

# Waves of War

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

Cambridge University Press

### Andreas Wimmer

*Editor's Note: The following text is based on an author-meets-critics session that took place during the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting in San Francisco in August, 2014. My thanks to Jack Goldstone, Mabel Berezin, and Andreas Wimmer for agreeing to write up their comments for the newsletter.*

### Comments on *Waves of War*

#### Jack A. Goldstone

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In this deservedly acclaimed book, Andreas Wimmer has provided a feast of new data and vitally important analyses. In *Waves of War*, we see the completion of a trend away from class-based analysis that has characterized political sociology since the state-centered approach developed in the 1980s and 1990s; the “waves” that propel both state-making and war in this book are driven by ethnic groups seeking to build regimes based on national identities. You might say that Wimmer confirms Marx’s worst nightmares about national interests trumping those of class, and thus creating continued conflicts that suspend the progress of working populations.

There are many findings that strike me as both sound and important, and where Wimmer’s analysis reinforces conclusions supported by other quantitative and case-based work. One

of the most significant is that regime type – whether democracy, anocracy, or dictatorship – is not a strong predictor of political violence; instead it is the rise of political struggles over ethnic power in states that precipitates most civil ethnic wars. This is a result that I strongly endorse, having been part of a multi-year team effort that arrived at essentially the same conclusion: that it is only when elite relations become polarized along ethnic or regional lines that partial democracies become likely sites of major violent conflicts (Goldstone et al. 2010).

I also applaud Wimmer’s valuable thoughts on whether peace can be engineered – an issue that is of more than academic interest today as the US prepares to go to war yet again in Iraq to deal with a state that has fractured along ethnic lines. Wimmer is honest and pessimistic. He notes, first, that it is underlying social relations and not formal institutions that determine whether people feel their identities and interests are aligned with their government, and second that those underlying social relations are not easily changed. Wimmer notes that making governments more inclusive – Wimmer’s solution for countering the centripetal forces of ethnic nationalism – is often resisted by dominant elites who see only a dilution of their power as a result. Similarly, ethnic groups who have been victimized in the past will rarely trust security and police forces dominated by an ethnic rival, no matter the

rules under which they claim to operate. Inclusivity must therefore be pervasive throughout governance, and not merely a result of token inclusion at one level.

Perhaps most troubling but clearly demonstrated is that nationalism – a scourge that brought us two world wars and dozens of genocides and ethnic cleansings – is far from dead, and that it is even invigorated by democratic reforms that force issues of political identity to the fore (a point also made by Mann 2005). In Ukraine, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Thailand, and many other places local nationalist aspirations clashed with old political boundaries to create a cauldron of competing claims to power and territory. In much of the world it may be many decades before people are able to act according to the liberal ideal of treating everyone as an individual with an equality of citizenship, with the latter including respect, access, and equal treatment under the law and in social relations. Governments, and even more, many social groups, continue to be discriminatory, exclusive, and distrustful of others in their own states.

In my own research, I have found that the percentage of the world's population living in societies that are both fully democratic and materially prosperous has hardly increased in the last 35 years. That is not because there has not been progress, especially in Latin America and eastern Europe. But that progress has been offset by persistent ethnic and religious conflicts, authoritarianism, and recurrent crises and democratic reversals in countries with faster-growing populations, leaving the world divided much as before.

There does, however, seem to be one rather large lacuna in Wimmer's comparative-historical analysis of nation-building and wars. Wimmer has sought to turn around Charles Tilly's famous claim that state-making is tied to

wars; Wimmer instead insists that both modern nation-state making and wars are the result of nationalist aspirations clashing with older imperial state forms or with competing nationalisms. Yet the analysis completely overlooks another of Tilly's major topics – the role of revolutions in history.

In pointing out this omission, I am not simply asking for attention to a favorite topic, or to a tangential side issue. Revolutions have played a central role in the history of nationalism and nation-state building. The American, French, and Chinese Revolutions were crucial events in

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creating American, French, and Chinese nationalism. Indeed, by my count out of the 167 years of national state creation in Wimmer's data (adding the four pre-1800 cases he mentions in the text), 74 – nearly half of all nation-creation years – coincide with revolutions.

This should not be surprising: Wimmer clearly says (p. 22) that “nation-states are created when a power shift allows nationalists to overthrow or absorb the established regime.” “Overthrow” – that is, revolution – is the common mode by which a nationalist movement replaces a traditional imperial

regime.

Yet the book has nothing to say about the relationship between ethnic conflict, state formation and revolutions. Astonishing! There is not even a mention of revolutions in the index. It is common enough for books on international relations to treat revolutions as obscure things within the “black box” of nations that can be safely ignored when talking about international war among states. But for a book arguing against that view, and making the case that internal political conflicts over power are critical to the onset of both civil and international wars, it is a very odd omission to neglect the literature on revolutions.

What would Wimmer have learned from bringing in the literature on revolutions (e.g. Skocpol 1979; Goldstone 1991, 2001, 2014; Goodwin 2001; Foran 2005; Selbin 2010)? Three things: First, state-changing politics are coalitional politics – cross-class coalitions are essential to large-scale political change. One reason ethnicity has the power that it does is that it IS an inherently cross-class identity. It thus competes effectively with more liberal civic nationalism, which often appeals mainly to urban or professional groups.

Second, mobilization is conscious and organized. It is not just a matter of a passive response to ethnic or nationalist institutions or interests. Wimmer’s data analysis is rich indeed, and the correlations allow him to say that nation-making occurs when power shifts in favor of nationalists, and that such shifts occur when the established regime “is weakened by wars” or “if nationalists have had ample time to decry ethno-political hierarchies as instances of ‘alien rule’ and to mobilize followers” (p. 23). Yet we see very little mobilization in this book, and nothing about the interplay between nationalist leaders and followers. In Serbia, in Georgia, in Iraq, in Russia (Chechnya), and in China (Tibet) ethnic

mobilization resulted from deliberate choices by political leaders to emphasize ethnic grievances and identities as a way to manage conflict and promote their power agendas. Furthermore, we learn nothing about the difference between ethnic mobilization for nation-building and ethnic mobilization for genocide. For Wimmer, Germany becomes a nation-state in 1871, as a result of Bismark’s nationalist wars against Austria and France, but – oddly for a book on “nationalism” and “ethnic exclusion” – there is no mention of Nazism, Hitler, or genocide (none of which appear in the index, either). Not all nationalisms, even ethnic nationalisms, are the same.

Third, revolutions depend heavily on ideologies for mobilization and these ideologies affect post-revolutionary reconstruction. In some cases, revolutionary ideologies intentionally seek to replace or obliterate ethnic identities to create new national identities, as with India and Ethiopia and Tanzania and South Africa, or France in 1789 or the United States in 1776 (except for race). Yet in other cases, revolutionary ideologies promote and intensify ethnic identity – as in Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo, Ireland, Chechnya, Tibet, Xinjiang. Again, understanding how ideologies shape revolutions gives much more insight into how various nationalisms evolve and compete with other views of political identity.

Finally, a nit-pick, but a potentially important one. Research findings based on statistical analysis are no better than the data on which they are based. I find the data in many cases quite troubling. Why did the US become a nation-state in 1868, or Russia in 1905? I understand the formal logic here; the 14th amendment extended citizenship to all Americans regardless of race. But it did not give women the vote – if we don’t care about women (who Wimmer explicitly sets aside in

deciding on nation-state status), why care so much about racial minorities, or even majorities? Most white Americans believe the Constitution of 1789 created a state where sovereign power resided in the nation (We the people) – and that is supposed to be Wimmer’s criteria. Similarly for Russia – yes, the Tsar issued a decree that created a Duma in 1905. But it was advisory, elected by a small fraction of the population, and did not change the character of the regime from absolute monarchy at all. It took the revolution of 1917 to do that. South Africa’s whites believed that, despite apartheid laws, they had created a nation-state with citizenship rights and popular sovereignty; I don’t think they would accept Wimmer’s data-coding that South Africa only became a nation-state in 1994 with the post-apartheid constitution. It may have been a deeply flawed nation-state from the viewpoint of ethnic inclusion and civil rights; but those who created and fought for a South-African nationhood out of Boer and British nationalism would say they had created a nation-state far earlier. If we think minority/majority rights matter, then Britain only becomes a nation state after the reform act of 1832, not prior to 1800 as Wimmer would have it. Wimmer has Japan becoming a nation-state in 1868, with the Meiji restoration. But in fact the Meiji constitution that created a nation based on the Japanese people was not adopted until 1889. Prior to that, the Meiji oligarchs, like the Shogun before them, ruled in the name of the Japanese emperor.

China is dated a nation-state from 1911, the date of the Chinese Republican revolution. But after 1915 it was formally a dynastic empire again when Yuan Shikai made himself emperor, then dissolved into warlord rule. Chiang Kai-shek tried to revive the Republic, and arguably created a national state government in China in the 1920s, but he was at war with nearly half his population in the 1940s, eventually losing to the communists

who finally established a people’s republic in 1949.

Wimmer says that France became a nation-state before 1800, presumably as a result of the French Revolution that killed the King, installed the First Republic, and created a new national administrative and legal system. However, the First and even Second Republics were very short-lived; Napoleon I was a dynastic ruler, installing relatives as monarchs all across Europe and when overthrown was replaced by a return to the absolutist Bourbon monarchy. In 1830, France became a national constitutional monarchy; but that system was overthrown by Napoleon III. Napoleon III was an imperialist who sought to incorporate Algeria into France on equal terms with other territories without regard for French ethnicity; so one should perhaps date the creation (re-creation?) of the French nation-state from the start of the Third Republic in 1871.

Of course, in coding a cross-national data set, as I know from my own experience (Goldstone et al. 2010), one has to make coding rules and stick to them; and correcting these nit-picks might have no impact at all on Wimmer’s statistical findings. However, it is a concern that so many of the cases that I know well seem to be miscoded; so it might be helpful to do a sensitivity analysis on some alternative coding rules (e.g. the date that a national language is taught in all schools, or the date that chief executive authority is no longer exercised by dynastic or imperial powers), to ensure the robustness of Wimmer’s findings.

Wimmer has provided two great accomplishments: a new data set on ethnic power and state-making, and refocusing our attention on the role of ethnic nationalism in modern state creation. We might wish for a world of smooth democratization and universal human and civil rights; but that is not the world we have now. As Wimmer has

shown, and has been shown true by current events in the Middle East and North Africa, we live in a world where ethnic nationalism and ethno-religious identities dominate state-making; and so it has been for the last few centuries.

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### Comments on *Waves of War*

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In the last ten years or so, Andreas Wimmer has produced a body of work that ranges across topics from ethnic closure to social networks and reveals a comparative historical sociology that is as broad as it is deep. Wimmer's *Waves of War* (2013) is a particularly

notable entry to his corpus of work. My discussion of *Waves of War* moves in three directions. First, my comments acknowledge the accomplishment that *Waves of War* represents and pinpoint where that accomplishment lies. Second, I take up the choice theoretic framework that Wimmer develops in his analysis. Third, a model is only as valuable as its potential application. I conclude by speculating on how social scientists might deploy Wimmer's analysis in future research.

*Waves of War* aims to re-theorize all of the major components of comparative political sociology—the state, nationalism and war. A bold formulation lies at the core of the book: nationalism is constitutive of modernity and its central political form the nation-state. Other political forms such as empires existed without the like-over-like or "identity" principle that is a core organizing principle of the modern nation-state. The upside of the modern nation-state is that it is an inherently more inclusive form of political organization than the organizational forms that preceded it; the downside of the modern nation-state is that it inherently predisposes towards war—hence the title of the book. Wimmer seeks to explain how and why the nation-state came to dominate modern political organization and how it spread from Western Europe to become a global political form. In short, *Waves of War* seeks to model and explain this "momentous transformation." Wimmer's project is deeply historical and raises questions that point to issues of temporality and sequentiality.

Each chapter of *Waves of War* engages in dialogue with major figures in comparative political sociology. The chapter on how the nation-state came together focuses upon the work of Charles Tilly and constructivist theories of nationalism. Wimmer finds lacunae in four standard analytic accounts of the development and diffusion of the nation-state.

He weighs Ernest Gellner's economic nationalism against the political sociology of Charles Tilly and Michael Mann. He contrasts Benedict Anderson's culturalist account of the growth and diffusion of nationalism with John Meyer's world polity theory. If, as Wimmer suggests, political sociology fails to provide a full account of the development of the nation-state because it does not give proper weight to the role of conflict then the International Relations literature on ethnic closure, violence and war might do a better job of explanation. With the exception of the game theoretic approach to ethnic conflict and war represented in the work of Laitin and Fearon (2003), Wimmer argues that realist and idealist versions of IR theory also fail to adequately explain multiple dimensions of the relation between conflict and political development.

Wimmer's problem is important, the "ethno-nationalization of war," that is the acceleration of conflict on all levels as the nation-state advances. The data sets upon which the book is based are vast, original, and remarkable in themselves. Wimmer's goal in *Waves of War* is to unite state formation, nationalism, ethnicity and war—topics that are empirically related but often treated as analytically separate—in one overarching analytic frame that marshals new data to answer old questions. He is careful to claim that he is not offering a new theory per se—just re-arranging the elements of existing theories so that they perform more analytic work. Wimmer's goal is to identify causal mechanisms that apply to more than one time period—which is the reason for the large data sets that he has constructed—data sets that enables him to treat all data points equally. In short, his data sets control for history and culture.

Wimmer's ambition is large and this demands that we subject his project to questions that are commensurate with this ambition. We have to ask does *Waves of War* succeed on its own

terms? Does Wimmer's work complement in useful ways, rather than negate, the competing theories with which he engages?

To begin that assessment, we have to begin with the model that Wimmer develops—particularly the mechanism of political closure embedded in the model. According to Wimmer, the nation-state, unlike more traditional or feudal forms of political organization, is a contract among different competing groups of elites. These elites emerge as states begin to centralize and the degree of state centralization is proportionate to the capacity of a nation state to emerge. Modern states need money (taxes) and military (protection); they need non-elite members to enter a social and political contract with them. Nation-states "buy off" non-elites, the "people" with "public goods" (social welfare) and concurrently develop the like-over-like principle of cultural identity and attachment. To this point, Wimmer's argument bears some similarity to the one that Gianfranco Poggi advances in *The Development of the Modern State* (1979).

Wimmer's account departs from Poggi when he includes the variations that formal modeling mandates. In this account, nation states, and political organizations more generally, represent a negotiated equilibrium between elites and masses with room for variation depending upon how that negotiation plays out. The negotiation has multiple components: first, the four categories of collective actors (i.e., primary and secondary elites and primary and secondary masses); second, the degree of inclusion/exclusion of masses and secondary elites within the polity; third, the centralization of the state; and fourth, the strength of voluntary associations that move the cultural, like-over-like, project forward. These four categories yield three political forms. The first form is the standard modern nation-state (all collective actors

included and a strong central state). France, among other countries, fits this model. The second political form is populism (no secondary elites; primary and secondary masses and an ineffective to weak state). Multiple countries in Latin America might fit this model. The last category is ethnic closure (only dominant elites; and primary masses coupled with a weak state). Various Eastern European countries might fit this model. The model is process oriented and answers the how question; but does not answer the why question: what makes the nation-state so attractive that it diffuses widely. Here Wimmer provides a novel answer. Nation-states spread because within diverse political spaces secondary elites (intellectuals, culture producers of various sorts) observe that nation-states work and these secondary elites take on the role of legitimacy entrepreneurs—who promulgate the new political form.

The architecture of *Waves of War* is worth noting. Wimmer shifts between two methodological strategies: first, the model building with its choice analytic mode of argumentation; and second, a more standard explanatory analysis based upon regression models. Wimmer puts his analytic model together brick by brick in a series of chapters that use standard explanatory logic with dependent variables and independent variables in regression equations that test different pieces of the overall analytic model. This is where the massive data sets that Wimmer has assembled come into play as he marshals a different data set for each chapter. These chapters are revealing in and of themselves. For example, one chapter demonstrates that democracy has no direct effect on either nation-state formation or, as I understood it, propensity to engage in war.

Wimmer's model is ultimately choice theoretic and the utility and strength of these types of models is the mechanisms that they reveal.

They give us formal tools to apply to specific historical phenomena or events (for example, the discussion of French political development, p. 71). When Wimmer discusses the bargains that elites strike with masses and the political outcomes of these bargains, he is elaborating a formal mechanism that can provide an analytic frame that elucidates multiple contexts. A weakness of analytic models and mechanisms is that they tend to be a-historical and a-temporal, that is they attenuate the effects of context and culture. While *Waves of War* covers

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the book, I kept asking myself what we might learn if we applied this model to Putin and the Ukraine, to Gaza, or to ISIS.

The strength of any analytic approach is its application. Wimmer spends the last pages of the book addressing the issue of globalization and the end of the nation-state—a concept that is much in vogue but which often lacks empirical specification. Nation states will continue (and hence wars) because Wimmer sees no institutional form on the horizon that can structure the kinds of negotiation between elites and masses that formed the core of the nation-state. Wimmer briefly mentions the case of the European Union as an example but only allots two pages to it. It is hard to ask an author who has already delivered such a compelling and meticulously researched book to write more—but Wimmer could have used the European case as a way to nail down his model.

If Wimmer's model is transposable at all, the European Union and its current crisis would be an excellent venue to test it in. The European Union does provide an institutional form but it has been unable to deal collectively with the challenges that the sovereign debt crisis which began in 2010 have posed. The principle response to the crisis has been a retreat to intense feelings of nationalism across the continent, the rise of xenophobic political parties and a refusal among citizens of member states to view each other in solidaristic terms. In the European case, primary and secondary elites have failed to negotiate with secondary masses (workers, persons who do no benefit from a transnational polity). Thus, for the most part, Europe is witnessing a regress to the national model.

Wimmer sees no institutional form on the horizon that might serve a global world in the same way as the nation-state served a more territorially restricted world. In contrast to

Wimmer, I do see some global institutional forms on the horizon, although perhaps they are not the ones that we would necessarily welcome. For example, religion is absent from *Waves of War* even though religion has historically been at the core of much political conflict. Religion crosses borders and is institutionalized as Samuel Huntington (1993) has argued. A new political form could emerge that unites culture and economics, as opposed to culture and politics as the nation-state did. In the 2014 summer of Thomas Piketty, one could imagine a world governed solely by global finance through the institution of the market.

In the end, we have to ask does Wimmer succeed on his own terms. The answer is unequivocally—yes. Does *Waves of War* extend in useful ways the theories that it engages? My answer here is somewhat more nuanced. This “critic” will never be happy with the absence of history, narrative and culture in the analysis. I also would have preferred Wimmer to speculate more with his own model and to take it a bit more in a policy direction. Lastly, there is a danger with formal models, even with an analysis as data rich as *Waves of War* offers: that these models remain detached from the realities that they seek to describe.

In any project of this sort there is a direct relation between the level of criticism and the ambition and reach of the book. *Waves of War* is a magisterial accomplishment. It pushes the boundaries of each topic that it engages – topics that dominate the contemporary political landscape. For these reasons, Wimmer's *Waves of War* merits our attention and praise. I learned much from *Waves of War* and you will too.

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## Author's Response

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I am deeply grateful to Professors Berezin and Goldstone for their careful reading of the book and their exceedingly generous assessment of its contributions. In an age when journal publishers ask us to summarize our articles in a tweet of 25 characters maximum and when books are sold online chapter by chapter, we cannot take it any longer for granted that our colleagues, even our reviewers, carefully read an entire book—especially a complex and hard-to-read one such as *Waves of War*. Since most of the readers will not be familiar with its content, I take the opportunity to summarize the gist of its argument first<sup>1</sup>—without referring to the multiple datasets and their statistical analysis that form the empirical core of the book.

To explain recent conflicts in countries such as Syria or Sudan, observers have been quick to point their fingers at proximate causes specific to our times: the power vacuum created by the end of the Cold War offered opportunities for rebels to fill the void; the recent globalization of trade flooded the developing world with cheap arms; rising global consumer demand generated new struggles over oil and minerals; jihadist groups spread using networks of fighters trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

*Waves of War* suggests that such explanations miss a bigger picture. If we extend the time horizon beyond the Cold War to include the

entire modern period— from the American and French revolutions to today— we can see repeating patterns of war and conflict. These patterns are related to the formation and development of independent nation-states— a fact strangely ignored by mainstream International Relations scholarship that focuses on relationships between independent states, rather than the process and consequence of their emergence. Note that in contrast to Tilly, *Waves of War* is not concerned so much with the war-prone formation of modern, territorial states in early modern Europe, but with their transformation into national states ruled in the name of a people with more or less clearly identified ethnic boundaries and with the spread of this political formation around the world.

*Waves of War* thus lays the finger on how principles of legitimacy transform over time and with what consequences. Until the eighteenth century, empires, dynastic kingdoms, tribal confederacies, and city-states governed most of the world. This changed when nationalists introduced the notion that every "people" deserved its own government. They argued that ethnic likes should rule over likes. In other words, Slovaks should be governed by Slovaks, not the House of Hapsburg; and Americans by Americans, not the British crown. Over the past two centuries, in wave after wave of nation-state formation, this new principle of political legitimacy transformed the world. Nationalists adopted this principle because it promised them and the population at large a better exchange relationship with the state: an exchange of military support against political participation, of taxation against public goods. Wherever nationalists were powerful enough—mostly independent of global trends or colonial legacies—they overthrew or gradually transformed the old regime and established nation-states based on the like-over-like principle.

In most places, two distinct phases of conflict accompanied this transition. First, violence accompanied the creation of the nation-state itself. Roughly a third of present-day countries have fought violent wars of independence that united, if only temporarily, the diverse inhabitants of colonial or imperial provinces against their overlords. Second, many of the resulting nation-states endured even worse violence after independence was won because the like-over-like principle bred further conflict. Imperial governments had often

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recruited members of specific minorities into the colonial army and bureaucracy. (The classic example was the Belgian preference for Rwanda's Tutsi minority over its Hutu majority to staff the country's colonial administration.) In other former imperial dependencies, the elites of the more assimilated and educated groups controlled the post-imperial state's nascent bureaucracies and security apparatuses, a fact that other groups began to resent as a break with the like-over-like principle that was now firmly established as the new template of legitimacy. More important, many new governments lacked the political power and resources to reach out to the entire population and overcome the political inequalities inherited from the imperial past. This made nation building more difficult and ethnic patronage more likely. Large segments of the population thus remained politically marginalized.

Whatever its origins, ethnopolitical inequality was perceived as a scandal once nationalism had been accepted as the guiding principle of

legitimacy. This made it easier for opposition leaders to mobilize followers and stage armed rebellions against exclusionary regimes. Data from every country in the world since 1945 demonstrates a tight correlation between such inequality and conflict: an increase in the size of the politically excluded population by 30 percent increased the chances of civil war by 25 percent. Almost 40 percent of independent countries today have experienced at least one ethnopolitical rebellion since World War II. It is important to note that these countries are not more ethnically diverse than those at peace. It is therefore not diversity per se, *Waves of War* shows, but political inequality, that breeds conflict.

New nation-states are also more likely to go to war with each other than established empires or dynastic states were. Empires drew loose and often arbitrary borders with little regard to ethnicity. Nation-states, on the other hand, care about borders because these may divide a single national group across various states. This creates the risk that those who end up on the wrong side of the border are treated as second-class citizens in neighboring states dominated by other ethnic groups - another way that the like-over-like principle can be violated. Conflict between neighboring nation-states thus often erupts over territories where ethnic groups overlap or over borders that divide a single ethnic group. In the early 1990s, for example, the Serbian minority resisted integration into the newly founded state of Croatia. The government of Serbia, expecting that their co-ethnics in Croatia would be mistreated (and in pursuit of its own national unification project), intervened on their behalf. War between the two states followed, ending with the expulsion of the Croatian Serbs across the border.

In short, *Waves of War* shows that the spread of the like-over-like principle and the formation of nation-states have been driving forces

behind civil and interstate war - a fact woefully absent from much of the literatures on civil and international wars, which remain focused on political economy mechanisms such as the economic incentives for rebels or the military-economic balance of power between independent states.

Goldstone notes the absence, in the narrative summarized so far, of an appropriate role for national revolutions, which often accompany the transition to the nation-state. This is an important point. Indeed, as he notes, many of the transitions have been brought about by revolutionary upheavals. I would go further and argue that even where the transition to the nation-state occurred gradually and in a negotiated and agreed manner, such as in Sweden or Botswana, the result is a profound re-configuration of the power structure, brought about by the new cross-class alliances that Goldstone emphasizes. In this broad understanding of "revolution", almost every transition to the nation-state is revolutionary—and the book is indeed about the causes and consequences of the national revolution, broadly defined, around the world. If we define revolution more narrowly, as implying resistance by the old regime and some collective mobilization (street protests, guerilla warfare, and so on) to overcome it, then it remains to be seen whether they do have consequences that are qualitatively different from non-revolutionary shifts in the power configuration. It would be easy to test—one would have to code every transition to the nation-state as either revolutionary or not (or a "degree of revolutionness") and then see whether this has consequences either for the subsequent power structure or for war proneness or both.

The international relations literature contains some hints that this might be the case for interstate wars. Walt (1992) highlighted a possible link between a revolutionary change in the

domestic power configuration and the possibility of interstate war (see also Maoz, 1989). He offered a classical neorealist argument, according to which "revolutions cause war by increasing the level of threat between the revolutionary state and its rivals and by encouraging both sides to view the use of force as an effective way to eliminate the threat" (Walt 1992, pp. 322–23). More recently,

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Colgan (2013) has argued that revolutions lead to international war because the leaders emerging from revolutionary turmoil are inherently less conflict averse and more politically ambitious.

From the point of view of *Waves of War*, I would argue that the threat to neighboring states' security (as argued by Walt) would be particularly pronounced if the revolutionary state emerges from a nationalist upheaval because a nationalist regime within an imperial or dynastic environment will often make claims to territory inhabited by co-nationals and corresponding trouble with the neighbors. Similarly, the political ambition of

revolutionary regimes, emphasized by Colgan, would be especially marked, I argue, if it goes together with the nationalist project of re-drawing the boundaries of statehood in the entire region. It is, thus, an open empirical question whether or not revolutionary regimes emerging from nationalist movements do indeed have such consequences.

Goldstone's second, related point concerns the content of nationalism. Are "civic" nationalisms à la France and the United States inherently more peaceful than "ethnic" nationalisms, he asks, or are there even relevant distinctions between more or less violent nationalisms within these two types? I doubt that this will be so. The United States' supposedly "civic" form of nationalism had a decisively racial undertone—one fourth of the population was enslaved when the nation was declared independent—and it subsequently embarked upon an expansionist agenda that had very unpleasant consequences for the subjugated, expelled, and marginalized non-white peoples. The "ethnic" nationalism of China has not, as far as I can see, led to a similarly bellicose expansionism (leaving the Tibetan case aside). Everybody picks the examples that suit best, of course. It is an interesting question, and empirically quite feasible, to try to answer Goldstone's question in systematic ways. Of course, one would have to overcome very thorny definitional issues given that the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalisms is conceptually ambiguous, to say the least, as the US example makes clear (and as its early propagator later came to argue: Brubaker, 1999).

Theoretically, I doubt that some nationalist ideologies are inherently more violent—beyond the question of whether such variation can be captured by the civic vs. ethnic distinction. I would point to numerous transformations of nationalist ideologies (from the ideology of racial purity and superiority of

the Nazis to the pacifist, anti-nationalist, and non-racial patriotism of contemporary Germany, for example). Ideologies matter, of course. The major ideological division relevant for war and peace, I submit, is that between nationalist and non-nationalist principles of legitimacy—at least at the level of abstraction and generalization that the book is aiming at and over the time period that it considers. Eastern Europe and the former Ottoman domains are especially prone to ethnic violence not because their nationalisms are particularly chauvinistic, but because they transitioned from empires that maintained ethnic diversity and heterogeneity at the local level, rather than slowly eroding it through (forced) assimilation as in France or (among whites) the United States, and because the new elites failed to incorporate minorities into the emerging system of alliances.

Goldstone's data concerns are legitimate and I am very glad that he raises these points—I have the deepest respect for his wide-ranging historical knowledge. Most of the "miscodings" that he mentions are, however, not miscodings given my definition of the nation-state as a government ruled in the name of a people of equal citizens without internal, legally enshrined divisions of status between them. The United States had legally sanctioned slavery until the civil war—the almost perfect antinomy to the idea of equality. Apartheid Africa similarly excluded de jure and de facto its majority black population. Whether American or South African whites thought they lived in a perfect democracy of equals doesn't matter that much, from the point of view of my definition, as long as the boundaries of the nation are not defined, constitutionally, in inclusive terms, but contain special provisions that define second-class citizenship (or no citizenship rights at all) for certain kinds of people. The issue of gender inequality, legally sanctioned in most countries well into the 20th century, is of a different

nature and, while relevant for many aspects of modern statehood (e.g. Adams, 2005), it is only indirectly relevant for the core process of nation-state formation and war that the book is about (after all, there is no single mono-gendered state in the world nor has there ever been a war fought in the name of men or women).

On the more detailed codings: As is explained in the book, we code on what the constitution says about who rules in the name of whom, not whether or not a state lives up to (for example) the democratic principles enshrined in a constitution. Russia is therefore correctly coded, while we might have made a mistake in the case of Japan. As the book also explains in detail, we code only the first transition to the nation-state and not the reversals (Hitler's Germany, France's Napoleon, China's restored empire). If we do so, as mentioned in the book, the main results of the analysis do not change.

***Statistical analysis is certainly a-contextual—it has to be to achieve its aims—but this doesn't mean that it cannot uncover cases and groups of cases in which contextual matters appear to make history work differently than “on average.”***

Berezin notes the absence of historical narrative in the book—and rightly so, because it explicitly assumes a non-narrative form. Readers who would like to follow threads of events and trends that intersect and produce particular configurations of contingency might be better served with Michael Mann's monumental four-volume *Sources of Social Power* (Mann, 1986-2013). *Waves of War* attempts to tease out, from the various historical threads and contextual colorings, the

patterns that repeat—to remain in the carpet metaphor. The price is indeed, as noted in the introduction, a high level of abstraction and methodological de-contextualization: only those aspects of a particular war-prone configuration that are comparable, from the theoretical angle adopted by the book, to other configurations and that are captured by some data are relevant for the statistical analysis. Whether or not one prefers such a bare-bone skeleton of patterns over a richly flavored stew of contextual narratives is a matter of intellectual taste, rather than empirical accuracy or theoretical acumen. With hindsight, I think it would have been better if *Waves of War* had followed Berezin's advice and offered something for every taste. My new book on nation-building will try to do better and combine paired case comparison with broad statistical analysis of the sort that *Waves of War* is perhaps overly rich.

I do think, however, that *Waves of War* offers a little bit more of an attempt at delving into context than what Berezin makes it appear. To be sure, it is not the main concern of the book. But several chapters try to explore a) whether certain continents show different dynamics of nation-building than others, b) which groups of cases the argument applies to and which ones it doesn't (it discusses, for example, why the civil wars of Latin America of the 1960s and 1970s do not conform to the pattern found elsewhere), and so on. Statistical analysis is certainly a-contextual—it has to be to achieve its aims—but this doesn't mean that it cannot uncover cases and groups of cases in which contextual matters appear to make history work differently than “on average.”

I am grateful for Berezin's suggestion to explore future alternatives to the nation-state in more depth. *Hélas*, I for my part find understanding the past so hard that to predict the future seems impossible. All we can do is to extrapolate trends, heroically assuming that

mechanisms will remain constant and the same as in the past. Still, the exchange-theoretic argument at the core of the analysis lends itself to such an operation—the argument, that is, that political institutions and forms of legitimacy rest on specific modes of exchanging political, economic, and symbolic resources between state elites and the population at large. Let us further assume, as *Waves of War* does to explain the attractiveness of nationalism, that modes of exchange that leave the population worse off than in the past will appear less legitimate in their eyes and thus will be less stable. The European Union hasn't offered anything in public goods to the population (apart from financing infrastructure projects in the peripheries), including no security (there is no European army or police), nor does it tax the population directly or let it participate in its decisions (this has recently changed with the empowerment of the European Parliament). Conformingly, the sense of European identity has remained weak and its institutions are not perceived with much legitimacy. The current crisis in the European Union therefore doesn't come as much of a surprise from the point of view of the theoretical framework outlined in *Waves of War*.

Will religious identities replace national ones or will a non-political form of market control, centered on Wall Street emerge, possibilities that Berezin hints at? They may, but the transition to such a world will undoubtedly be painful and violent, given that neither macro-religious institutions (the Vatican, Al-Azhar University, etc.) nor Wall Street can offer a better exchange relationship to the population at large than can nationally defined states. If *Waves of War* is correct, then, the transition to a macro-religious institutional order or a completely unchained financial capitalism will meet organized resistance by large segments of the world population. ISIS, to be sure, represents an attempt to create a religiously

and ethnically homogenous Sunni Arab state (a marriage between Wahhabism and Baathism, as it were) rather than to revert to a trans-ethnic, trans-religious empire such as the Caliphate that it pretends to re-establish. Thus, if one can read tomorrow's weather from today's sunset, not much of a post-national age seems to be on the horizon. But maybe the day after tomorrow?

#### Endnotes

1. Parts of this summary have appeared in the online version of *Foreign Affairs*, November 7, 2013.

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