ETHNIC AND NATIONALIST VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

Work on ethnic and nationalist violence has emerged from two largely non-intersecting literatures: studies of ethnic conflict and studies of political violence. Only recently have the former begun to attend to the dynamics of violence and the latter to the dynamics of ethnicization. Since the emergent literature on ethnic violence is not structured by clearly defined theoretical oppositions, we organize our review by broad similarities of methodological approach: (*a*) Inductive work at various levels of aggregation seeks to identify the patterns, mechanisms, and recurrent processes implicated in ethnic violence. (*b*) Theory-driven work employs models of rational action drawn from international relations theory, game theory, and general rational action theory. (*c*) Culturalist work highlights the discursive, symbolic, and ritualistic aspects of ethnic violence. We conclude with a plea for the disaggregated analysis of the heterogeneous phenomena we too casually lump together as "ethnic violence."

INTRODUCTION

The bloody dissolution of Yugoslavia, intermittently violent ethnonational conflicts on the southern periphery of the former Soviet Union, the ghastly

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butchery in Rwanda, and Hindu-Muslim riots in parts of India, among other dispiriting events, have focused renewed public attention in recent years on ethnic and nationalist violence as a striking symptom of the "new world disorder."

To be sure, measured against the universe of possible instances, actual instances of ethnic and nationalist violence remain rare. This crucial point is obscured in the literature, much of which samples on the dependent variable (Fearon & Laitin 1996) or metaphorically mischaracterizes vast regions (such as post-communist Eastern Europe and Eurasia in its entirety or all of sub-Saharan Africa) as a seething cauldron on the verge of boiling over or as a tinderbox, which a single careless spark could ignite into an inferno of ethnonational violence (Bowen 1996, Brubaker 1998). Ethnic violence warrants our attention because it is appalling, not because it is ubiquitous.

Nonetheless, although measurement and coding problems prevent confident calculations, two general features of the late modern, post–Cold War world—in addition to the particular traumas of state collapse in the Soviet and Yugoslav cases—have probably contributed to a recent increase in the incidence of ethnic and nationalist violence and have certainly contributed to an increase in the share of ethnic and nationalist violence in all political violence—that is, to what might be called the ethnicization of political violence. The first could be called "the decay of the Weberian state": the decline (uneven, to be sure) in states' capacities to maintain order by monopolizing the legitimate use of violence in their territories and the emergence in some regions—most strikingly in sub-Saharan Africa—of so-called quasi-states (Jackson 1990, Jackson & Rosberg 1982), organizations formally acknowledged and recognized as states yet lacking (or possessing only in small degree) the empirical attributes of stateness.

The end of the Cold War has further weakened many third world states as superpowers have curtailed their commitments of military and other state-strengthening resources, while the citizenries—and even, it could be argued, the neighbors—of Soviet successor states are more threatened by state weakness than by state strength (Holmes 1997). Such weakly Weberian states or quasi-states are more susceptible to—and are by definition less capable of repressing, though not, alas, of committing—violence of all kinds, including ethnic violence (Desjarlais & Kleinman 1994). Meanwhile, the stronger states of the West are increasingly reluctant to use military force—especially unilaterally, without a broad consensus among allied states—to intervene in conflicts outside their boundaries (Haas 1997). As a result, weakly Weberian third world states can no longer rely on an external patron to maintain peace as they could during the Cold War era.

The second contextual aspect of the post–Cold War world to highlight is the eclipse of the left-right ideological axis that has defined the grand lines of

much political conflict—and many civil wars—since the French Revolution. From the 1950s through the early 1980s, violence-wielding opponents of existing regimes could best mobilize resources—money, weapons, and political and logistical support—by framing their opposition to incumbents in the language of the grand ideological confrontation between capitalism and communism. Incumbents mobilized resources in the same way. Today, these incentives to frame conflicts in grand ideological terms have disappeared. Even without direct positive incentives to frame conflicts in ethnic terms, this has led to a marked ethnicization of violent challenger-incumbent contests as the major non-ethnic framing for such contests has become less plausible and profitable.

Moreover, there may be positive incentives to frame such contests in ethnic terms. With the increasing significance worldwide of diasporic social formations (Clifford 1994, Appadurai 1997), for example, both challengers and incumbents may increasingly seek resources from dispersed transborder ethnic kin (Tambiah 1986, Anderson 1992). And a thickening web of international and nongovernmental organizations has provided greater international legitimacy, visibility, and support for ethnic group claims (normatively buttressed by culturalist extensions and transformations of the initially strongly individualist human rights language that prevailed in the decades immediately following World War II). This institutional and normative transformation at the level of what Meyer (1987) calls the "world polity" provides a further incentive for the ethnic framing of challenges to incumbent regimes. To foreshadow a theme we underscore later: Ethnicity is not the ultimate, irreducible source of violent conflict in such cases. Rather, conflicts driven by struggles for power between challengers and incumbents are newly ethnicized, newly framed in ethnic terms.

Ethnicity, Violence, and Ethnic Violence

Attempts to theorize ethnic and nationalist violence have grown from the soil of two largely nonintersecting literatures: studies of ethnicity, ethnic conflict, and nationalism on the one hand, and studies of collective or political violence on the other. Within each of these large and loosely integrated literatures, ethnic and nationalist violence has only recently become a distinct subject of inquiry in its own right.

In the study of ethnicity, ethnic conflict, and nationalism, accounts of *conflict* have not been distinguished sharply from accounts of *violence*. Violence has generally been conceptualized—if only tacitly—as a *degree* of conflict rather than as a *form* of conflict, or indeed as a form of social or political action in its own right. Most discussions of violence in the former Yugoslavia, for example, are embedded in richly contextual narratives of the breakup of the state

(Glenny 1992, Cohen 1993, Woodward 1995). Violence as such has seldom been made an explicit and sustained theoretical or analytical focus in studies of ethnic conflict [though this has begun to change with Lemarchand's (1996) work on Burundi, and Tambiah's (1996), Brass's (1997) and Horowitz's (forthcoming) work on ethnic riots].

In the study of collective or political violence, on the other hand, ethnicity figured (until recently) only incidentally and peripherally. In a number of influential studies (e.g. Gurr 1970, Tilly 1978) ethnicity figured scarcely at all. Revealingly, Gurr used the general term "dissidents" to describe nongovernmental participants in civil strife. Although the empirical significance of ethnicity was recognized, its theoretical significance was seldom addressed explicitly; it was as if there was nothing analytically distinctive about ethnic (or ethnically conditioned or framed) violence. Ethnicity thus remained theoretically exogenous rather than being integrated into key analytical or theoretical concepts.

In recent years, to be sure, a pronounced "ethnic turn" has occurred in the study of political violence, paralleling the ethnic turn in international relations, security studies, and other precincts of the post–Cold War academic world. But this sudden turn to ethnicity and nationality too often has been external and mechanical (Brubaker 1998). Although ethnicity now occupies a central place in the study of collective and political violence, it remains a "foreign body" deriving from other theoretical traditions. It has yet to be theoretically digested, or theorized in a subtle or sophisticated manner.

This suggests two opportunities for theoretical advance today—and in fact significant work is beginning to emerge in these areas. On the one hand, it is important to take violence as such more seriously in studies of ethnic and nationalist conflict. It is important, that is, to ask specific questions about, and seek specific explanations for, the occurrence—and nonoccurrence (Fearon & Laitin 1996)—of violence in conflictual situations. These questions and explanations should be distinguished from questions and explanations of the existence, and even the intensity, of conflict. We lack strong evidence showing that higher levels of conflict (measured independently of violence) lead to higher levels of violence. Even where violence is clearly rooted in preexisting conflict, it should not be treated as a natural, self-explanatory outgrowth of such conflict, something that occurs automatically when the conflict reaches a certain intensity, a certain "temperature." Violence is not a quantitative degree of conflict but a qualitative form of conflict, with its own dynamics. The shift from nonviolent to violent modes of conflict is a phase shift (Williams 1994:62, Tambiah 1996:292) that requires particular theoretical attention.

The study of violence should be emancipated from the study of conflict and treated as an autonomous phenomenon in its own right. For example, to the extent that ethnic entrepreneurs recruit young men who are already inclined to-

ward or practiced in other forms of violence, and help bestow meaning on that violence and honor and social status on its perpetrators, we may have as much to learn about the sources and dynamics of ethnic violence from the literature on criminology (Katz 1988) as from the literature on ethnicity or ethnic conflict.

At the same time, the strand of the literature that grows out of work on political violence and collective violence should take ethnicity and nationality more seriously. This does not mean paying more attention to them; as noted above, there has already been a pronounced ethnic turn in the study of political violence and collective violence. *That* political violence can be ethnic is well established, indeed too well established; *how* it is ethnic remains obscure. The most fundamental questions—for example, how the adjective "ethnic" modifies the noun "violence"—remain unclear and largely unexamined. Sustained attention needs to be paid to the forms and dynamics of ethnicization, to the many and subtle ways in which violence—and conditions, processes, activities, and narratives linked to violence—can take on ethnic hues.

Defining the Domain

In reviewing emerging work in anthropology, political science, and to a lesser extent other disciplines as well as sociology, we immediately face the problem that there is no clearly demarcated field or subfield of social scientific inquiry addressing ethnic and nationalist violence, no well-defined body of literature on the subject, no agreed-upon set of key questions or problems, no established research programs (or set of competing research programs). The problem is not that there is no agreement on *how* things are to be explained; it is that there is no agreement on *what* is to be explained, or *whether* there is a single set of phenomena to be explained. Rather than confronting competing theories or explanations, we confront alternative ways of posing questions, alternative approaches to or "takes" on ethnic and nationalist violence, alternative ways of conceptualizing the phenomenon and of situating it in the context of wider theoretical debates. In consequence, this review specifies the contours and attempts a critical assessment of an emergent rather than a fully formed literature.

What are we talking about when we talk about ethnic or nationalist violence? The answer is by no means obvious. First, despite its seemingly palpable core, violence is itself an ambiguous and elastic concept (Tilly 1978:174), shading over from the direct use of force to cause bodily harm through the compelling or inducing of actions by direct threat of such force to partly or fully metaphorical notions of cultural or symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:167–74). But the difficulties and ambiguities involved in characterizing or classifying violence (which we shall understand here in a narrow

sense) as ethnic or nationalist[1] are even greater. Although these difficulties have yet to receive—and cannot receive here—the full exploration they deserve, a few summary points can be made:

1. The coding of past, present, or feared future violence as ethnic is not only an analytical but a practical matter. Violence is regularly accompanied by social struggles to define its meaning and specify its causes, the outcome of which—for example, the labeling of an event as a pogrom, a riot, or a rebellion—may have important consequences (Brass 1996b).
2. Coding practices are influenced heavily by prevailing interpretive frames. Today, the ethnic frame is immediately and widely available and legitimate; it imposes itself on, or at least suggests itself to, actors and analysts alike. This generates a coding bias in the ethnic direction. A generation ago, the coding bias was in the opposite direction. Today, we—again, actors and analysts alike—are no longer blind *to* ethnicity, but we may be blinded *by* it. Our ethnic bias in framing may lead us to overestimate the incidence of ethnic violence by unjustifiably seeing ethnicity at work everywhere and thereby artifactually multiplying instances of "ethnic violence" (Bowen 1996). More soberingly, since coding or framing is partly constitutive of the phenomenon of ethnic violence, not simply an external way of registering and coming to terms with it intellectually, our coding bias may actually increase the incidence (and not simply the perceived incidence) of ethnic violence.
3. With these caveats in mind, we define ethnic violence on first approximation as violence perpetrated across ethnic lines, in which at least one party is not a state (or a representative of a state), and in which the putative ethnic difference is coded—by perpetrators, targets, influential third parties, or analysts—as having been integral rather than incidental to the violence, that is, in which the violence is coded as having been meaningfully oriented in some way to the different ethnicity of the target.

This preliminary definition allows us to exclude the violence between Germans and Frenchmen on the Marne in 1914. Similarly, it allows us to exclude the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, since the shooting was not interpreted in ethnoreligious terms as a Catholic being shot by a Muslim. But the definition hardly allows us to define a focused domain of research. A great profusion of work—only a small fraction of which is engaged by most contemporary analysts of ethnic violence—is related in one way or another to ethnic vio-

[1]To avoid cumbersome repetition, we refer simply to "ethnic" rather than to "ethnic or nationalist." But we understand "ethnic" broadly as including "nationalist" (insofar as this latter term designates ethnic or ethnocultural forms of nationalism, as opposed to purely "civic" or state-centered forms of nationalism).

lence. The range and heterogeneity of this work compel us to be highly selective in our review. We have had to exclude many pertinent literatures, or at best touch on them only in passing. These include literatures on pogroms (Klier & Lambroza 1992) and genocides (Dobkowski & Wallimann 1992); on antisemitism (Langmuir 1990), Nazism (Burleigh & Wippermann 1991), fascism, and the radical right (Rogger & Weber 1965); on racial violence (Horowitz 1983), race riots (Grimshaw 1969), and policing in racially or ethnically mixed settings (Keith 1993); on slavery (Blackburn 1997), colonialism (Cooper & Stoler 1997), third-world nationalist revolutions (Chaliand 1977, Goldstone et al 1991), and state formation [especially in contexts of encounters with aboriginal populations (Bodley 1982, Ferguson & Whitehead 1992)]; on separatism (Heraclides 1990), irredentism (Horowitz 1991b), and the formation of new nation-states (Brubaker 1996); on xenophobia and anti-immigrant violence (Björgo & Witte 1993), "ethnic unmixing" (Brubaker 1995, Hayden 1996), forced migration (Marrus 1985), and refugee flows (Zolberg et al 1989); on religious violence (Davis 1973); on terrorism (Stohl 1983, Waldmann 1992), paramilitary formations (Fairbanks 1995), and state violence (van den Berghe 1990, Nagengast 1994); on conflict management (Azar & Burton 1986) and peace studies (Väyrynen et al 1987); on the phenomenology or experiential dimensions of violence (Nordstrom & Martin 1992); and on rage (Scheff & Retzinger 1991), humiliation (Miller 1993), fear (Green 1994), and other emotions and psychological mechanisms (e.g. projection, displacement, identification) implicated in ethnic and nationalist violence (Volkan 1991, Kakar 1990).[2] Clearly, this would be an unmanageable set of literatures to survey. Moreover, most of these are well-established, specialized literatures addressing particular historical forms and settings of ethnic or nationalist violence, whereas we have interpreted our task as that of bringing into focus a newly emerging literature addressing ethnic violence as such. For different reasons, we neglect the theoretically impoverished policy-oriented literature on conflict management, and for lack of professional competence, we neglect the psychological literature.

Since the emerging literature we survey is not structured around clearly defined theoretical oppositions, we organize our review not by theoretical position but by broad similarities of approach. We begin by considering a variety of inductive analyses of ethnic and nationalist violence that build on statistical analysis of large data sets, on the extraction of patterns from sets of broadly similar cases, on controlled comparisons, and on case studies. We next consider clusters of theory-driven work on ethnic violence deriving from the realist

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[2]Citations here are merely illustrative; we have tried to cite relatively recent, wide-ranging, or otherwise exemplary works, in which ample citations to further pertinent literature can be found.

tradition in international relations, from game theory, and from rational choice theory. We conclude by examining culturalist analyses of ethnic violence.

We recognize the awkwardness of this organizing scheme. It is logically unsatisfactory, combining methodological and substantive criteria. It lumps theoretically and methodologically heterogeneous work under the loose rubric "inductive." It risks implying, incorrectly, that inductive work is not theoretically informed, and that culturalist approaches are neither inductive nor theory driven. We nonetheless adopt this scheme in an effort to mirror as best we can the emerging clusters of work.

INDUCTIVE APPROACHES

Without questioning the truism that all research—and all phases of research (including data collection)—is theoretically informed, we can characterize the work grouped under this heading as primarily data-driven rather than theory-driven. This work seeks to identify the regularities, patterns, mechanisms, and recurrent processes comprising the structure and texture of ethnic violence in inductive fashion through the systematic analysis of empirical data. The data in question range from large sets of highly aggregated data through small-n comparisons to single case studies. Methods of analysis range from statistical analysis and causal modeling to qualitative interpretation. We organize our discussion by level of aggregation.

Large Data Sets

Gurr has been a leading figure in the study of political violence for three decades and a pioneer in the statistical analysis of large data sets in this domain (1968). His first major work (1970) outlined an "integrated theory of political violence" as the product of the politicization and activation of discontent arising from relative deprivation. Although ethnicity played no role in his early work, it has become central to his recent work (1993a, 1993b, 1994, Harff & Gurr 1989, Gurr & Harff 1994). This work has been built on a large-scale data set surveying 233 "minorities at risk" that have (*a*) suffered (or benefited from) economic or political discrimination and/or (*b*) mobilized politically in defense of collective interests since 1945. For each of these "nonstate communal groups"—classified as ethnonationalists, indigenous peoples, ethnoclasses, militant sects, and communal contenders—Gurr and associates have assembled and coded on ordinal scales a wide array of data on background characteristics (such as group coherence and concentration), intergroup differentials and discrimination, and group grievances and collective action. They then seek to explain forms and magnitudes of nonviolent protest, violent protest, and rebellion through an eclectic synthesis of grievance and mobilization variables.

This work sensitizes us to the sharply differing dynamics, configurations, and magnitudes of ethnic violence across regions. This comparative perspective is crucial, since violence in Northern Ireland or in the Basque region, while unsettling in the context of post–World War II Europe, can be placed in more benign perspective when compared to Burundi, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, or post–Cold War Bosnia, where killing is measured not in the hundreds and thousands but in the tens or even hundreds of thousands (Heisler 1990). The standardized data set built by Gurr and associates gives us little reason to believe that the processes and mechanisms generating violence in Northern Ireland are the same as those that drive the violence in Sri Lanka. It is not even clear, as we shall suggest in the conclusion, that these are both instances of the same thing (i.e. ethnic violence).

If for Gurr the unit of analysis is the group, for Olzak (1992), Tarrow (1994), and Beissinger (1998), the unit is the event. Assembling data on ethnic and racial confrontations and protests in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Olzak uses event history analysis and ecological theories of competition and niche overlap to show that the breakdown of ethnic and racial segregation, by increasing economic and political competition, triggers exclusionary collective action, including ethnic and racial violence. Beissinger, constructing a database on violent collective events in the disintegrating Soviet Union and its incipient successor states, analyzes the highly clustered incidence of nationalist violence in the context of a larger cycle of nationalist contention. He shows that nationalist struggles turned increasingly violent (and increasingly assumed the form of sustained armed conflict) late in the mobilizational cycle, in connection with the contestation of republican (and incipient state) borders at a moment when effective authority (to the extent it existed at all) was passing from the collapsing center to the incipient successor states. In part, Beissinger echoes the findings of Tarrow (1994, Della Porta & Tarrow 1986) concerning the tendency for violence in Italy to occur toward the end of a mobilizational cycle. Although not directly concerned with ethnicity, Tarrow's work—notably his finding that violence does not map directly onto protest—has implications for the study of ethnic violence. In Italy, violence appears to increase when organized protest weakens. As mobilization wanes, violence is practiced by splinter groups as the only way to cause disruption. Although the dynamics of the two cases differ, both Beissinger and Tarrow analyze violence as a phase in a mobilizational cycle rather than as a natural expression of social conflict or social protest.

Case-Based Pattern Finding

For the analysis of ethnic conflict and violence in postcolonial Africa and Asia, Horowitz (1985) remains the classic text. Seeking to extract patterns from sets of broadly comparable cases, he stresses the social psychological and cogni-

tive underpinnings as well as the richly elaborated symbolic dimensions of violent ethnic conflict, giving particular emphasis to comparative, anxiety-laden judgments of group worth and competing claims to group legitimacy.[3] At the same time, Horowitz has given systematic attention to the effects of institutions—notably electoral systems, armed forces, and federalist arrangements—in fostering or preventing violent ethnic conflict (1985:Parts 3–5, 1991c). His arguments concerning institutional design—notably the design of electoral systems—in the context of post-apartheid South Africa (1991a) have led to a lively debate with Lijphart (1990).

More recently, Horowitz (forthcoming) has returned to an earlier (1973, 1983) concern with ethnic riots. He analyzes the morphology and dynamics of the "deadly ethnic riot," building inductively from detailed reports on a hundred riots, mainly since 1965, in some 40 postcolonial countries. Arguing for a disaggregated approach to ethnic violence, Horowitz distinguishes the deadly ethnic riot—defined as mass civilian intergroup violence in which victims are chosen by their group membership—from other forms of ethnic (or more or less ethnicized) violence such as genocide, lynchings, gang assault, violent protest, feuds, terrorism, and internal warfare. The deadly ethnic riot is marked by highly uneven clustering in time and space, relatively spontaneous character (though not without elements of organization and planning), careful selection of victims by their categorical identity, passionate expression of intergroup antipathies, and seemingly gratuitous mutilation of victims.

Using broadly similar inductive approaches, other scholars have addressed ethnic riots in recent years, chiefly in the South Asian context (Freitag 1989; Das 1990a; Spencer 1990; Pandey 1992; Jaffrelot 1994; Brass 1996a, 1997). The most sustained contribution in this genre is Tambiah's (1996) richly textured, multilayered account. While distancing himself from a simplistic instrumentalist interpretation of ethnic riots as the joint product of political manipulation and organized thuggery, Tambiah devotes considerable attention to the routinization and ritualization of violence, to the "organized, anticipated, programmed, and recurring features and phases of seemingly spontaneous, chaotic, and orgiastic actions" (p. 230), the cultural repertoire and social infrastructure [what Brass (1996b:12) calls "institutionalized riot systems"] through which riots are accomplished. At the same time, however, reworking Le Bon, Canetti, and Durkheim, Tambiah seeks to theorize the social psychological dynamics of volatile crowd behavior.

Other works in the pattern-finding mode address not particular forms of ethnic violence (such as the deadly ethnic riot) in their entirety but rather (like

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[3]Working within a broadly similar theoretical tradition, Petersen (1998) argues that structurally induced resentment, linking individual emotion and group status, best accounts for ethnic violence in a broad range of East European cases.

Horowitz 1985) general mechanisms and processes that are implicated in ethnic violence. As Blalock (1989) notes in a different context, such mechanisms and processes, although not the immediate or underlying cause of violent conflicts, do causally shape their incidence and modalities. Here we restrict our attention to one class of such mechanisms and processes (albeit a large and important one): to the ways in which *inter*-ethnic violence is conditioned and fostered by *intra*-ethnic processes.[4]

One such mechanism involves in-group policing. As analyzed by Laitin (1995a), this involves the formal or informal administration of sanctions, even violent sanctions, within a group so as to enforce a certain line of action vis-à-vis outsiders (who may be defined not only in ethnic terms but in religious, ideological, class, or any other terms). Practices such as "necklacing" in South African townships, "kneecapping" by the IRA, the execution of Palestinians alleged to have sold land to Israelis, and the killing of alleged "collaborators" in many other settings have attracted notoriety as techniques used by ethnonationalist radicals to maintain control over in-group followers. Pfaffenberger (1994), for example, shows how members of the dominant Tamil separatist group in Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers, have prevented young male Tamils from leaving Jaffna and murdered leaders of rival Tamil groups, dissidents within their own ranks, and civilian Tamils suspected of helping the Sinhalese.

A second intragroup mechanism—and a classical theme in the sociology of conflict (Simmel 1955, Coser 1956)—involves the deliberate staging, instigation, provocation, dramatization, or intensification of violent or potentially violent confrontations with outsiders. Such instigative and provocative actions are ordinarily undertaken by vulnerable incumbents seeking to deflect within-group challenges to their position by redefining the fundamental lines of conflict as inter- rather than (as challengers would have it) intragroup; but they may also be undertaken by challengers seeking to discredit incumbents.

Gagnon's (1994/1995) analysis of the role of intra-Serbian struggles in driving the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia is the most theoretically explicit recent contribution along these lines. Gagnon argues that a conservative coalition of party leaders, local and regional elites, nationalist intellectuals, and segments of the military leadership, threatened in the mid-1980s by economic crisis and strong demands for market-oriented and democratic reforms, provoked violent ethnic confrontation—first in Kosovo and then, more fatefully, in the Serb-inhabited borderland regions of Croatia—in a successful attempt to define ethnicity (specifically the alleged threat to Serb ethnicity) as the most

[4]General mechanisms may, of course, be specified in a deductive as well as an inductive manner. Although most of the work cited in the rest of this subsection is broadly inductive, we also cite here for reasons of convenience a few deductive works. Deductive theorizing about general mechanisms implicated in ethnic violence is considered in more sustained fashion in the next section.

pressing political issue and thereby to defeat reformist challengers and retain their grip on power. Although Gagnon's empirical analysis is one-sided in its exclusive focus on the Serbian leadership (partially similar points could be made about the Croatian leadership), his theoretical argument on the within-group sources of intergroup conflict is valuable. In a broader study of national-ism and democratization, Snyder (1998) argues that such strategies of provo-cation are particularly likely to occur, and to succeed, in newly democratizing but institutionally weak regimes. Other instances of such cultivated confronta-tions arising from intragroup dynamics are found in Deng's (1995) study of the Sudan and Prunier's (1995) study of Rwanda.

A third important intragroup mechanism is ethnic outbidding (Rabushka & Shepsle 1972, Rothschild 1981, Horowitz 1985:Chapter 8, Kaufman 1996). This can occur in a context of competitive electoral politics when two or more parties identified with the same ethnic group compete for support, neither (in particular electoral configurations) having an incentive to cultivate voters of other ethnicities, each seeking to demonstrate to their constituencies that it is more nationalistic than the other, and each seeking to protect itself from the other's charges that it is "soft" on ethnic issues. The outbidding can "o'erleap itself" into violent confrontations, dismantling the very democratic institutions that gave rise to the outbidding. This is a powerful mechanism (and a general one, not confined to *ethnic* outbidding). *How* it works is theoretically clear, and *that* it sometimes works to intensify conflict and generate violence was classically, and tragically, illustrated in Sri Lanka (Horowitz 1991c, Pfaffen-berger 1994).

Yet outbidding does not always occur, and it does not always pay off as a political strategy when it is attempted. Contrary to many interpretations, Gag-non (1996) argues that the violent collapse of Yugoslavia had nothing to do with ethnic outbidding. In his account, Serbian elites instigated violent con-flict, and framed it in terms of ethnic antagonism, not to mobilize but to demo-bilize the population, to forestall challenges to the regime. When they needed to appeal for public support during election campaigns, elites engaged not in ethnic outbidding but in "ethnic underbidding," striving to appear more mod-erate rather than more radical than their opponents on ethnic issues. Further work needs to be done (following Horowitz 1985) in specifying the conditions (e.g. different types of electoral systems) in which such outbidding is more or less likely to occur, and more or less likely to pay off.

A fourth intragroup mechanism concerns the dynamics of recruitment into gangs, terrorist groups, or guerrilla armies organized for ethnic violence. Al-though most ethnic leaders are well educated and from middle-class back-grounds, the rank-and-file members of such organizations are more often poorly educated and from lower or working class backgrounds (Waldmann 1985, 1989; Clark 1984). Considerable attention has been focused on the inter-

group dynamics that favor recruitment into such organizations. For example, interviewing IRA members, White (1993:Chapter 4) finds that many working-class Catholics joined the IRA after experiencing violence in their neighbor-hoods at the hands of British security forces and loyalist paramilitaries. We have little systematic knowledge, however, about the social and psychological processes within groups that govern the recruitment of young men (and, much more rarely, women) into disciplined, ethnically organized violence-wielding groups—processes such as the distribution of honor, the promising and provi-sion of material and symbolic rewards for martyrs, rituals of manhood, the shaming of those who would shun violence, intergenerational tensions that may lead the impetuous young to challenge overcautious elders, and so on.

"Small-N" Comparisons

Controlled comparisons have been relatively few, especially those comparing regions suffering from ethnic violence with regions in which similar ethnic conflicts have not issued in violence. The Basque/Catalan comparison is a natural in this respect and has been explored by Laitin (1995b), who focuses on linguistic tipping phenomena and the differential availability of recruits for guerrilla activity from rural social groups governed by norms of honor, and by Díez Medrano (1995), who focuses on the social bases of the nationalist move-ments. Varshney (1997) compares Indian cities that have similar proportions of Muslim and Hindu inhabitants and that share other background variables, yet have strikingly divergent outcomes in terms of communal violence. He ar-gues that high levels of "civic engagement" between communal groups ex-plain low levels of violence between Muslims and Hindus. Waldmann (1985, 1989) compares the violent ethnic conflicts in the Basque region and Northern Ireland to the (largely) nonviolent conflicts in Catalonia and Quebec, and ex-plains the transition from nonviolent nationalist protest to violent conflict in the former cases in terms of the loss of middle-class control over the nationalist movement. Friedland and Hecht (1998) compare the violent conflicts for con-trol of sacred places in Jerusalem and the Indian city of Ayodhya. In both cases, they show, struggles over religious rights at sacred centers claimed by two religions—Jews and Muslims in Jerusalem, Hindus and Muslims in Ayodhya—have been closely bound up with struggles to establish, extend, or reconfigure nation-states.The comparison of Rwanda and Burundi is compel-ling because of stunning violence in both cases despite quite different histori-cal conditions. This comparison has not been analyzed systematically, but Le-marchand (1996) suggestively discusses the multiple ways in which the two cases have become intertwined. To be sure, the idea of controlling all relevant variables through a "natural experiment" is illusory. But Laitin (1995b) de-fends the exercise as worthwhile because it compels us to focus on specific processes under differing conditions, setting limits to overgeneralized theory.

Case Studies

In this domain as in others, "cases" continue to be identified generally with countries. Thus substantial literatures have formed around key cases such as Northern Ireland (McGarry & O'Leary 1995; Feldman 1991; Bruce 1992; Bell 1993; White 1993; Aretxaga 1993, 1995); Yugoslavia (Woodward 1995, Cohen 1993, Glenny 1992, Denich 1994, Gagnon 1994/1995); Sri Lanka (Kapferer 1988; Tambiah 1986; Kemper 1991; Pfaffenberger 1991, 1994; Spencer 1990; Sabaratnam 1990); and Rwanda and Burundi (Lemarchand 1996, Prunier 1995, Malkki 1995). The identification of case with country, however, is a matter of convention, not logic. Ethnic or nationalist violence in a country is treated as a case when the violence is portrayed as a single processual whole. If the violence is instead construed as a set of separate (though perhaps interdependent) instances, then it becomes a case set, suitable for controlled comparison or even for a large-n study. In Olzak's (1992) study of confrontations and protests, for example, the United States is not a case but the location for a large-n study of events. The breakup of Yugoslavia has most often been treated as a single complex interconnected case, but if we had adequately disaggregated data, it could be studied as a set of cases (for example, of recruitment to unofficial or quasi-official violence-wielding nationalist militias or gangs).

Most case studies are organized around a core argumentative line. In Woodward's 1995 analysis of Yugoslavia, for example, the cumulative effect of economic crisis, a weakening central state, and external powers' recognition of constituent "nations" that were incapable of acting like states created a security dilemma for minorities in the newly recognized states. For Deng (1995), the attempt by the North to identify the Sudanese nation as an Arab one could lead only to rebellion from the South, which had been enslaved by Arabs but never assimilated into an Arab culture. For Kapferer (1988), Sinhalese Buddhist myths and rituals—rooted in an embracing cosmology and "ingrained in the practices of everyday life" (p. 34)—provided a crucial cultural underpinning for a radically nationalizing Sinhalese political agenda and for anti-Tamil violence in Sri Lanka. In Prunier's 1995 analysis of Rwanda, an externally imposed ideology of sharp difference between Hutus and Tutsis, and postcolonial claims to exclusive control of the state on both sides of this colonially reified group difference, created a security dilemma favoring preemptive violence.

At the same time, authors of these and other case studies recognize that the explanatory lines they highlight are partial, and they consequently embed these arguments in richly contextualized narratives specifying a web of intertwined supporting, subsidiary, or qualifying arguments. As a result, one cannot evaluate these works on the same metric as one would the statistical or even the small-n studies. The rhetorical weight in case studies tends to be carried by the richness and density of texture; although a major argumentative

line is almost always identifiable, the argument takes the form of a seamless web rather than a distinct set of explanatory propositions. Attempts to extract precise propositions from such case studies often reduce the original argument to the point of caricature. [5] However, close reading of such works can yield rich material on microsocial processes at low levels of aggregation that macro theories miss.

THEORY-DRIVEN RATIONAL ACTION APPROACHES

The main clusters of theory-driven work on ethnic violence have employed models of rational action, drawing in particular from the realist tradition in international relations, from game theory, and from rational choice theory in general.[6] Although "rational action" (or "strategy," the preferred term of international relations and game theory) is understood differently in these traditions (referring in international relations to the grand designs of states engaged in power politics, in game theory to the fully specified plan for playing a particular game, and in rational choice theory in general to individual action oriented to the maximization of subjective expected utility), ethnic violence in all three traditions is seen as a product of rational action (rather than emotion or irrationality), though structural background conditions are seen as crucially shaping the contexts of choice.

International Relations Approaches

International relations scholars of the realist school (Jervis 1978) posit the existence of a "security dilemma" under conditions of anarchy in which even nonaggressive moves to enhance one's security, perceived as threatening by others, trigger countermoves that ultimately reduce one's own security. While formulated to explain interstate wars, the security dilemma has been applied to intrastate ethnic violence as well.

A line of argument initiated by Posen (1993) focuses on the windows of opportunity—and vulnerability—occasioned by the collapse of central authority in multiethnic empires (see also Carment et al 1997). In such circumstances, especially given an historical record of serious intergroup hostilities (amplified and distorted, of course, in the retelling), groups are likely to view one another's nationalist mobilization as threatening. These perceived threats may create incentives for preemptive attack (or at least for countermobilization that will in turn be perceived as threatening by the other group, engendering a mo-

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[5]Blalock (1989:14) notes the degradation of propositional conflict that typically occurs once case studies get taken up in the literature and involved in theoretical controversy.

[6]These clusters are not, of course, mutually exclusive. For example, Lake & Rothchild (1996) draw on elements from all three.

bilization spiral that can lead to violence, especially since violent action can be undertaken autonomously, under conditions of state breakdown, by small bands of radicals outside the control of the weak, fledgling successor states).

To be sure, the international relations perspective on ethnic violence has its weaknesses. Ethnic conflict differs sharply from interstate conflict (Laitin 1995c). States are distinct and sharply bounded entities [though to treat them as unitary actors, as international relations scholars commonly do (Van Evera 1994), is problematic (Mann 1993:Chapters 3, 21)]. In contrast, ethnic groups are not "given" entities with unambiguous rules of membership, as is well known from a generation of research (Barth 1967, Young 1965). Rarely is a single leader recognized as authoritatively entitled to speak in the name of the group. As a result, ethnic groups generally lack what states ordinarily possess, namely, a leader or leaders capable of negotiating and enforcing settlements (Paden 1990, Podolefsky 1990). Moreover, ethnic group membership is fluid and context-dependent. Relatively high rates of intermarriage (as in the former Yugoslavia) mean that many people, faced with interethnic violence, are not sure where they belong. Boundary-strengthening, group-making projects *within* ethnic groups are almost always central to violent conflicts *between* groups, but these crucial intragroup processes are obscured by international relations–inspired approaches that treat ethnic groups as unitary actors.

Game Theoretic Approaches

In examining ethnic violence, game theorists subsume the issue as part of a general theory of social order (Kandori 1992, Landa 1994). With specific reference to ethnic violence, however, game theorists seek to understand the rationale for the choice to use violence, assuming that violence will be costly to both sides in any conflict (Fearon 1995). They are not satisfied with theories, especially psychological ones (Tajfel 1978), that can account for conflict or mistrust but not for violence. Game theorists seek to provide a specific account of violence rather than accept it as an unexplained and unintended byproduct of tense ethnic conflicts.

There is no unitary or complete game theory of ethnic violence. Rather, game theorists have identified certain general mechanisms that help account for particular aspects of the problem of ethnic violence. Here we review game-theoretic accounts of three such mechanisms, associated with problems of credible commitments, asymmetric information, and intragroup dynamics, respectively.

Fearon (1994) has developed a model of the problem of credible commitments and ethnic violence. In this model, the problem arises in a newly independent state dominated by one ethnic group but containing at least one powerful minority group as well. The model focuses on the inability of an ethnicized state leadership to "credibly commit" itself to protect the lives and property of

subordinate ethnic groups, who, as a result, have an interest in fighting for in-
dependence immediately rather than waiting to see if the leadership honors its
commitment to protect them. Once a war breaks out, as Walter (1994) shows,
settlement is extremely difficult, because neither side will want to disarm with-
out full confidence that the agreement will be adhered to; but no one will have
such confidence unless the other side disarms. Weingast (1998) shows that in-
dividuals who are told by their group leaders that they are targets for extermi-
nation would rationally take up arms even if the probability is negligible that
their leaders' prognostications are accurate, since a low probability event with
drastic consequences has a high expected disutility. Therefore ethnic war can
emerge from a commitment problem even if only vague suggestions of repres-
sion exist, or if only a maniacal wing of the ruling group has genocidal inten-
tions. Weingast's work is sensitive to the importance of institutions such as the
consociational ones described by Lijphart (1977) that enhance the credibility
of commitments. In the absence of such institutions, ethnic violence is more
likely to occur.

Some scholars discount the credible commitments problem, arguing that
many states do not even seek to make such commitments to protect their mi-
norities. Rothchild (1991) shows that ethnic violence in Africa is associated
strongly with regimes that show no interest in bargaining with disaffected
groups. In many cases violence results neither from fear nor from failed coor-
dination but from deliberate policy. However, if violence of this type were not
reciprocated, and carried few costs for its perpetrators, it would be, in game-
theoretic terms, a dominant strategy for leaders of ethnocratic regimes; and re-
searchers must then explain why this sort of violence is not more common than
it is.

Concerning the problem of information asymmetry, Fearon & Laitin (1996)
suggest, with Deutsch (1954), that ethnic solidarity results from high levels of
communication. As a result, in everyday interaction within an ethnic group, if
someone takes advantage of someone else, the victim will be able to identify the
malfeasant and to refuse future cooperation with him or her. High levels of inter-
action and of information about past interaction make possible the "evolution
of cooperation" (Axelrod 1984) within a community. Interethnic relations,
however, are characterized by low levels of information; the past conduct of
members of the other ethnic group, as individuals, is not known. Under such
conditions, an ethnic incident can more easily spiral into sustained violence, if
members of each group, not being able to identify particular culprits, punish
any or all members of the other group. This unfortunate equilibrium, Fearon
and Laitin show, is not unique. They describe an alternate equilibrium, one that
helps explain why violent spiraling, although gruesome, is rare. They find that
even under conditions of state weakness or breakdown, ethnic cooperation can
be maintained by local institutions of in-group policing—where leaders of one

group help identify and punish the instigators of the violence against members of the other group—and intergroup mediation. The in-group policing equilibrium is one in which interethnic violence can be cauterized quickly.

Concerning in-group dynamics, game theory can help to clarify the microfoundations for the intragroup processes discussed previously in the section on case-based pattern finding. Game theoretic approaches, attuned to the individual level of analysis, do not assume—as do many theorists of ethnic conflict—that members of ethnic groups share a common vision or common interests. Kuran (1998a, 1998b) assumes that people have distinct preferences for some combination of ethnically marked and generic, ethnically indifferent consumption (including not only goods but activities, modes of association, policies, and so on). Ethnic entrepreneurs, who will be more successful to the extent that their constituents favor ethnic over generic consumption, try to induce the former at the expense of the latter. Such pressures, and constituents' interdependent responses to them, can trigger ethnification cascades—sharp and self-sustaining shifts from ethnically neutral to ethnically marked activities that divide once integrated societies into separate ethnic segments between whom violence is much more likely to flare up, and spread, than between the same individuals before the "cascade." Laitin (1995b) uses a cascade model similar to that of Kuran. He assumes that ethnic activists, in the context of a national revival, will use tactics of humiliation to induce co-nationals to invest in the cultural repertoires of the dormant nation. But when humiliation fails, and when activists fear that no cascade toward the national revival is possible, they will consider the possibility of inducing both intra- and interethnic violence.

Rational Action Theory

Rational action perspectives on ethnicity and nationalism have proliferated in recent years (Rogowski 1985, Meadwell 1989, Banton 1994). Yet despite an abundance of informal observations concerning the strategic, calculated, or otherwise instrumental dimensions of ethnic or nationalist violence, few systematic attempts have been made (apart from the international relations and game-theoretic traditions mentioned above) to analyze ethnic and nationalist violence as such from a rational action perspective. One exception is Hechter (1995), who claims that "nationalist violence can best be explained instrumentally." Hechter argues that while the dispositions linked to emotional or expressive violence are distributed randomly in a population, and thus have no effect at the aggregate level, the dispositions underlying instrumental violence are clustered systematically and thus are decisive at the aggregate level. This argument presupposes that the dispositions underlying emotional or expressive violence are idiosyncratic individual characteristics, yet surely such powerful violence-fostering emotions as rage or panic-like fear may be clustered systematically at particular places and times and thus may be significant at the

aggregate level. But Hechter does stake claim to territory into which rational-ists—for all their expansionist inclinations—have so far hesitated to tread. He also clearly states a series of propositions about the relation between group solidarity, state strength and autonomy, and oppositional nationalist violence. Another exception is Hardin (1995), who applies broadly rational choice per-spectives (following Olson 1975) to the formation of ethnic groups and their development of exclusionary norms and then relies on an informal game model to explain how groups with such norms can "tip" toward violence.

Blalock's general theory of power and conflict (1989), though not specifi-cally addressed to ethnic or nationalist violence, analyzes structures, mecha-nisms, and processes that are often implicated in such violence. These include the small, disciplined "conflict groups" specifically organized to carry out vio-lence and the mechanisms through which protracted conflicts are sustained or terminated. He adopts a modified rational-actor persepective—modified in emphasizing structures of power and dependency and allowing for non-economic goals and the the role of misperception, deception, ideological bias, and so on in shaping the subjective probabilities on the basis of which action is undertaken.

CULTURALIST APPROACHES

Culturalist analyses of ethnic and nationalist violence reflect the broader "cul-tural turn" the social sciences have taken in the past 20 years. Although such analyses are extremely heterogeneous, they generally characterize ethnic vio-lence as meaningful, culturally constructed, discursively mediated, symboli-cally saturated, and ritually regulated. Some culturalist analyses expressly re-ject causal analysis in favor of interpretive understanding (Zulaika 1988) or adopt a stance of epistemological skepticism (Pandey 1992, Brass 1997). Yet for the most part, culturalist accounts do advance explanatory claims, although the status and precise nature of the claims are not always clear. Here we sketch a few clusters of recurring themes in culturalist analyses.

The Cultural Construction of Fear

Like the rational action approaches just considered, culturalist approaches seek to show that even apparently senseless ethnic violence "makes sense" (Kapferer 1988) in certain contexts. Yet while they claim to discover a "logic" to ethnic and ethnoreligious violence (Spencer 1990, Zulaika 1988, Juergens-meyer 1988) and reject representations of it as chaotic, random, meaningless, irrational, or purely emotive, culturalists claim that such violence makes sense not in instrumental terms but in terms of its meaningful relation to or resonance with other elements of the culturally defined context.

Culturalist analyses construe the relevant context in different ways. One major focus of attention has been on the cultural construction of fear, on the rhetorical processes, symbolic resources, and representational forms through which a demonized, dehumanized, or otherwise threatening ethnically defined "other" has been constructed. The social construction of fear, to be sure, is not a new theme in analyses of ethnic violence. It was central to Horowitz (1985:175–184), who in turn drew on a generation of work in social psychology. Yet while Horowitz sought to elaborate a universal "positional group psychology" to account for cross-cultural regularities in patterns of ethnic antipathy and anxiety, recent culturalist accounts have tended to emphasize particular features of individual cultural contexts; they have emphasized the cultural and historical rather than social psychological grounding of ethnic fear. A literature has emerged on the construction of fearful Hindu beliefs about Muslims in India (in the context of opposed ethnoreligious idioms and practices, religiously justified social segregation, and the rise of militant Hindu nationalism) (Gaborieau 1985, Pandey 1992, Hansen 1996); of Sinhalese beliefs about Tamils in Sri Lanka (in the context of an ethnocratic Sinhalese state, Tamil terrorism, state repression, and unchecked rumor) (Spencer 1990); and of Serbian beliefs about Croats in disintegrating Yugoslavia (in the context of a nationalizing Croatian successor state symbolically linked to, and triggering memories of, the murderous wartime Ustasha regime) (Glenny 1992, Denich 1994). Once such ethnically focused fear is in place, ethnic violence no longer seems random or meaningless but all too horrifyingly meaningful.

Without using the term, culturalist analyses have thus been concerned with what we discussed above as the security dilemma—with the conditions under which preemptive attacks against an ethnically defined other may "make sense." Unlike the international relations approaches to the security dilemma, however—and unlike political and economic approaches to ethnic violence in general—culturalist approaches seek to specify the manner in which fears and threats are constructed through narratives, myths, rituals, commemorations, and other cultural representations (Atran 1990). Culturalist analyses thus see security dilemmas as subjective, not objective, and as located in the realm of meaning and discourse, not in the external world. Many cultural analyses (e.g. Tambiah 1996, Bowman 1994) acknowledge the crucial role of ethnic elites in engendering ethnic insecurity through highly selective and often distorted narratives and representations, the deliberate planting of rumors, and so on. But the success of such entrepreneurs of fear is seen as contingent on the historically conditioned cultural resonance of their inflammatory appeals; cultural "materials" are seen as having an inner logic or connectedness that makes them at least moderately refractory to willful manipulation by cynical politicians.

Although such accounts may be plausible, even compelling "on the level of meaning" (Weber 1968:11), they have two weaknesses. The first is eviden-

tiary: It is difficult to know whether, when, where, to what extent, and in what manner the posited beliefs and fears were actually held. How do we know that, in India, the most "rabid and senseless Hindu propaganda," "the most outrageous suggestions" about the allegedly evil, dangerous, and threatening Muslim "other," have come to be "widely believed," and to constitute "a whole new 'common sense'" (Pandey 1992:42–43, Hansen 1996)? How do we know that, in Sri Lanka in 1983, Tamils were believed to be "superhumanly cruel and cunning and, like demons, ubiquitous" (Spencer 1990:619) or "agents of evil," to be rooted out through a kind of "gigantic exorcism" (Kapferer 1988:101)? How do we know that, in the Serb-populated borderlands of Croatia, Serbs really feared Croats as latter-day Ustashas? Lacking direct evidence (or possessing at best anecdotal evidence) of beliefs and fears, culturalist accounts often rely on nationalist propaganda tracts (Pandey 1992:43, Lemarchand 1996:Chapter 2) but are unable to gauge the extent to which or the manner in which such fearful propaganda has been internalized by its addressees. [Malkki (1995) has attempted to document the extent of such internalization in her fieldwork among Hutu refugees from Burundi, but because this work concerns the victims of near-genocidal violence, not the perpetrators, it speaks most directly to the consequences rather than to the causes of ethnic violence—although consequences of past violence can become causes of future violence in the course of a long-term cycle of intractable violent conflict (Lemarchand 1996, Atran 1990)].

The second problem is that such accounts (though culturalist accounts are not alone in this respect) tend to explain too much and to overpredict ethnic violence. They can not 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.

Framing Conflict as Ethnic

In southern Slovakia in 1995, a pair of Hungarian youths were pushed from a train by Slovakian youths after a soccer match. Although one of the youths was seriously injured, and although the incident occurred after the Hungarians had been singing Hungarian nationalist songs, the violence was interpreted as drunken behavior by unruly soccer fans rather than as ethnic violence, and even the nationalist press in Hungary made no attempt to mobilize around the incident (Brubaker field notes). Similarly, the burning down of an Estonian secondary school in a predominantly Russian region of Estonia in 1995 was interpreted as a Mafia hit, even on the Estonian side, and no mobilization occurred, even though no one could suggest why the Mafia might have been interested in a secondary school (Laitin field notes). These incidents illustrate what we alluded to in the introduction as the constitutive significance of cod-

ing or framing processes in ethnic violence. The "ethnic" quality of ethnic violence is not intrinsic to the act itself; it emerges through after-the-fact interpretive claims. Such claims may be contested, generating what Horowitz (1991a:2) has called a metaconflict—a "conflict over the nature of the conflict" that may, in turn, feed back into the conflict in such a way as to generate (by furnishing advance legitimation for) future violence (Lemarchand 1996:Chapter 2, McGarry & O'Leary 1995). Such social struggles over the proper coding and interpretation of acts of violence are therefore worth studying in their own right (Brass 1996a, 1997; Abelmann & Lie 1995) as an important aspect of the phenomenon of ethnic violence.

Gender

Like other forms of violence and war, and like the phenomena of ethnicity and nationhood in general (Verdery 1994), ethnic and nationalist violence is strongly gendered. The Basque ETA and the Irish Republican Army (IRA), for example, are overwhelmingly male (Waldmann 1989:154, Zulaika 1988:182), although Aretxaga (1995:138) discusses women's efforts to be recognized as full members of the IRA rather than of its women's counterpart. As victims of ethnic violence, women are sometimes deliberately spared, at other times deliberately targeted [for example, in the notorious mass rapes of Bosnia Muslim women by Bosnian Serbs (Korać 1994)]. More research is needed on the specific roles that women may play in certain ethnic riots, not necessarily as direct perpetrators but, for example, in shaming men into participating (Hansen 1996:153). Katz (1988) argues that while women as well as men are susceptible to the "seductions of crime," the characteristic modalities of women's criminal activities are different; we might expect the same to be true of ethnic violence.

The representation of ethnic violence is also strongly gendered. Recent research on nationalism shows that in many settings, prospective threats to (as well as actual attacks on) "the nation" are construed as a feared or actual violation or rape of an "innocent, female nation" by a brutal male aggressor (Harris 1993:170, Verdery 1994:248–249). To defend or retaliate against such threats or attacks, conspicuously masculinist virtues may be asserted in compensatory or overcompensatory fashion. In India, for example, Hindu nationalist organizations offer a "way of recuperating masculinity" to their recruits, enabling them to "overcome the [stereotypically] 'effeminate' Hindu man and emulate the demonized enemy, the allegedly strong, aggressive, militarized, potent and masculine Muslim" (Hansen 1996:148, 153).

Ritual, Symbolism, Performance

A number of analysts—echoing themes from the Manchester school of social anthropology (Gluckman 1954, Turner 1969)—have underscored the ritual-

ized aspects of ethnic violence. Gaborieau (1985) highlights "rituals of provocation," which he describes as "codified procedures" of deliberate disrespect, desecration, or violation of sacred or symbolically charged spaces, times, or objects—in India, for example, the killing of cows by Muslims, or the disturbance of Muslim worship by noisy Hindu processions (on noise as a cultural weapon in ethnoreligious struggles, see Roberts 1990). Marches and processions through space "owned" by another group have triggered violence in Northern Ireland and India with sufficient regularity and predictability to warrant calling these too rituals of provocation (Feldman 1991:29–30, Jaffrelot 1994, Tambiah 1996:240). Even without deliberate provocation, conflicting claims to the same sacred spaces (Ayodhya, Jerusalem) or sacred times (when ritual calendars overlap) may provide the occasion for ethnic violence (Van der Veer 1994; Tambiah 1996:Chapter 9; Das 1990b:9ff; Friedland & Hecht 1991, 1996). Freitag (1989) and Tambiah (1985:Chapter 4, 1996:Chapter 8) have applied what the latter calls a semiotic and performative perspective on rituals and public events to ethnic confrontations, disturbances, and riots in South Asia. Performance and ritual are also emphasized in Zulaika's (1988) study of the cultural context of violence in a Basque village. Van der Veer (1996) sees riots as a form of ritual antagonism expressing an opposition between the self and an impure, alien, or demonic "other." Following Davis's (1973) analysis of the "rites of violence" in the religious riots of sixteenth-century France, analysts of ethnic riots have called attention to the ritualized nature and symbolic resonance of the seemingly gratuitous forms of mutilation often involved (e.g. hacking off of body parts, desecration of corpses).

Feldman's (1991) study of Northern Ireland is the most sustained discussion of the symbolic dimension of ethnic violence. Feldman focuses on the ethnically charged symbolism of urban space in Belfast, the increasing ethnic partitioning of which is both a consequence of ethnic violence and a reinforcing cause of future violence. He also analyzes the equally charged symbolism of the body. Ironically, given his critique of instrumental analyses of ethnic violence, Feldman devotes a great deal of attention to the body as an instrument, as a weapon deployed by those (in his case, IRA prisoners) for whom it is the only resource. Of course, as he shows in rich detail, this instrumentalization of the body through the "dirty protest" (in which prisoners denied special political status refused to wear prison clothing and smeared feces on the walls) and the subsequent hunger strike (in which 10 prisoners died) was achieved in symbolically resonant form [analyzed also by Aretxaga (1993, 1995), the latter piece focusing on female prisoners' own "dirty protest," centered on the display of menstrual blood].

It should be emphasized that no serious culturalist theory today argues that violence flows directly from deeply encoded cultural propensities to violence or from the sheer fact of cultural difference. In this salutary sense, there are no

purely culturalist explanations of ethnic violence; and it is difficult to simply classify as culturalist a work such as Tambiah (1996), in which cultural, economic, political, and psychological considerations are deftly interwoven. By considering separately culturalist approaches, we do not imply that they are or ought to be segregated from other approaches. We suggest, rather, that such approaches highlight aspects of ethnic violence—discursive, symbolic, and ritualistic aspects—that should ideally be addressed by other approaches as well.

CONCLUSION: A PLEA FOR DISAGGREGATION

The temptation to adopt currently fashionable terms of practice as terms of analysis is endemic to sociology and kindred disciplines. But it ought to be resisted. The notion of "ethnic violence" is a case in point—a category of practice, produced and reproduced by social actors such as journalists, politicians, foundation officers, and NGO representatives, that should not be (but often is) taken over uncritically as a category of analysis by social scientists. Despite sage counsel urging disaggregation (Snyder 1978, Williams 1994, Horowitz forthcoming), too much social scientific work in this domain (as in others) involves highly aggregated explananda, as if ethnic violence were a homogeneous substance varying only in magnitude. To build a research program around an aggregated notion of ethnic violence is to let public coding—often highly questionable, as when the Somali and Tadjikistani civil wars are coded as ethnic—drive sociological analysis.

The paradigmatic instances of ethnic and nationalist violence are large events, extended in space and time. Moreover, they are composite and causally heterogeneous, consisting not of an assemblage of causally identical unit instances of ethnic violence but of a number of different types of actions, processes, occurrences, and events. For example, it is evident from the case literature that in Sri Lanka "ethnic violence" consists of episodic riots on the one hand and more continuous low-level terrorism (and state violence in response to the terrorism) on the other, all occurring against the background of the "cultural violence" perpetrated by a series of ethnocratic Sinhalese governments. Not only do the riots, terrorism, and state violence involve sharply opposed mechanisms and dynamics (in terms of degree and mode of organization, mode of recruitment and involvement of participants, affective tone, symbolic significance, contagiousness, degree and modality of purposeful rationality, and so on), but within each category there is also a great deal of causal heterogeneity. Thus an ethnic riot typically involves at one level deliberate manipulation and organization by a small number of instigators but also, at other levels, turbulent currents of crowd behavior governed by powerful emotions and compelling collective representations requiring social psychological and cultural modes of analysis.

There is no reason to believe that these heterogeneous components of large-scale ethnic violence can be understood or explained through a single theoretical lens. Rather than aspire to construct a theory of ethnic and nationalist violence—a theory that would be vitiated by its lack of a meaningful explanandum—we should seek to identify, analyze, and explain the heterogeneous processes and mechanisms involved in generating the varied instances of what we all too casually lump together—given our prevailing ethnicizing interpretive frames—as "ethnic violence." This can be accomplished only through a research strategy firmly committed to disaggregation in both data collection and theory building.

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