



WAVES OF WAR

Nationalism, State Formation, and
Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World

ANDREAS WIMMER



CAMBRIDGE

Waves of War

Nationalism, State Formation, and
Ethnic Exclusion in the Modern World

Andreas Wimmer



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107673243

© Andreas Wimmer 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by the MPG Books Group

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Wimmer, Andreas.

Waves of war : nationalism, state formation, and ethnic exclusion in the modern
world / Andreas Wimmer.

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in comparative politics)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-02555-4 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-67324-3 (paperback)

1. Nationalism–History–20th century. 2. Nation-state–History–20th
century. 3. Ethnic groups–Political activity–History–20th century. I. Title.

JC311.W469 2013

320.5409'04–dc23

2012016081

ISBN 978-1-107-02555-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-67324-3 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Waves of War

Why did the nation-state emerge and proliferate across the globe? How is this process related to the wars fought in the modern era? Analyzing datasets that cover the entire world over long stretches of time, Andreas Wimmer focuses on changing configurations of power and legitimacy to answer these questions. The nationalist ideal of self-rule gradually diffused over the world and delegitimized empire after empire. Nationalists created nation-states wherever the power configuration favored them, often at the end of prolonged wars of secession. The elites of many of these new states were institutionally too weak for nation building and favored their own ethnic communities. Ethnic rebels challenged such exclusionary power structures in violation of the principle of self-rule, and neighboring governments sometimes intervened into these struggles over the state. *Waves of War* demonstrates why nation-state formation and ethnic politics are crucial to understand the civil and international wars of the past 200 years.

ANDREAS WIMMER is Hughes-Rogers Professor of Sociology and Faculty Associate in Politics at Princeton University. His research is aimed at understanding the dynamics of nation-state formation, ethnic boundary making, and political conflict from a comparative perspective. He is the author of *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict: Shadows of Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 2002) and his articles have been published by the *American Journal of Sociology*, the *American Sociological Review*, *World Politics*, *Sociological Theory*, and *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, among others. Professor Wimmer's work has won best article awards from the Comparative Historical, Political, Cultural, Mathematical, and Theory sections of the American Sociological Association, the Thyssen Prize for Best Article in the Social Sciences, and the Anatol-Rapoport-Prize from the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie*.

Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics

General Editor

Margaret Levi *University of Washington, Seattle*

Assistant General Editors

Kathleen Thelen *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

Erik Wibbels *Duke University*

Associate Editors

Robert H. Bates *Harvard University*

Stephen Hanson *University of Washington, Seattle*

Torben Iversen *Harvard University*

Stathis Kalyvas *Yale University*

Peter Lange *Duke University*

Helen Milner *Princeton University*

Frances Rosenbluth *Yale University*

Susan Stokes *Yale University*

Sidney Tarrow *Cornell University*

Other Books in the Series

David Austen-Smith, Jeffrey A. Frieden, Miriam A. Golden, Karl Ove Moene, and Adam Przeworski, eds., *Selected Works of Michael Wallerstein: The Political Economy of Inequality, Unions, and Social Democracy*

Andy Baker, *The Market and the Masses in Latin America: Policy Reform and Consumption in Liberalizing Economies*

Lisa Baldez, *Why Women Protest? Women's Movements in Chile*

Stefano Bartolini, *The Political Mobilization of the European Left, 1860–1980: The Class Cleavage*

Robert Bates, *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*

Series list continues following the Index.

Acknowledgments

Many colleagues have helped to shape and sharpen the arguments that run through the chapters of this book with their suggestions, criticisms, and encouragements. Many more labored on the different datasets they analyzed, so many, in fact, that acknowledging them needs to be relegated to the first footnotes of each chapter. Here, I would like to thank the coauthors of the various journal articles on which four of these chapters are based.

I had the pleasure to work with Brian Min, formerly a graduate student in political science at UCLA and now assistant professor at the University of Michigan, over the first seven years after we had both moved to the City of Angels. During our intense collaboration on the two projects that resulted in Chapters 4 and 5, he patiently, politely, and good-humoredly introduced me to the secrets of quantitative research and data management. Lars-Erik Cederman, professor of political science at the ETH Zurich, initiated our collaboration on the dataset analyzed in Chapter 5. This allowed us to test my argument that ethno-political inequality is a key factor in explaining contemporary conflict processes. Clemens Kroneberg recently received his PhD in sociology from the University of Mannheim and is now assistant professor there. Five years ago, he approached me with the idea to formally model aspects of the theory of ethnic boundary making I was working on, which eventually led us to write Chapter 2. Yuval Feinstein is a PhD student in the department of sociology at UCLA and soon to be assistant professor at the University of Haifa. He has suffered with me through the pains of building a dataset, analyzed in Chapter 3, on territories for which no data exist, and shared the joys of an analysis full of surprises. I thank all of them for having shared these varied journeys with me and for all they have taught me along the way.

Chapter 2 appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology* 118(1): 176–230, 2012 and received the Anatol-Rapoport-Prize from the Modeling and Simulation Section of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie*. Chapter 3 was published in the *American Sociological Review* 75(5): 764–790, 2010. It received the best article award from the Comparative Historical Section of the American Sociological Association.

Chapter 4 was also published by the *American Sociological Review* 71(6): 867–897, 2006. It was fortunate enough to receive the best article awards from both the Comparative Historical and the Political Sociology Sections of the American Sociological Association. Chapter 5 is based on another article published by the *American Sociological Review* 74(2): 316–337, 2009.

The United States Institute of Peace offered a year-long Jennings Randolph Senior Fellowship, which enabled me to put this book together. I am grateful for this opportunity and for the congenial environment that Chantal de Jonge Outraat and her team created for the fellows of the institute. UCLA's International Institute has generously supported my research with course buy-outs over the past years, and the social science dean's research support has nourished the data projects that made this book possible.

Special thanks go to David Laitin, who has carefully and thoroughly read the entire manuscript and offered many insightful and helpful criticisms; to Stathis Kalyvas, who has encouraged my forays into the domain of conflict research in various crucial ways; to Michael Ross, with whom I regularly hike in the Santa Monica mountains to discuss life as well as the joys and disappointments of doing quantitative cross-national research; and to Rogers Brubaker for decade-long friendship, intellectual comradeship, and wise advice in matters small and large.

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	x
1 Introduction and summary	1
2 The birth of the nation	37
3 The global rise of the nation-state	73
4 Nation-state formation and war	108
5 Ethnic politics and armed conflict	143
6 Can peace be engineered?	174
7 Conclusions	197
<i>Appendices</i>	206
<i>Bibliography</i>	297
<i>Index</i>	318

Figures

1.1	Empires, nation-states, and other types of polities, 1816–2001	<i>page</i> 2
1.2	The ethno-nationalization of war, 1816–2001	3
1.3	How the balance of power affects the likelihood of nation-state formation (in %)	23
1.4	The big picture: nation-state formation and war since 1816	25
1.5	Ethnic civil wars in independent states since 1945: a disaggregated approach	30
2.1	Types of alliance systems in modernizing states	45
2.2	State centralization, mass mobilization, and alliance systems in three different model universes	61
3.1	A power-configurational model of nation-state formation	82
3.2	The global spread of the nation-state, 1816–2001	88
4.1	A stylized model of institutional change and war	121
4.2	Rates of war relative to imperial incorporation and nation-state creation (ten-year moving averages)	126
4.3	Nation-state creation and types of war (ten-year moving averages with 95 percent confidence intervals)	128
4.4	Predicted probabilities of civil and inter-state wars in years before/after nation-state creation	135
5.1	Types of ethnic conflict	151
7.1	Synopsis: nation-state formation and war	198

Tables

2.1	Control and interest distributions in empires and in the strong scenario	<i>page</i> 58
2.2	Control and interest distributions under the weak scenario	60
2.3	Actors' preferences over alliance systems under the weak and strong scenarios	62
3.1	Explaining nation-state creation (logit analysis)	96
3.2	Does context matter? Logit analysis with sub-samples and additional covariates	103
4.1	A new war typology	125
4.2	Explaining the outbreak of civil war (logit analysis)	134
4.3	Explaining the outbreak of wars between states (logit analysis)	138
5.1	The conflict dataset	160
5.2	The big picture: ethnic exclusion and armed conflict (logit analysis)	164
5.3	The disaggregated view: explaining different types of ethnic conflict (multinomial logit analysis)	168
6.1	Democracy and exclusion: which influences what?	178
6.2	Political institutions and ethnic conflict (logit analyses)	181
6.3	Political institutions and infighting (Columns 1) and rebellion (Columns 2) (multinomial logit analyses)	186

Introduction and summary

I THE NARRATIVE IN A NUTSHELL AND THE MORAL OF THE TALE

Nationalism demands that rulers and ruled hail from the same ethnic background. The gradual adoption of this principle of legitimate statehood has transformed the shape of the political world over the past 200 years and has provided the ideological motivation for an increasing number of wars fought in the modern era. Before the age of nationalism set in at the end of the eighteenth century, individuals did not pay much attention to their own ethnic background or that of their rulers. They identified primarily with a local community – a village or town, a clan, or a mosque. In much of Europe and East Asia, their overlords ruled in the name of a divine dynasty, rather than “the people,” and many were of different ethnic stock than their subjects. In parts of the Middle East, Africa, or Central Asia, charismatic leaders held tribal confederacies together and were respected and feared for their political skills and military bravery. Vast stretches of land in the Americas, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe were ruled by emperors whose legitimacy derived from spreading God’s word across the world (as did the Ottomans and Bourbons) or bringing civilization to “backward” peoples (as France and Great Britain claimed to do in their colonies). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, such empires covered about half of the world’s surface, while dynastic kingdoms, tribal confederacies, city-states, and so forth, made up most of the rest, as Figure 1.1 shows.

In this world of empires, dynastic kingdoms, city-states, and tribal confederacies, few wars concerned the ethno-national composition of government. Rather, they were fought by dynastic states over the balance of power between them or over the rightful successor to a throne. Empires conquered fertile lands

I thank Wesley Hiers, Michael Ross, Steve Ward, and Sarah Zingg Wimmer for helpful comments and suggestions on various drafts of this introduction. A previous version was presented at the New School of Social Research’s Social Imagination Seminar, to which Eiko Ikegami had kindly invited me, and at the department of sociology of Columbia University.

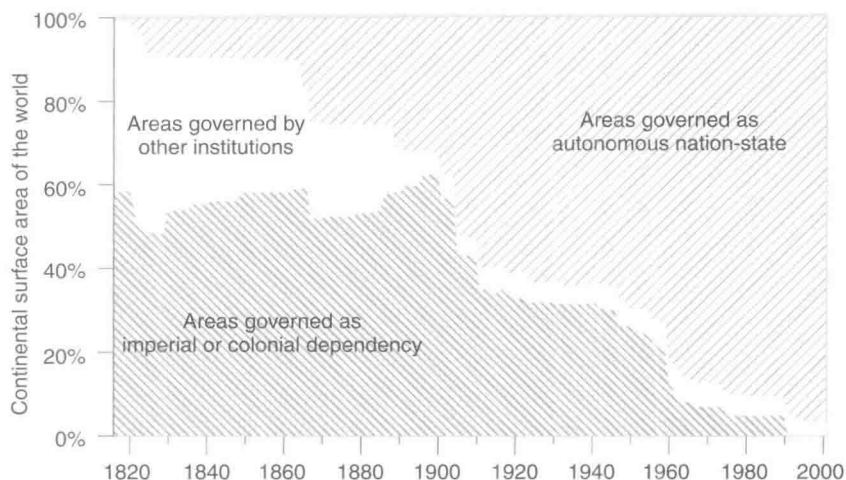


FIGURE 1.1 Empires, nation-states, and other types of polities, 1816–2001

Notes: states smaller than 25,000 km² are excluded; data are from Chapter 4.

far away from their capitals. Alliances of city-states competed over trade routes or rural hinterlands. Rebellious movements saw to bring heavenly order to the corrupt politics of the day or to repeal an unjust tax increase. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, still only one-fourth of the wars were ethno-nationalist, as can be seen from Figure 1.2, while balance-of-power wars between states, wars of conquest, and non-ethnic civil wars each comprised another quarter of all violent conflicts.

A contemporary observer looks at a different world and through different eyes. The globe is divided into a series of sovereign states, each supposed to represent a nation bound together by shared history and common culture. To us, this political map seems as obvious as the shapes of continents and the rivers that run through them. With the exception of the Middle Eastern monarchies and some small European principalities, most of today's states are ruled in the name of a nation of equal citizens, rather than dynasty or divine will. Statehood has become so much associated with nationalist principles that the terms nations and states are often used interchangeably, as in the "United Nations" or in "inter-national."

Most of today's more prominent and protracted wars are also associated with the national principle – the idea that each people should be self-ruled, that ethnic like should be governed by like. The independence struggle of Abkhazians against the Georgian state or the conflict between Protestant and Catholic parties and militias in Northern Ireland come to mind. Figure 1.2 shows that at the end of the twentieth century, over three-quarters of all full-scale wars – those armed conflicts costing more than 1,000 battle deaths – were fought either by

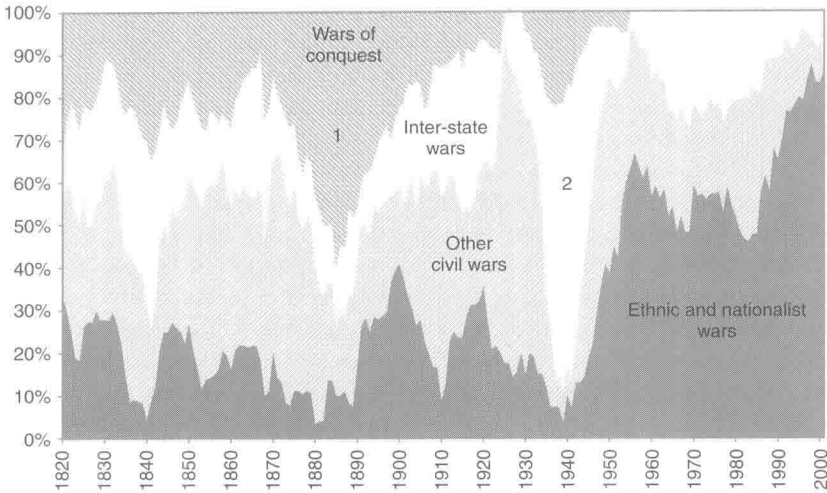


FIGURE 1.2 The ethno-nationalization of war, 1816–2001

Notes: ten-year moving averages; for data sources see Chapter 4; 1 marks wars associated with the conquests of Africa and Central Asia; 2 marks wars associated with World War II.

nationalists who seek to establish a separate nation-state or over the ethnic balance of power within an existing state. Contrary to what Karl Marx had predicted, the twentieth century has turned into the age of ethno-nationalist conflict, rather than revolutionary class struggle.

This book seeks to explain this momentous transformation of the political world – from a world of multiethnic empires, dynastic kingdoms, tribal confederacies, and city-states to a world of states each ruled in the name of a nation properly seated in the general assembly of the UN; from localized political identities to large-scale ethnic or national communities with often millions, sometimes tens of millions, of members; from wars of conquest, succession, and tax rebellions to wars in the name of national sovereignty and grandeur, ethnic autonomy, and the like.

How has this transformation come about? Existing scholarship has mostly focused on how strong, territorially centralized states have emerged in Western Europe and beyond. Charles Tilly's famed dictum that "wars made states and states made war" referred to the rise of these absolutist states from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. This book takes this story from the early modern period into our present day and from Western Europe to the world. It is not concerned with the development of the sovereign territorial state, as were Tilly and his successors, but why these states became nation-states and how this particular model of legitimizing political power proliferated across the world. It shows that

the shift from dynasticism and empire to the nation-state was both the cause and consequence of a new wave of wars long after early modern states had been formed in previous centuries of warfare. This new wave, carried forward by the power of nationalist ideologies, reached different parts of the world at different points in time, rolling over Latin America during the early nineteenth century and finally arriving in the Soviet Union by the end of the twentieth.

In a nutshell, the argument offered in this book proceeds along the following lines. Nationalism as a new principle of legitimacy emerged from Tilly's war-making Western states. Increasing state centralization and military mobilization led to a new contract between rulers and ruled: the exchange of political participation and public goods against taxation and the military support by the population at large. The idea of the nation as an extended family of political loyalty and shared identity provided the ideological framework that reflected and justified this new compact. It meant that elites and masses should identify with each other and that rulers and ruled should hail from the same people.

This new compact made the first nation-states of Great Britain, the United States, and France militarily and politically more powerful than dynastic kingdoms or land-based empires because they offered the population a more favorable exchange relationship with their rulers and were thus considered more legitimate. Ambitious political leaders around the world adopted this new model of statehood, hoping that they too would one day preside over similarly powerful states. These nationalists subsequently were able to establish new nation-states wherever the power configuration favored their ascent and allowed them to overthrow or gradually transform the old regime, leading to cascades of nation-state creations that altered the political face of the world over the past 200 years.

This shift from empire, dynasticism, or theocracy to national principles of legitimizing political power is a major source of war in the modern era. First, nationalists who now portrayed the ethnic hierarchies of empire as violations of the like-over-like principle resorted to arms to fight for independent nation-states. Second, newly founded nation-states competed with each other over ethnically mixed territories or over the political fate of co-nationals across the border who were ruled by ethnic others. Third, civil wars broke out when the new nation-states were captured by ethnic elites who excluded others from the political and symbolic benefits of self-rule. Such ethno-political exclusion and conflict is especially marked in states that lacked the institutional capacity and organizational bases to realize the project of nation building and to offer political participation and public goods to the population at large, rather than only to the ethnic constituencies of the dominant elites.

Nationalism thus motivated a bloody, generation-long struggle over who should rule over whom. It lasted until the like-over-like principle was realized through border changes, expulsions and ethnic cleansings, assimilation and nation building or political accommodation and power sharing between various

ethnic elites. Based on the global datasets introduced further below, we can calculate that the likelihood of war more than doubles after nationalism has gained a foothold in a political arena; and it remains high over generations after a nation-state has been founded.¹

2 MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS

While the book tells this story of the rise and global spread of the nation-state and the waves of war it generated, it is not a history book, and it does not have a narrative structure. Rather, it explores the forces underlying these historical developments with the help of social science techniques of analysis and with large datasets that cover the entire modern world – the kind of datasets that make it possible to draw the preceding two figures. Besides introducing such new datasets, the analysis offers important substantial insights for our understanding of world history over the past two centuries. Both contributions are briefly summarized here.

2.1 Bringing power and legitimacy center stage

The book aims to show that political power and legitimacy need to move center stage in all three areas of scholarship that it addresses: on nation building and ethnic politics, on nation-state formation, and on war. It will demonstrate how particular power relations between the state and other political actors combine with their varying visions of a legitimate political order to produce different political identities, forms of statehood, and dynamics of violent conflict.

More specifically, the book derives the political salience and legitimacy of political identities from a specific distribution of power and resources between the state and the population at large. Both ethnic group formation and nation building result from a renegotiation of the relationship between rulers and ruled during the process of political modernization (in line with Bates 1974; Wimmer 2002). Depending on how the distribution of resources and power between rulers and ruled change, political alliances form along ethnic lines, or the population at large shifts its loyalty to the state elite and identifies with the overarching national category. Ethnic groups and nations thus both represent equilibrium outcomes of the modernization process. This analysis contributes to the “constructivist” literature on ethnicity and nationalism by offering a precise, mechanism-based

¹ More precisely, the predicted probability of war is 1.1 percent in territories without nationalism – controlling for degrees of democratization, neighboring wars, the presence of oil resources, and political instability. This probability increases to 2.5 percent in the period after a first national(ist) organization has been founded. These figures were calculated on the basis of Model 1 in Table 4.2. Results are almost identical if we also control for levels of economic development and population size, which reduce the number of observations considerably.

analysis of the power configurations that provide either nations or specific ethnic cleavages with popular legitimacy and political meaning.

The book also introduces a power-cum-legitimacy approach to our understanding of the global spread of the nation-state. Shifts in the power relations between adherents of different ideas of legitimate statehood – dynasticism, imperial universalism, or national sovereignty – are crucial in understanding this momentous transformation of the political world over the past 200 years (in line with the general thrust of the work of Roeder 2007). The nation-state form was not universally adopted because one society after the other gradually ripened enough – as theories of modernization would have it – to finally fall as fully blossomed nations onto the garden of the inter-“national” community. Nor did the nation-state proliferate across the globe because the international system forced national sovereignty upon people after people. Similar to contagion processes, the global rise of the nation-state resulted from the concatenation of local and regional power shifts in favor of nationalists without much help from the global system. This power-configurational analysis sheds new light on a process that remains poorly understood, despite its obvious historical importance, in comparative sociology and international relations scholarship.

Finally, the book offers an analysis of war that again brings questions of political power and legitimacy to the foreground. It demonstrates that the shift of these principles of legitimacy – from empire to nation-state – is a major cause of both inter-state and civil wars over the past 200 years. This is often neglected in existing scholarship in international relations, which has paid only scarce attention to how transforming the nature of the units composing the inter-“national” system has affected war processes. The book also brings power and legitimacy to the study of civil wars that is at the core of a vast and fast-growing comparative politics literature. It demonstrates that civil wars and armed conflicts are most likely in ethnocracies that violate the principles of ethnic self-rule. Dominant political economy approaches to civil war, which focus on the conditions that make rebellion economically attractive or militarily feasible, need to be complemented with an analysis of the struggle over the power and legitimacy of the state.

2.2 New data to answer old questions

Studying nation-state formation and war has long been the exclusive domain of qualitative styles of historical research. The classic oeuvres on nationalism and the nation-state, for example, were written by historically minded social scientists such as Ernest Gellner, John Breuilly, or Michael Mann. They traced the origins of the nation-state in England, France, and the United States and then described, using examples from across the world, how it diffused over the globe. Besides these world historical narratives, entire libraries have been written on each individual trajectory of nation-state formation in the West. Others have

teased out the differences, similarities, and interlinkages between a handful of cases, often deriving big conclusions from small numbers.²

Most of the chapters that follow use the tools of statistical analysis to identify recurring patterns in the tapestry woven by hundreds of such specific historical threads. They will analyze newly created datasets that cover the entire world over very long periods of time and will thus allow identifying those causal mechanisms that structure more than one context and period. Such a quantitative approach based on global datasets can counterweigh against the “European provincialism” that plagues the literature on nationalism and nation-state formation, as one of its most prominent authors has trenchantly observed (Anderson 1991: xiii).³ Emphasizing old-world developments would be less problematic if the nation-state had remained confined to the area of its origin instead of proliferating across the world, or if the earliest nation-states had indeed all been located in Europe such that those of “the rest” could be seen as belated completions of a universal sequence. However, as Anderson reminds us, the first continent to become thoroughly nationalized was the Americas, not Europe. And many non-Western nation-states came into existence before those of Europe. There is thus no reason why Holland should be given more analytical weight than Haiti, Germany more than Japan, or Belgium more than Bolivia. A quantitative approach based on global datasets gives equal weight to all cases, while allowing analysis of how they relate to each other through diffusion and imitation.

An inverse bias exists in work on ethnic politics and conflict. Here, Western scholars see themselves standing above the abyss of violence into which the leaders of many new nation-states in the East and South have thrown their populations. Studying ethnic conflicts in Africa, for example, has developed into a small research industry among comparative political scientists. But the history of Western states is punctuated by frequent episodes of ethnic cleansing and nationalist wars as well, not least during the two world wars. To see whether the West and “the rest” indeed show similar patterns of violence and war associated with the spread of nationalism and the rise of the nation-state, we thus need a perspective looking over the long run and the entire globe, rather than restricting the horizon to the world’s new nation-states or the postwar period, as is the case in most comparative politics scholarship on civil war.

In order to develop such a long-term and global perspective, one needs to turn the usual relationship between data and research questions on its head. Instead of searching for new questions that have not yet been answered with

² See the well-known critique by Liebersohn (1991).

³ The articles submitted to the leading journal in the field of nationalism studies, *Nations and Nationalisms*, illustrate the disproportionate attention given to Europe: 21.5% of all manuscripts submitted since the first issue was published in 1985 were concerned with Western Europe, followed by Eastern Europe with 13.3% of the articles, then Asia, excluding the Middle East, with 12.6%, followed by Oceania with 8.7%. Only 5.4% of the articles concerned Africa, and even fewer North America (4%) or South America (2.5%).