out series of violent clashes throughout the Great Lakes region, involving Rwanda, the former Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda, in what is being called "Africa's First World War." These distinct but interrelated conflicts are being driven by grabs for valuable resources, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, by high government and military officials, using national armies crossing borders, creating or cooperating with local warlords and criminal networks (see "Panel of Experts" 2001; McNulty 1999b; Prunier 1997; Weinstein 2000).

Rwandan developments illustrate the centrality of the state. First, as a country, all of the regional influences just noted were shaped by international borders, as membranes affecting the flow of people, ideas and violence. Policies originating in the different capitals are key pieces in the regional mix. Of critical importance is Uganda, which in many ways shaped the RPF invasion (see Mamdani 2001). The Habyarimana government had kept those Rwandan Tutsi refugees from coming back across the border since 1973, claiming that densely populated Rwanda (see Percival and Homer-Dixon 1995) simply had no more

land to support them (McNulty 1999a: 87). Within the geopolitical container of Rwanda's borders, administrative policies were decidedly skewed. Habyarimana's coup in 1973, following a time of economic stagnation, replaced regime domination by southern Hutu with northern Hutu, and power and benefits were redirected accordingly.

The genocide provides a glaring counter-example to the idea that state weakness is the cause of violence (Hintjens 1999; Longman 1998). Even in pre-colonial times, the Rwandan polity had been extraordinarily centralized and controlling. This had been fostered by external patrons during its golden years of development, with chains of command that reached down to individual households. The *interahamwe*, the local militia groups which did much of the killing in the genocide, began as state-controlled rural self-help groups which were internationally praised as essential to Rwanda's development. "[I]f anything, the state became so powerful and efficient that it crushed and overwhelmed Rwandan society completely" (Hintjens 1999: 245, 268). The actual genocide, all observers agree, was meticulously planned over a long period, with detailed procedures and death lists, and carried out through centralized directives.

What was the core issue? Control of government, with the ruling clique about to lose it to an internationally supervised, inclusive coalition. Although Rwanda had long had a reputation for government efficiency and comparatively little overt corruption, connection to the government was the most important key to success. "President Habyarimana held absolute power and ... political and economic advancement were largely dependent on proximity to the President and his coterie" (Taylor 1999: 108), i.e. to those of the northern clans that were his power base. Until the crash in coffee prices, however, prosperity was sufficiently general that many could do well, even Tutsi, if they did so quietly. From 1990, with war and structural adjustment, conditions led to the development of what Reno would call a shadow state. "[S]omething new was emerging ... a militarization of Rwandan state expenditure and growing corruption among the political elite." Humanitarian aid was diverted, drug trafficking and money laundering were linked to high places.

The regime's determination to remain in power gradually led to the defensive creation of a "state within a state," centered on control of paramilitary youth organizations, which operated in tandem with the army and other state institutions at national, district and municipal levels. As the paid militias of young men grew, fewer and fewer Rwandan people benefited from the protection and patronage of the Rwandan state.

(Hintjens 1999: 257, 261)

As opposition from the RPF, Rwandan Tutsi, poor and southern Hutu, and international agencies increased, this northern elite saw its association with the state imperiled. Habyarimana, forced to compromise and looking out for his own political future, became part of the threat. It was this shadow state that planned the genocide, an effort to crush any and all domestic opposition.

Nationalist visions have been key ideological tools throughout recent Rwandan history, and all revolve around "the Hamitic hypothesis" (Mamdani 2001; Taylor 1999). Positioning in relation to its various elements has been a clear indicator of political affiliation through the years. This tale of Rwandan history was fabricated by Church authorities, anthropologists and other scholars. Simply, it holds that Rwanda was originally inhabited by forest-dwelling pygmies, called Twa (who now make up less than 2 per cent of the population). Then came Bantu farmers, the Hutu, as part of a great migration from western Africa. Finally, cattle-raising Tutsi came from the north to conquer the lands. The Tutsi were alleged to be racially superior "Hamitic" people, with "Aryan blood," thus explaining their development of indigenous states, and justifying European and Catholic reliance on them to rule.

An emergent Hutu elite with broad peasant support, who expelled Tutsi from positions of authority in 1959–1961, accepted the idea that the Tutsi were racially alien invaders, though of course rejecting their superiority. Their leaders stressed the coercion and exploitation experienced under recent Tutsi dominance, and cross-border attacks by refugee Tutsi reinforced fears and led to internal attacks by Hutu against Tutsi. The revolution itself was seen as the embodiment of democratic rule. It brought opportunity and dignity for the Hutu, and it became a central icon of Hutu nationalism. After the 1973 coup, Habyarimana, attentive to external patrons, redefined the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi from racial to ethnic, and officially advocated the latter's greater inclusion in national life as a minority in a plural society. Yet this vision excluded the hundreds of thousands of Tutsi who had fled Rwanda for Uganda, who were still seen as threats, and were referred to as "insects."

As Mamdani (2001) emphasizes, Habyarimana did not eliminate the Hutu/Tutsi divide in political institutions, thus creating conditions for its social reproduction. The idea of the Tutsi as an alien race threatening to the Hutu remained as a partially repressed text, with intellectual advocates ready to bring it forth when Habyarimana found it expedient. With the RPF invasion, radio and other media blasted this message in the most inflammatory ways, so that anyone who was not solidly with Hutu (i.e., the current government) was linked to invaders, who wished to overturn the effects of 1959, and reinstate Tutsi rule. The Tutsi with the RPF – and since they won the civil war, the current government – have claimed on the other hand that the Hamitic hypothesis is completely wrong, that Tutsi, Hutu and Twa have always been one people, and that is and should be the basis of the Rwandan nation. "RPF leaders complain that the ethnic labels Hutu and Tutsi are some sort of 'mistake'. They popularize this by harking back to the mythical origins of a unified Rwandese people unsullied by colonialism" (de Waal 1994: 3). Their highest value is "justice," rather than democracy, which is seen as limited while the majority Hutu tend to be inveterate tribalists.

Ethnicity in Rwanda well illustrates the three elements of the current scholarly synthesis on the subject. Certainly, major categories are historically and socially constructed. Although in Rwanda the Hamitic hypothesis is fiercely argued in all its details, the weight of evidence does indicate that Tutsi moved

into this area from around the fifteenth century, from somewhere around the Horn. Most probably they arrived as pastoral migrants, not conquerors. While it may be justified to speak of them as having been an ethnic, the same cannot be said for Hutu, who originated out of culturally diversified and distinctive local populations. Tutsi and Hutu developed as political identities of super- and subordination. These categories were fluid and permeable, with Hutu becoming Tutsi and vice versa. Moreover, Tutsi and Hutu were vertically linked and mutually dependent, so violence was not between the two, but rather between geographically separated polities of Hutu and Tutsi combined. The colonial apparatus rigidified and racialized the two categories, and broke down local patron-client hierarchies so that two national strata emerged. Identity cards were issued to fix placements, a rule of patrilineal inheritance of racial status imposed, and in some cases categorically ambiguous persons were pigeon-holed on the basis of how many cattle they owned (though the widely reported "fact" that anyone with more than ten head of cattle was categorized Tutsi apparently was applied only in some instances, see Mamdani 2001: 98–99).

Still, in terms of language and life-style, Tutsi and Hutu became one. "[T]he predecessors of today's Hutu and Tutsi indeed created a single cultural community, the community of Kinyarwanda speakers, through centuries of cohabitation, intermarriage, and cultural exchange" (Mamdani 2001: 74). In the countryside the average Hutu and Tutsi are economically indistinguishable. Although Hutu and Tutsi are physically distinctive, there is such overlap and blending that the genocidal killers had to rely on identity cards and pointing fingers to know who to kill. Yet before the build-up to genocide, "there was little evidence of overt hostility from Bahutu towards their Batutsi neighbors and relatives" (Hintjens 1999: 248). During his fieldwork in 1983–85, Taylor (1999: 86, 108) found that "ethnicity seemed to be receding as a political issue," and that "Rwanda was more divided by class and region than by ethnicity."

The political manipulation of the historically constructed Hutu/Tutsi divide which led to genocide was transparent, and it was effective.

[S]ixty years of colonial and Tutsi rule, and thirty-five years of Hutu supremacy [have] created distinct and mutually opposed Hutu and Tutsi identities, which for all the hesitations of social scientists, are identifiably "ethnic" ... [I]t is impossible to interpret recent events without recourse to tribal labels, and they are the labels used by the people themselves. Above all, people kill each other because of them.

(de Waal 1994: 3)

But we should hesitate to apply "ethnic" to two groups which are culturally identical, and the two categories certainly do not correspond to tribes, much less races. Powerful as they are as markers of identity, they are, as Mamdani (2001) cogently argues, essentially *political* identities, shaped by a long history of differential incorporation into a variety of stratified systems, carried along by malleable retellings of distinctive histories. To call what happened ethnic, tribal,

or racial violence inevitably suggests "ancient hatreds" or irrational xenophobia, and obscures the fact that the genocide was, by all accounts, deliberate *political* violence. Yet "political violence" fails to convey the identity-linked passions involved. In my view, "identerest violence" is more accurate and adequate than either alternative.

That does not diminish the importance of culture. It is Mamdani who stresses that the Rwandan genocide, in contrast to that of the Nazis, was done by hand, in the neighborhood, face to face, with many thousands of Hutu actively participating. "[T]he main agents of the genocide were the ordinary peasants themselves" (Prunier 1995: 47). Discussion of this disturbing fact must begin by repeating that the killing was centrally planned and directed. Furthermore, all agree that there was a major element of coercion – those Hutu who refused to join in killing were often killed themselves – and great numbers of Hutu fled rather than being drawn into the carnage. But those who were initially forced to kill, and many who were not forced but volunteered, often became quite enthusiastic in their tasks. As one killer later put it: "I am ashamed, but what would you have done if you had been in my place? Either you took part in the massacre or else you were massacred yourself. So I took weapons and I defended the members of my tribe against the Tutsi" (Prunier 1995: 247). As this quotation indicates, one motivation was fear, fear created by media overflowing with Tutsi plots and atrocities. Some have also stressed that Rwandans have been long conditioned to obey orders – yet there were plenty who resisted authority.

Mamdani emphasizes two aspects of political ideology introduced by colonialists, and never purged from Rwandan culture. Unlike in other "ethnic" oppositions in Africa, Tutsi had been framed as both racially distinctive and foreign – much like the Europeans they once abetted. This contributed to a greater moral gulf, a justification for "victims to become killers." It helps explain why this violence, in stark contrast to other violence in Africa, was a deliberate effort to exterminate an entire category of people. Taylor (1999) emphasizes other aspects of Rwandan culture, connected to images of the world and the body, and flows and blockages. He points out that killing was far from simple slaughter. It regularly involved rape, torture, mutilation, degradation, all inscribing messages on Tutsi bodies in ways soon recognized as "thematic," even "formulaic." In his view, Hutu hate propaganda played into indigenous themes about "menacing 'blocking beings'" such as sorcerers, and applied itself to all Tutsi. Perpetrators of atrocity were then, in their minds, acting out "a massive ritual of purification" (Taylor 1999: 101). Furthermore, this ritual was highly gendered. Tutsi women were not spared, but specially targeted, even by their Hutu husbands. The politics of desire was long active in Rwanda, with many Hutu men finding Tutsi women especially attractive and seductive. As the hate built up, this came to be seen as a Tutsi strategy of racial pollution, that had to be eliminated at the root. Even beyond the Hutu/Tutsi divide, in modernizing sectors of Rwanda, women were making strides, even surpassing men. The killing of successful women, even Hutu women, was thus part of reasserting patrimony.

Despite the overwhelming importance of the Hutu/Tutsi divide – however one characterizes it – it is still a poor indicator of who killed who. It was not only Tutsi who were killed. Recall that there was a substantial Hutu opposition to the government, and the leaders of this opposition were among the first victims of the death lists. The shock troops were the organized militias, who had been trained for this purpose, and other military associated with those who killed Habyarimana – himself the head Hutu. When more arms were needed, rootless young men of the cities were enlisted, liquored up, and given the even more intoxicating power of life and death over those who had once been their "betters." Teachers, students, doctors, even the well-dressed were murdered. Killing methodically spread to the towns and country, following well-laid plans. But still, it was not simply Hutu against Tutsi. In the countryside, there were economic differences, "the people whose children had to walk barefoot to school killed the people who could buy shoes for theirs" (Prunier 1995: 250). Looting was often a motive. And it was especially Hutu from the north who excelled in killing, spreading the plague southward, often including southern Hutu politicians.

Lastly, the case of Rwanda illustrates the phases of identity-linked violence, although since this was a centralized plan, there was much temporal overlap (see Hintjens 1999: 262–267; McNulty 1999a: 93–95; Prunier 1995: 226–255; Taylor 1999: 6–26). The interest coalition was led by elite members of northern clans, associated with government, the army and commerce. They were aided by intellectuals, whose rabid message was relentlessly disseminated by radio and other media. The call was to all Hutu, although those opposing the current clique were not welcome, and those not benefiting from it were not enthusiastic. It relied on disciplined militia, and poor people who saw an opportunity against the rich. Key to the success of this program was the creation of a "security dilemma," by repeatedly uncovered "proofs" that domestic Tutsi were conspiring with invaders from Uganda to reverse the 1959 revolution, and secure their position by exterminating as many Hutu as they could ("the Bahima conspiracy"). Polarization proceeded apace, with moderates killed by death squads (called "Network Zero"). Projection of fears was equally clear, with many Hutu accepting tales that the invading RPF were demonic cannibals. Finally, the violence, which had begun with the RPF invasion, was already so prevalent before the actual genocide began, that many Tutsi seemed passively resigned to their slaughter when it finally arrived (see Gourevitch 1998).

Prunier (1995: 228) asks "did the plotters actually think they could carry it off?" He and McNulty (1999a: 96) think they did, and they almost succeeded. But – even disregarding the manifest inhumanity – there is reason to question whether deciding to engage in the genocide of a major segment of the population, which was supported by a disciplined invading army that had been halted only by a negotiated cease-fire, in the face of international powers ready to apply isolating sanctions (if not actually intervene), can be called "rational." Was it more rational than trying to use the official and unofficial powers they still controlled to maneuver themselves into an acceptable, if diminished, position in the new system? I doubt a simple "yes" is possible. Rather, this may be a case of

leaders believing in their own self-justifying propaganda, and caught up in the fears and hatreds that they themselves have created. If so, they would not be unusual. I argue elsewhere (Ferguson 1999: 407, 2001: 105–106), that it is one of the most depressing constants of war, that those who initiate killing believe in the moral correctness of what they do.

The Rwandan genocide shows the hollowness of an “ancient loyalties and animosities” approach. It illustrates the need to get beyond the label “ethnic conflict.” That catch-all term is applied to situations where cultural difference is not critical or even present, and even in the most salient examples, such as Rwanda, it proves to be a misleading guide to the development of violence. We need to develop a more complex but more realistic understanding of how a system of identities is brought into and shapes violent struggle. To do that, we need a perspective that can encompass everything from global economic trends to local cultural symbols.

Implications of and for anthropology

As noted at the start of this introduction, anthropologists’ close encounter with intra-state violence in the 1970s and 1980s challenged practitioners to find new forms of analysis, and ethically, to find new ways to politically respond to the suffering they observed. Analytically, the focus turned to systems of meaning and overlapping fields of power. Ethically, the main response was that anthropologists could bear witness, expose and write against terror that usually originated within the government/elite social matrix, and was directed downward against opponents (Robben and Suarez-Orozco 2000: 12; Sluka 2000b: 11–13, 30; Starn 1997: 236–237; Warren 2000: 229–231). Dealing with the politics of the Reagan and Thatcher era, the idea of working with people in power to lessen violence seemed a contradiction in terms. Similarly, as writers coming from the more traditional anthropology of war tried to grapple with the Cold War (Foster and Rubenstein 1986; Rubenstein and Foster 1988; Turner and Pitt 1989), I cautioned about directing our efforts to policy centers, which would use only what furthered already established goals. Rather, I argued, anthropologists *generally* should engage with protest politics – while seriously considering on an *individual* basis opportunities for input into policy (Ferguson 1988a, 1989: 154–159).

Times change. Many who were most committed to stopping superpower involvement in “proxy wars” are now calling for more aggressive involvement of various organizations – the US, NATO, the UN, NGOs – to prevent, stop or recover from local political violence. But understanding of the causes of such struggles is limited, and we are currently in a real conceptual dilemma as to how they will be approached. Realism – an extremely powerful current in policy circles – has formulated a new, state-centered paradigm for intra-state violence, as described in pieces throughout this Introduction. The problem is weak states, which cause ethnic groups to react to each other the way states do in international “anarchy,” and the solution is to build up strong state centers. Some

realists acknowledge this will be difficult to do while adhering to values of human rights (Ayoob 1998: 49; Zartman 1995b: 269–271) – more than difficult I would say, and how would it be done?

Others provide clear, if frightening, policy guidelines, such as Kaufmann (1996, 1997). His formula for intervening in and successfully resolving “ethnic civil wars” is to choose one side to support (on what grounds is not specified), draw a separation line between areas with different ethnic majorities, occupy the territory inside the separation line, and then “exchange populations.” “Once the conquest is complete, all enemy ethnics in custody must be moved across the separation line. At the same time, all friendly ethnics who wish to immigrate from beyond that line – or more likely, are expelled by the opposing side – must be resettled” (1996: 95–97). Then there are even more frightening prospects and solutions being forcefully advocated: a “west against the rest” policy of fomenting divisions within rival “civilizations” (especially “Confucian” and Islamic) (Huntington 1993: 49); rapid and overwhelming use of military force against any localized threat (Van Creveld 1991: 198); or a bunker mentality of walling out the impending anarchy (Kaplan 1994).

It is well worth noting that of the contributors to this volume, the most explicit call for anthropologists to involve themselves in policy issues comes from an international relations theorist, Yale Ferguson. I agree with him (though not because of clan loyalty). Certainly, there will continue to be a great many situations around the world where anthropologists will be called on to write against the state oppression of local peoples, as Maybury-Lewis has encouraged us all to do. But it is also our responsibility to help develop new, alternative ways of seeing and dealing with the terrible violence so commonly breaking out between different groups over control and direction of a state. What can anthropologists contribute?

We can apply our understanding of culture and ethnicity in relation to conflict. It is common to read non-anthropologists speaking of these as fixed and bounded. Culture and ethnic divisions are inherently fluid – contested, selected, always an interpretation. They exist in versions and variations, like jazz, as Jean Jackson has suggested about culture. As Maybury-Lewis challenges us, anthropology can and should make it clear to students, other scholars, policy makers, and anyone else we can reach, that cultural differences and identities are not by nature exclusive, although they certainly can be made that way.

Our position must be nuanced. Static, divisive views of culture are used as weapons in some of the conflicts described in this book. But people who seek just redress for real grievances also appeal to local meanings and identities to mobilize support. Struggles for redress are inherently conflictive, and conflict encourages boundary formation. Some sort of us/them division is built into the process. But this can be done in different ways, with radically different consequences. Political and military mobilization can be much easier and more excitable when there is a clear-cut, personal enemy, a scapegoat. That is where ethnic entrepreneurs using ideas of primordial animosities come in – conjuring up demonic cultural others that need to be vanquished. That is where the real

danger lies today, and where basic anthropological premises can be applied. We could actively promote the idea of a world community which respects not only human rights, but also cultural difference. Reaction to any claim of a self-identified people for international recognition or hearing could be linked explicitly to a commitment to respect cultural difference. One people's rights end where another people's nose begins.

The "identerest" concept could also be brought into policy consideration. Because of the disparate bases of support for intererest groups, alternative group formations may be possible. If one political faction seeks to mobilize experienced hardship and perceived disrespect by targeting a constructed enemy other, different leaders may be able to build a competing movement by bringing together a different constellation of identities in a more constructive, cooperative path toward redress. For outside powers, perhaps the most productive path to a peaceful world order may be to identify, encourage, and if need be to protect internal political movements which understand and address local needs and values in a non-violent way. (When the history of the Kosovo war is written, one of the sad lessons from it will be how little was done to support such domestic movements (Demjaha 2000: 33-34).) Alternatively, efforts to reconstruct a more civil society *after* collective violence could be more effective if shaped by better understanding of what kinds of people were in the hard core, and what kinds were drawn in later, and so might be more easily "peeled off."

We could also expand our role as "cross-cultural translators." Anthropologists do this already when they show how people involved in violence see the world around them. But typically, our readers have been other academics or college students. One can imagine another route, where two anthropologists working together seek to represent the views of opposing groups, so each can better understand the other's perceptions, emotions and fears. This would be more productive if informed by basic concepts of conflict resolution, as in Ury (1999) or Hopmann (n.d.). It could be done before violence occurs, preferably, or afterwards. Those who advocate separation as a solution for ethnic violence do so because they believe reconciliation after such bloodshed is impossible. But as Warren observes, the twentieth century demonstrates that "antagonists are rarely immutably at war with each other," however firmly that opposition is constructed at a given moment. South Africa, Guatemala and Argentina have created commissions to establish "truth and reconciliation" among those formerly at war (although these bodies also demonstrate the difficulties in reaching either goal) (Avruch and Vejarano 2001; Warren 2000: 232-233). Such bodies could in the future include anthropologists seeking to present opposed cultural interpretations in a way that might foster better mutual understanding.

Another fundamental concept of anthropology is holism, which in one sense means that societies should be approached as complex integrated systems. In the anthropology of war, however, there has been a longstanding divide between those who seek explanation in the material bases of social life, or in the symbols and understandings of local culture. In my view, both of these positions have now advanced, separately, to the point where real synthesis is possible — as I

argue regarding Yanomami warfare (Ferguson 2001). Both the need for and the possibility of such synthesis are even more apparent in recent identity-linked violence. As the summary which began the previous section indicates, understanding such conflict entails looking at all aspects of a sociocultural system, from the most elevated values, to the most practical exigencies of making a living. This volume does not exhaust what needs to be brought in. It does not address the entire issue of ecology in relation to violence, which has achieved policy prominence under the title of "environmental security" (Homer-Dixon 1999; Homer-Dixon and Blitt 1998).¹⁹ Also in the tradition of holism, understanding requires attention to factors operating from the most global to the most local levels, and the interactions between them.

Anthropological holism can offer an alternative to simple and inaccurate mono-causal explanations, situating the reality of communal violence along these two dimensions of symbol to subsistence and local to global. Developing a framework of interrelated, important factors, such as those outlined in this Introduction, and applying it to any given case would be laborious. But it would, I believe, offer a clearer, more accurate understanding of how violent conflict actually comes about, as illustrated by the Rwandan horror. It seems more practically illuminating for real situations than statistical approaches seeking to identify common denominators of violence. And for its complex, multi-factorial nature, it offers more levers and pathways to derail locomotives of destruction.

Anthropology can join in transdisciplinary study and reconceptualization of "the state," about which our own and others' theory is much less sophisticated than it is on ethnicity. The lessons from political science about reifying the state, as emphasized by Y. Ferguson, fit well with the cases presented here, which highlight the extreme variation in both the institutional systems and national control of states. However, focus on "the state" is still in order, since it is control of governments-within-borders that is usually the objective of contestants in violent struggles, and the concept of "shadow state" offers new ways to approach the issue. As previously noted, the realist prescription for recent turmoil is to build up central authority. But it is primarily the more authoritarian governments of the former USSR that have experienced the greatest internal violence in recent years (Aklaev n.d.; Motyl 1997), and it has been the heavy handed policy of Indian governments which has generated the protracted rebellion in Kashmir (Ganguly 1997: 230).²⁰

As noted at the start of this introduction, anthropologists have first hand-knowledge of what suffering under a dominating government can bring. We need to make that point, loud and clear, in relation to the future of "weak" or "collapsing" states. The report of the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict concludes (1997: chapter 4) that ultimately "structural prevention" requires sustainable development, respect for human rights, non-violent dispute resolution, real democracy, and social justice (see also Brown and de Jonge Oudraat 1997). This is what anthropological and other peace researchers refer to as "positive peace," and the conditions which Carnegie identifies as contributing to deadly conflict are "structural violence" (Sponsel 1994). If

history is any guide, structural violence will not be diminished by hasty external support for central governments.

Anthropologists could join those already questioning the premise that "the state" is the fundamental, necessary unit for local peace and the international order (David 1998: 95; Holsti 1996: 203). The universal rule of states is a recent wrinkle on this planet. States and non-state political systems have been intimately connected since the beginning of European expansion, and indeed since the beginning of states (Ferguson and Whitehead 2000a; Wolf 1982). Not only can there be co-existence and cooperation between different kinds of polities, but given the terrible costs associated with the rule of and fights over some post-colonial governments, we should at least consider the possibility that in some places, returning governance to non-centralized, locally grounded and autonomously developed political structures might work better. One point that merits particular consideration is the pernicious effects of territorial boundaries. This is one iron linkage between the current international system, the state, nationalism and many types of communal violence. If globalism is transcending state boundaries in many ways, they are still fundamental constitutive elements of processes of intra-state violence. Greater recognition of authority based on allegiances of *people*, rather than territorial control – as was the case through much of humankind's past²¹ – might be one step away from violence, and fully consistent with the increasing horizontal networks of globalism.

Buzan (1998: 218–219) has considered this "radical" stance, of possibly moving beyond the "transplanted European state system," and rejects it. "[T]he radicals have no obvious template. They can try to look back or try to look forward, but the view is seriously hazy in both directions. It is far from clear how useful it is to dig in the arcadian mine of the social and political constructions that existed before the European imposition." Well then – look at the present. For decades – and even more so now – "failed states" have been respected in international fora without any ability to deliver to their people any of the services and securities associated with government. The international community's exclusive focus on state governments prohibits establishing moderating relationships with other political entities or sub-state peoples, and may actually criminalize them. It imposes major limitations for approaching political violence as a regional problem (see Herbst 1997). At the same time, the world today is full of political structures which have a "special status," already outside the narrow framework of what a state should be. Puerto Rico, the Free Associated State (as it is titled in Spanish) has been one for more than half a century (see Ferguson 1988b); Kosovo has just become another. And European countries, of course, are sloughing off one vital characteristic of statehood after another.

It is not a question of reverting to the political structures of an earlier epoch – if this were even possible. As regards the future, there are ideas already out there which seem more clear than the idea of somehow strengthening states without violating human rights, as seen in Kaldor's (1999) or Falk's (1995, 2000) calls for global institutions to check violence and abuse, or Gottlieb's (1993) "states plus nations" proposal to recognize new political forms, varieties of boundaries, and

layers of sovereignty. International relations theorist Wendt (1999: 371–377) invokes cultural anthropology when he shows how the international system is based on a set of common assumptions. To ignore that culture is to support the status quo, when what is called for now – he says – is a "design orientation."

One can take this too far. Anthropology teaches us that new political forms are not likely to follow any preconceived plan – they will evolve in practice, as they have throughout human history. Yet planning can make a real difference to the directions taken, if it goes with the flow. "Real realism" would try to envision humane possibilities by looking at the *realities* of global developments, state systems, nationalist agendas, and ethnic and other identity-linked conflicts, to identify multiple points where calculated action can encourage peaceful process. As Villalon (1998: 6–7) suggests regarding contemporary Africa, we might think of our time in terms of the evolutionary theory of punctuated equilibria, where what emerges over the next few years will structure political process for decades to come. Thus it is especially important now to gain some perspective, and to try to keep an open mind.

True collapse is unlikely, as Tainter points out. Channels of communication and transportation will be maintained somehow at some level, and functions such as the issue of passports will still be performed somewhere, because people need these things. Accommodations will be reached. *People* will build needed structures, if allowed to. But all that can be done without a capital exercising real control over its claimed territory. If in the future, developed industrial nations – themselves transforming into new kinds and levels of structures – are required to deal with a welter of different types of polities, that is no reason to panic. We have been there before.

Notes

1. Most of these cases were discussed at a session of the 1993 Meetings of the American Anthropological Society in Washington, DC. They were elaborated, compared, and discussed at a workshop titled "The State Under Siege" in April 1994 – during the very days of the slaughter in Rwanda – at the New York Academy of Sciences and the Research Institute for the Study of Man. The workshop was funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation. John Schoeberlein-Engel presented a paper on Tajikistan at both gatherings, which could not be included here due to his other commitments. Anastasia Karakasidou was not in the AAA session, but joined us in New York. A version of this Introduction was presented and discussed in February 1999 at a meeting of the Working Group on Political Violence, War, and Peace in the Contemporary World, at the Center for Global Change and Governance at Rutgers-Newark. I wish to thank everyone involved in all those sessions for ideas that have been incorporated into this Introduction, and also give special thanks to Anna Skinner, my research assistant during the penultimate revision.
2. For instance, in his survey of recent Russian literature, Aklaev (n.d.) describes three different types of classification of ethnic conflict, with a total of eighteen categories between them.
3. The reason for this collapse will be debated by generations of scholars. To my knowledge, the only anthropological theory on it has been offered by Marvin Harris (1992), who attributes it to a political economy that impeded and degraded the performance of its own infrastructure. Or as Marx might have put it in terms of his own theory of

revolution, the system fell because relations of production had become fetters on the means of production.

- 4 It should be noted that Cooper (1999) concludes that it is not the presence of weapons itself that leads to violence. In calm situations, they can be present without being used. Cooper also discusses some of the ethical and policy quandaries in arms supply, such as cases where one side is clearly being victimized by better-armed opponents.
- 5 An interesting turn in recent research has been that economists, who long ago abandoned the study of war (as opposed to studying military spending) (Goodwin n.d.), are now at the cutting edge of explaining how current trends in globalization are responsible for new wars and instability within less-developed countries (e.g. Berdal and Malone 2000; Collier 2000; Duffield 2000). Contrary to current ideas that environmental scarcities are generating conflict (Homer-Dixon 1999; Homer-Dixon and Blitt 1998), in this view it is precisely an *abundance* of internationally sought resources that fuels protracted violence (de Soysa 2000). These arguments dovetail closely with the concept of a "shadow state," as described later in this Introduction.
- 6 For instance, an ongoing research project, requested from and funded by the highest US governmental levels, finds closure to outside trade to be one of the best predictors of state failure, thus invalidating dependency analyses. "Trade openness was measured as the total value of imports plus exports as a percentage of a country's GDP" (Gurr *et al.* n.d.: 8, 26). Twenty years ago, a low value of external trade might indeed have reflected a government's import-substitution and other economic policies, but by the late 1980s it was far more likely a result of crashing export markets and international supervision and restriction of government spending. Other more internal explanatory variables in this study – concerning "partial democracies" and the significance of massive urbanization, seem similarly misunderstood.
- 7 One can actually pinpoint the shift away from "ancient hatreds" to "manipulative leaders" in the Clinton administration. From the *New York Times*: "Balkan Ghosts" (editorial), 7 March 1999, WK14; "Historians Note Flaws in President's Speech," 26 March 1999, A12; "Clinton Blames Milosevic, Not Fate, for Bloodshed," 14 May 1999, A12; "Coming to Terms With Kosovo's 'Old' Hatreds" (column), 12 June 1999, A14.
- 8 Many anthropologists are striving to provide relevant findings about race to their classes and other publics. Tightly analogous points could be made about ethnics, such as: there is no "pure" ethnic, within-ethnic variation exceeds between-ethnic variation, ethnic boundaries perceived to be intrinsic are historically constructed and malleable, ethnics can be redefined at higher and lower levels of inclusiveness, and the on-the-ground reality of ethnic difference is usually some form of gradient or cline rather than a sharp break.
- 9 Culturalist accounts "tend to explain too much and to overpredict violence. They cannot explain why violence occurs only at particular times and places, and why, even at such times and places, only some persons participate in it. Cultural contextualizations of ethnic violence, however vivid, are not themselves explanations of it" (Brubaker and Laitin 1998: 17).
- 10 This should not be understood as exempting our own culture. Certainly, air drops of napalm are as much of a cultural product, and arguably as savage, as deliberate torture and mutilation. Indeed, one security scholar has concluded that the "American way of war," once initiated, is *more* ruthless and destructive than that of even other Western states (Mead 1999/2000).
- 11 Just as "tribal" has very different connotations in Africa and North America, "ethnic conflict" has different meanings in different places. The "ethnic conflict" that people currently worry about is mainly of the Old World. In Latin America, struggles involving ethnicity typically involve non-violent resistance of indigenous peoples to

the oppressive hegemony of state structures (Guidieri *et al.* 1988; Urban and Sherzer 1991; Warren 1993a).

- 12 A good example of this is Vanhanen (1999: 187–189), who writes that "ethnic groups may be national, tribal, racial, religious, linguistic, cultural, or communal groups" and castes. The crucial characteristic of all these, he claims, is that "members are genetically more closely related to each other than to the members of other groups," thus they all "can be perceived as extended kin groups." All group conflict is thus a culturally universal expression of pan-human strategy to maximize reproductive success.
- 13 Collier and Hoeffler (1998) find that very high ethnic diversity is correlated with a low likelihood of conflict between groups. The highest likelihood is when a population is sorted into just two polarized groups.
- 14 It is often observed that class analysis has been left behind by the "ethnic resurgence." Interesting observations on this are offered by Coughlan and Samarasinghe (1991). They note two alternative views of ethnicity and economics: a straightforward Marxist approach which focuses on class, development, and markets; and a resource competition model which looks to differential political incorporation and the role of the state. They conclude that either version of rational choice theory, but especially the former, cannot stand against the manifest importance of culture, religion, and manipulated ideologies. However, in many cases it is still very clear that ethnic conflict is related in more complex ways to some form of ethnic stratification or economic discrimination. Aklaev's (n.d.: 15) review of recent Russian literature also shows that while ethnic divisions, fears, and symbols strongly affect recent conflicts, basic economic grievances underlying them show up repeatedly in survey research.
- 15 Because of a recent spate of popular biologicistic writings about an evolved young male syndrome of using violence to enhance life and reproductive chances (e.g., Wilson and Daly 1985), it should be noted that all these are cases where social processes have created large numbers of socially superfluous young men, something which has no analogue in any theorists' rendering of the evolutionary environments of the human species. For that and other reasons (Ferguson 2001: 108–109; work in progress), this should not be mistaken as any kind of "evolved response."
- 16 Local social structures (networks, etc.) which can contribute to political mobilization have received a great deal of attention in "new social movement" theory, but these have had little investigation with regard to the kinds of violent struggle described here (Jenkins and Schock 1992: 179; McAdam *et al.* 1996: 21–26). Although there is clearly room for cross-disciplinary communication, that large sociological literature is oriented toward more diffuse, largely non-violent and non-authoritarian movements, built from the ground up in the most developed societies.
- 17 This does not imply, however, the high degree of individuation associated with the multiple roles of people in modern societies, where each person may have a unique mix of significant social identities (see Simons 1997). In less complex societies, identities may be compound but still primarily collective – e.g., all the mature women of "x" clan of "y" tribe of "z" region.
- 18 The primary role of leaders' self-interest is one of the features that may seem to distinguish new forms of violence from traditional wars, which were supposedly waged in the interests of a state. But military historians have shown that a more refined sense of political self-interest has been key in shaping decisions for war by statesmen throughout history (Black 1998b).
- 19 Joseph Tainter and I organized a conference on "Environmental Dimensions of Cultural Conflicts" (Ferguson 1995b), the results of which will hopefully appear in a future volume.

- 20 Even fully within the realist paradigm, caution should be taken from recent experience in Africa. The Clinton administration provided increased military support to seemingly stable and responsible states, and several of these have used their militaries in war with their neighbors. "[T]wo years later, Clinton's trip can be seen not as a series of visits with a new generation of forward-looking African leaders but rather as stops in the governing capitals of Africa's new warmongers" (Weinstein 2000: 10). Also, Collier and Hoeffler (n.d.) present a preliminary analysis of data which indicate government military expenditures prompted by internal threats led to "neighborhood arms races" among low income countries, becoming "a regional public bad." "[A]n initial exogenous increase in military expenditure by one country is more than doubled in both the originating country and its neighbors," without having a statistically measurable impact on the risk of internal violent conflict in either. It seems a very real possibility that a policy to stabilize weak states by rebuilding and professionalizing their military would contribute significantly to a resurgence of "old style" inter-state wars.
- 21 It might be disputed that diminishing the importance of territorial boundaries goes against "human nature." Sociobiology's founder E.O. Wilson (1999: 185), for instance, claims that "territorial expansion and defense by tribes and their modern equivalents the nation states is a cultural universal" (emphasis in original). Quite typically, this claim is made without any effort here or elsewhere to provide empirical substantiation. In fact, this is an excellent example of sociobiology's penchant for projecting contemporary patterns on to human nature. In the anthropology of war, it is rather unusual to find any indication of territorial expansion or defense as an important factor in war. This is not hard to discover. Van Crevelde (1991: 152) is quite aware of it. Concern with territorial borders, though not unknown in simpler societies, is more characteristic of state-level societies, and not even all of them (Ferguson 1999: 392-393, 417-418).

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Part I

Commentaries