

Snyder, ch. 1

1

## Transitions to Democracy and the Rise of Nationalist Conflict

The centerpiece of American foreign policy in the 1990s was the claim that promoting the spread of democracy would also promote peace. Noting that no two democracies have ever fought a war against each other, President Bill Clinton argued that support for democratization would be an antidote to international war and civil strife.<sup>1</sup> Yet paradoxically, the 1990s turned out to be a decade of both democratization and chronic nationalist conflict.

While the world would undoubtedly be more peaceful if all states became mature democracies, Clinton's conventional wisdom failed to anticipate the dangers of getting from here to there. Rocky transitions to democracy often give rise to warlike nationalism and violent ethnic con-

<sup>1</sup> See his 1994 State of the Union address, "Transcript of Clinton's Address," *New York Times*, January 26, 1994, A17. On the absence of war between democracies, see Michael Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80:4 (December 1986), 1151-1169.

flicts. Since the French Revolution, the earliest phases of democratization have triggered some of the world's bloodiest nationalist struggles.

Spreading the benefits of democracy worldwide is a worthy long-run goal. However, strategies for accomplishing this must be guided by a realistic understanding of the politics of the transition. Naively pressuring ethnically divided authoritarian states to hold instant elections can lead to disastrous results. For example, international financial donors forced free and fair elections on the leaders of the small central African country of Burundi in 1993, and within a year some 50,000 Hutu and Tutsi were killed in ethnic strife there. And yet many other democratic transitions succeed without triggering nationalist violence. Understanding the conditions that permit such successful transitions should be the first step toward designing policies to pave the way toward democracy. To that end, this book explains why democratization often causes nationalist conflict, and why it sometimes does not. Drawing on that analysis, I prescribe ways to make democratic transitions less dangerous.

### Liberal Optimism Confronts the Nationalist Revival of the 1990s

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, a euphoric vision briefly captured the American imagination. Liberalism had triumphed over its two ideological competitors in the twentieth century, communism and fascist nationalism, and no new challengers were in sight. Empires and dictatorships were collapsing. Democratization was sweeping formerly authoritarian countries in Latin America, southern Europe, and Eastern Europe, and even making inroads in East Asia. Virtually everywhere states were adopting market economies. Global economic interdependence was continuing to deepen. Liberal, American-based mass news media and popular culture were achieving global reach. This victory of liberalism, it was claimed, would usher in "the end of history."<sup>2</sup>

Believing that all good things go together, liberal commentators argued that war was becoming obsolete, at least among the liberalizing countries

<sup>2</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989), 3–18.

that were establishing the dominant global trend.<sup>3</sup> A learned tome published in 1990 concluded that nationalism, commonly defined as the doctrine that each cultural group should have its own state, was rapidly heading into the dustbin of history because states organized around single nations could no longer cope with an increasingly interdependent, globalizing world.<sup>4</sup> Residual stumbling blocks in the path of triumphant liberalism could be overcome with the help of an energetic set of international institutions—United Nations troops to keep the peace, and International Monetary Fund experts to lure countries into the liberal fold and to enforce the rules of fiscal prudence. In keeping with this vision, President Clinton explained that promoting democratization would be a watchword of U.S. foreign policy—because democracies never fight wars against each other, they trade freely with each other, and they respect the human rights of their citizens.<sup>5</sup>

This vision tarnished quickly. War has been endemic since the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Nor have these been trivial wars at the periphery of the international order: the world's oil supply was at risk in the 1991 Gulf War; in June 1991 the Yugoslav army battled Slovenian separatists scarcely a hundred miles from Vienna, and NATO's air forces mounted a sustained bombing campaign throughout Serbia during the 1999 Kosovo conflict. Nationalist rhetoric, far from being discredited, came back into vogue. A quarter of the electorate in Russia's fledgling democracy voted in 1993 for the party of a neofascist anti-Semite, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (only a third voted for Hitler in 1932). In civil wars from Somalia to Bosnia, the armed forces of the liberal international community were bedeviled, attacked, and held hostage by local thugs. Ethnic mayhem in 1994 caused over half a million deaths in Rwanda, after Belgian peacekeepers were killed on the first day of the genocide campaign against the Tutsi minority.

As a result, the conventional wisdom was soon turned on its head: *The Atlantic Monthly* relabeled the post-Communist world as "the coming anar-

<sup>3</sup> John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chapter 6.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the 1994 State of the Union address, see also the article by Clinton's national security adviser, Anthony Lake, "The Reach of Democracy," *New York Times*, September 23, 1994, A35.



chy," and the eminent Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington announced that the future would hold in store a "clash of civilizations."<sup>6</sup> In the view of such pundits, cultural conflicts, whether along the fault lines of whole civilizations or simply among intermingled ethnic groups, would become the defining cleavages of international relations in the coming era. News media and political leaders commonly attributed these grim developments to "ancient hatreds" between inimical cultures, simmering for centuries and boiling over as soon as the lid of the cold war was lifted off the pot. This account was simple, intuitive, and reinforced daily by the justifications offered by perpetrators of ethnic slaughter. For Western politicians looking for an easy excuse to limit their involvement in unseemly struggles, the story of ancient hatreds also had the advantage of portraying these disputes as hopelessly intractable. But even those who retained the vision of spreading liberal democracy to unaccustomed corners of the globe considered age-old ethnic prejudices to be liberalism's major foe. President Clinton, in his 1993 presidential inauguration speech, remarked that "a generation raised in the shadows of the cold war assumes new responsibilities in a world warmed by the sunshine of freedom but threatened still by ancient hatreds."<sup>7</sup>

The good news is that this view is largely incorrect. Most of the globe's recent strife is not due to ancient cultural hatreds. In some cases, the warring groups had experienced no armed conflict until relatively recently. Serbs and Croats, for example, never fought each other until the twentieth century, and then largely because the Nazis installed an unrepresentative regime of murderers in Zagreb.<sup>8</sup> In other cases, occasional conflicts between cultural or ethnic groups have been interspersed with long interludes of

<sup>6</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic Monthly* 273:2 (February 1994), 44–76; Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72:3 (Summer 1993), 22–49.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph, "Modern Hate," *The New Republic* 208:12 (March 22, 1993), 24. Clinton later acknowledged that his "ancient hatreds" remarks were erroneous. See Katharine Seelye, "Clinton Blames Milosevic, Not Fate, for Bloodshed," *New York Times*, May 14, 1999, A12.

<sup>8</sup> The first armed conflict pitting Serbs against Croats was World War I, when half of the Austro-Hungarian forces invading Serbia were Croats. However, a quarter of this invasion force were Serbs from the border districts of Croatia, a group whose traditional occupation had been frontier guards against the Ottomans. Since Serbs fought on both sides, World War I can hardly be classified as an example of an ancient ethnic conflict. Dimitrije Djordjevic, "The Yugoslav Phenomenon," in

amicable relations, therefore cultural differences cannot in themselves be a sufficient explanation for the recent fighting. Few serious scholars attribute nationalism and ethnic conflict primarily to ancient cultural hatreds.<sup>9</sup>

The bad news, however, harbors a deep irony: the very trends that liberals saw as bringing the end of history have in many instances fueled the revival of nationalism. The end of the authoritarian Soviet empire spurred the aspiring leaders of many of its intermingled nations to establish their own national states, whose conflicting claims to sovereignty and territory often gave rise to disputes.<sup>10</sup> Elections often sharpened these ethnic and national differences. Nationalist demagogues exploited the increased freedom of the press in some newly democratizing states to hijack public debate for illiberal ends.<sup>11</sup> Painful adjustments to a market economy and to international interdependence provided further opportunities for nationalist politicians who promised protection in a strong state, or who distributed a shrinking economic pie along ethnic lines. At the same time, the globalization of media and culture often repelled rather than attracted those who failed to prosper in a Westernized world.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, as some critics argue, international organizations sometimes caused more conflict than they averted with their inept strategies of peacekeeping and their strict philosophies of economic reform.<sup>13</sup>

Though surprising to liberal optimists, these developments of the

Joseph Held, *The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 310.

<sup>9</sup> Although ethnic conflicts are a prevalent feature of the post-cold war landscape, they do not necessarily represent an increasing proportion of all conflicts. Myron Weiner, "Bad Neighbors, Bad Neighborhoods: An Inquiry into the Causes of Refugee Flows," *International Security* 21:1 (Summer 1996), 21–22, points out that between 1969 and 1992 the proportion of nonethnic refugee-causing conflicts increased.

<sup>10</sup> Placing the Soviet collapse in comparative perspective is Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen, eds., *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security* 21:2 (Fall 1996), 5–40.

<sup>12</sup> Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," 25–62; Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>13</sup> Richard K. Betts, "The Delusion of Impartial Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* 73:6 (November/December 1994), 20–33; Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1995), Chapter 3.



1990s actually echoed long-standing patterns in the history of nationalism, which I explore in subsequent chapters. Far from being an outmoded throwback, nationalism is largely a reaction to the social changes of the modern era. Western Europe went through these changes between the French Revolution and the Second World War, an age that saw the rise of modern nationalism and of popular warfare. During that period, democratization, economic development, and a revolution in the means of communication fueled nationalism, which often took a militant form. States being dragged by social change into a transition to democracy have been more likely to participate in wars and more likely to start them than have states whose regimes did not change.<sup>14</sup> The end of the cold war increased the prevalence of nationalism by unleashing this dangerous transition toward democratic, market societies in the post-Communist states.

Though democratization heightens a state's risk of war, historical evidence shows that three out of four democratizing states nonetheless avoided war in the decade after their democratization. Moreover, once liberal democracy became entrenched, no mature democracies have ever fought wars against each other. In those countries where transitions to democracy were fully consolidated during the 1990s, the rights of ethnic minorities tended to improve, and ethnic conflicts were rare.<sup>15</sup>

The central message of this book, consequently, constitutes a paradox. On the one hand, the successful unfolding of a global, liberal-democratic revolution might eventually undergird a more peaceful era in world politics. On the other hand, the transition to democratic politics is meanwhile creating fertile conditions for nationalism and ethnic conflict, which not only raises the costs of the transition but may also redirect popular political participation into a lengthy antidemocratic detour. The three most nearly successful attempts to overturn the global balance of power through aggression—those of Napoleonic France in 1803–15, Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany in 1914–18, and Adolf Hitler's Germany in 1939–45—all came

<sup>14</sup> Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20:1 (Summer 1995), 5–38; Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs* 74:3 (May/June 1995), 79–97.

<sup>15</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Peoples versus States: Ethnopolitical Conflict and Accommodation at the End of the 20th Century* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, forthcoming); see also Ted Robert Gurr and Will H. Moore, "Ethnopolitical Rebellion: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the 1980s with Risk Assessments for the 1990s," *American Journal of Political Science* 41:4 (October 1997), 1079–1103.

on the heels of failed attempts to democratize. Popular nationalistic energies, unleashed and perverted by the miscarriage of democratic reforms, created the conditions that made possible these bids for global hegemony. Thus, the process of democratization can be one of its own worst enemies, and its promise of peace is clouded with the danger of war.

To promote democratization without heeding these risks would be self-indulgent idealism. Yet to try to hold back the global social processes that may stimulate nationalism—including demands for increased mass participation in politics, the collapse of outworn empires, and the globalization of the economy and communications—would be equally unrealistic. Instead, one of the key tasks for the international community will be to distinguish the circumstances that make for a safe transition to liberal democracy from those that lead to backlash, nationalism, and war. Insofar as astute policy choices can help to create the more favorable conditions, understanding the pitfalls of democratization is the first step toward avoiding them. This is an analytical task for everyone who is engaged with the seminal issues of our day: political leaders in the advanced democratic states and in transitional states, journalists, human rights activists, scholars, citizens, and even nationalists themselves, insofar as they want to avoid costly missteps in the pursuit of their nations' goals.

In this introductory chapter, I will first define what I mean by the terms nationalism and democratization; second, summarize the evidence that nationalist conflict correlates with the early phases of democratization; third, challenge the view that ancient popular rivalries explain this correlation; fourth, briefly sketch my own alternative explanation, which highlights the role of persuasion by nationalist elites; fifth, discuss the practical implications of this theory for policy choices; and finally, provide a road map to the historical and contemporary case studies that constitute the bulk of the book.

## What Are Nationalism and Democratization?

### *Nationalism*

In everyday usage, a variety of very different phenomena may all be labeled as manifestations of nationalism, including ethnic riots, aggressive foreign policies of fascist states, patriotism in democracies, and the peace-



ful seeking of special rights for cultural groups. To avoid confusion, social scientists typically like to define terms more narrowly and precisely than is common in everyday discourse.

The most widely used scholarly definition of nationalism is by Ernest Gellner, who defines nationalism as the doctrine that the political unit (the state) and the cultural unit (the nation) should be congruent.<sup>16</sup> According to this view, nationalism holds that the state, which is the organization that exercises sovereign authority over a given territory, should rule on behalf of a particular nation, defined as a group of people who feel they share a common culture. This formulation is theoretically clear and historically plausible. Many self-proclaimed nationalist movements have had as their central aim the acquisition of a state by a culturally distinct people (like Croatian nationalists did in 1991), the inclusion of cultural brethren in an existing state (Hungarian nationalists in the 1930s), or the domination of an existing state by a single cultural group (Estonian nationalists in the 1990s). Indeed, in an age when conflicts rooted in ethnic nationalism are such a dominant concern, it is tempting to highlight cultural distinctions in the very definition of nationalism.

Yet this definition would seem to leave out phenomena that common usage, including usage by self-described nationalists, normally calls nationalism. For example, defining nationalism strictly in terms of shared culture would seem to exclude militant loyalty to a state's political institutions or other principles not based on culture, such as the universalistic principles embodied in the U.S. Constitution. Similarly, defining the aim of nationalism as achieving a sovereign state would seem to exclude the seeking of political rights short of sovereign statehood by cultural groups, such as those Québécois nationalists who seek a form of autonomy within the Canadian federal state. Moreover, nationalists often do not stop at getting their own state. They frequently attempt to enshrine distinct cultural values in that state, discriminate in favor of coethnics living within its borders, try to incorporate ethnic brethren and historic national territories into the state, and militantly guard against encroachments by historic enemies of the nation.<sup>17</sup> In some cases, the nation-state adopts a "nationalistic"

<sup>16</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1–7.

<sup>17</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Chapters 3 and 4.

view of neighboring nation-states as inferior, hostile, and deserving of domination.<sup>18</sup> Everyday usage assumes that these broader meanings are an integral part of the thing people call nationalism. I will try to show that common parlance links these phenomena not out of confusion but because they have related causes, dynamics, and consequences, which a theory of nationalism and nationalist conflict ought to try to capture. To accommodate this, Gellner's definition, though a useful starting place, needs to be broadened.

I define nationalism, therefore, as the doctrine that a people who see themselves as distinct in their culture, history, institutions, or principles should rule themselves in a political system that expresses and protects those distinctive characteristics.<sup>19</sup> A nation is, therefore, a group of people who see themselves as distinct in these terms and who aspire to self-rule. Nationalist conflict is defined as organized, large-scale violence motivated or justified by a nationalist doctrine.

By this definition, not all ethnic groups are nations; nor are all nations ethnic groups. There are many peoples who consider themselves to be culturally or historically distinct, for example the Cajuns of Louisiana, but who lack a doctrine that claims a right to self-rule for the group. Based on wide-ranging historical research, Anthony Smith distinguishes between an ethnic group, or *ethnie* (which has a distinctive consciousness based on a common language or culture, myths of common ancestry, or a common historical experience), and a nation (which seeks self-rule for such a group).<sup>20</sup> Ethnic conflict involves nationalism only when a goal of the conflict is to establish or protect self-rule by the ethnic group.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future," *International Security* 15:1 (Summer 1990), 5–56, calls this "hypernationalism."

<sup>19</sup> Snyder and Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," 9–10.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>21</sup> The most ambitious expression of the demand for self-rule is the achievement of sovereign statehood, whereby the nation establishes a bureaucratic apparatus that monopolizes the legitimate use of force within the territory it governs (Gellner, *Nations*, 3–5). Some nationalist movements, however, seek more limited forms of self-rule, involving autonomous authority for the nation over a narrower range of issues such as educational and language policy, a separate legal code, taxation, or control over local police forces. The Québécois political movement, for example, would remain nationalist by my definition if it sought to expand or protect the scope of self-



Although nationalist doctrine derives political authority from the right of a distinct people to rule themselves, nationalists do not necessarily hold that legitimate political processes require democratic voting. Rather, the right to self-rule means that the national group should not be ruled by an alien people or alien institutions. It also means that the nation's rulers, no matter how they are chosen, must justify their policies in terms of the welfare, security, and fulfillment of the national aims of the sovereign people. This ambiguity between rule by the people and rule in the name of a people constitutes one of the main attractions of nationalist doctrine to elites who seek to rule undemocratically in an era of rising demands for a mass role in politics.

Nations may distinguish themselves from each other not only on the basis of distinctive cultural traditions, but also on the basis of distinctive political traditions, political institutions, and political principles.<sup>22</sup> Thus, scholars commonly divide nationalisms into two types, ethnic and civic, based on the nature of their appeals to the collective good and on their criteria for including members in the group.<sup>23</sup> Ethnic nationalisms, like those of the Germans and the Serbs, base their legitimacy on common culture, language, religion, shared historical experience, and/or the myth of shared kinship, and they use these criteria to include or exclude members from the national group.<sup>24</sup> For example, German law offered citizenship to people of German ancestry who reside in Russia, while it denied it to many Turks who have lived in Germany all their lives. Civic nationalisms, like those of the British, the United States, and for the most part the French, base their appeals on loyalty to a set of political ideas and institutions that are perceived as just and effective. Inclusion in the group depends primarily on birth or long-term residence within the nation's territory, though sufficient knowledge of the nation's language and institutions to participate in the nation's civic life may be a criterion for the naturalization of resident aliens.

rule of the distinct Québécois nation, even while remaining within the sovereign state of Canada.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, given Gellner's extremely broad definition of culture as "a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating," a nation's political ideas and habits would count for him as culture. Gellner, *Nations*, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, 22–31.

This distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism is especially crucial in countries like contemporary Ukraine, where ethnic Russians and Ukrainians live intermingled. In those conditions, basing political loyalties on cultural or linguistic differences would be intensely divisive. Consequently, Ukraine's leaders have for the most part prudently promoted a civic-territorial form of national loyalty.

These categories are ideal types: no actual nation is purely civic or purely ethnic. Ethnic groups that seek political goals normally set up administrative institutions that function at least partly according to legal criteria, not just cultural norms. Conversely, civic states are often built on some discernible ethnic core, and over time, civic nations generate their own civic culture and shared historical myths.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, nations can be placed on a continuum between the civic and ethnic ideal types depending on whether loyalty to and inclusion in them is based primarily on institutions or on culture. A definition of nationalism that is broad, yet distinguishes between ethnic and civic variants, permits the investigation of the causes and consequences of both types.<sup>26</sup>

In short, this definition of nationalism highlights popular self-rule as a universal goal of nationalists but avoids smuggling democracy into the very definition of nationalism. It also allows the exploration of the cultural basis of political loyalty but avoids the mistake of equating nationalism with ethnicity. Thus, it features some of the elements of nationalism that are central to understanding the causes of nationalism and its consequences for violent conflict.

### Democratization

The term democratization distinguishes between mature democracies and democratizing states. In mature democracies, government policy, includ-

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 153–54.

<sup>26</sup> Although this definition of nationalism is broad, it does not subsume all types of political loyalty. There are many doctrines of supreme political loyalty that are based on alternative criteria for alignment and enmity, other than nations—e.g., social classes; smaller-scale kinship groups such as clans; local communities of individuals with face-to-face relationships; transnational religions; status groups such as the aristocracy; professional organizations such as guilds and knightly orders; family dynasties, empires, networks of patronage and personal reciprocity; or organizations that stand for universalistic moral principles.



ing foreign and military policy, is made by officials chosen through free, fair, and periodic elections in which a substantial proportion of the adult population can vote; the actions of officials are constrained by constitutional provisions and commitments to civil liberties; and government candidates sometimes lose elections and leave office when they do. Freedom of speech, freedom to organize groups to contest elections, and reasonably equitable representation of varied viewpoints in the media are presumed to be preconditions for a free and fair election. I define states as democratizing if they have recently adopted one or more of these democratic characteristics, even if they retain important nondemocratic features.<sup>27</sup>

The category of democratizing states is a very broad one. It includes states like the Czech Republic in the early 1990s, which made a transition from complete autocracy to virtually complete democracy. However, it also includes the former Yugoslavia just before its breakup in 1991, when elections were contested for the first time in circumstances of somewhat freer speech, yet electoral fairness and the rule of law were hardly well established.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Snyder and Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," 6 (fn. 5). For the purpose of a quantitative study of the relationship between democratization and war, the findings of which I occasionally invoke in this book, Edward Mansfield and I identified specific thresholds for several types of institutional change from an autocracy to a mixed regime and from a mixed regime to a democracy. We labeled states crossing any one of these thresholds as democratizing. See Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," 8–10. We relied on the categories and case codings of Ted Gurr's Polity II and III databases. However, in narrative discussions of cases in this book, I do not rely solely on these particular quantitative thresholds. Rather, I describe qualitatively the specific changes in institutions or civil liberties that warrant the designation of democratization.

<sup>28</sup> Though democratization is a broad term, scholars sometimes employ a still broader term—that is, increased political participation. Political participation may take democratic forms, such as voting or joining a political party, but it may also take nondemocratic forms, such as rioting, striking to express political demands, or forming mass-based paramilitary movements. See Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). Where these latter forms of political participation are prevalent, democratic elections are not "the only game in town," and perhaps not even the main game. Historically, one important form of increased mass political participation was the formation of nationalist societies and pressure groups, whose repertoire often featured rallies, lobbying, intimidation, and other nonelectoral methods. These operated in democracies, such as the

At what moment does a successfully democratizing state become a mature democracy? When can its democracy be termed consolidated? Some scholars use the "two turnover rule" to define democratic consolidation: that is, a democracy is considered consolidated when power has changed hands twice as a result of free and fair elections. Others say that democracy is consolidated when it is "the only game in town": that is, when no significant political party or group seeks to come to power by means other than winning a free and fair election.<sup>29</sup> Finally, others measure the degree to which the country has achieved the institutional and legal characteristics of a mature democracy, using indicators such as competitive politics, regular elections, broad participation, constraints on arbitrary use of executive power, free speech, and respect for civil liberties, including minority rights. When a country achieves a high enough score on almost all of these dimensions, it is said to have consolidated its democracy.<sup>30</sup> States that have crossed this line by any of the above criteria are mature democracies, no longer democratizing states.<sup>31</sup>

### The Link between Democratization and Nationalist Conflict: Some Evidence

Diverse evidence points to a connection between democratization and conflicts fueled by nationalism. As more people begin to play a larger role in politics, ethnic conflict within a country becomes more likely, as does international aggression justified by nationalist ideas.

Nazis in the Weimar Republic; in democratizing states, such as the German Navy League before World War I; and in states untouched by significant democratization, such as the nationalist Chinese Kuomintang movement of Chiang Kai-shek.

<sup>29</sup> See Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), Chapter 1.

<sup>30</sup> Both Gurr and Freedom House aggregate scores across multiple dimensions in this way. See Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War" and "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War" (manuscript, 1999), for a discussion of the precise cutoff points used to distinguish mixed regimes from mature democracies.

<sup>31</sup> Thus, to predict the international behavior of consolidated democracies, one should look to the theory of the democratic peace among mature democracies, not to the hypotheses about the war-proneness of democratizing states contained in this book.



Most of the states undergoing bloody ethnic conflicts that dominated the news of the 1990s experienced a partial improvement in their political or civil liberties in the year or so before the strife broke out. Most of these conflicts occurred in states that were taking initial steps toward a democratic transition, such as holding contested elections and allowing a variety of political groups to criticize the government and each other. Freedom House, an independent research and advocacy organization, makes widely used annual rankings of every state's degree of democracy and civil liberties, including press freedoms. By these measures, partial democratization and partial increases in press freedom occurred before the outbreak of ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia, before the escalation in the fighting between Armenians and the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, and in Russia, the perpetrator of the war against the ethnic separatist Chechens. In Burundi, the ethnic minority Tutsi military government agreed to accept elections in 1993 and to share governmental offices with the long-oppressed Hutu majority. When, inevitably, the elections installed a Hutu President who tried to insert some of his coethnics in the military establishment, a conflict spiral touched off by mutual fears and retaliation left some 50,000 dead. Though neighboring Rwanda held no election, its Hutu-dominated government allowed an increase in press freedom on the eve of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi minority.<sup>32</sup>

A systematic study of every ethnic conflict during the period from 1990 to 1998 noted that ethnic political assertiveness peaked during the wave of transitions toward democracy that followed the collapse of the Soviet empire from 1989 to 1991.<sup>33</sup> By mid-decade, this tide of democratization had slackened or in some cases reversed itself, and correspondingly the number of ethnic conflicts also diminished.<sup>34</sup> Where democracy was successfully consolidated, as in much of South America and the northern part of Eastern Europe, minority rights were increasingly being guaranteed through peaceful means. Meanwhile, fewer countries were entering the dangerous category of semidemocratic regimes, where

<sup>32</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World* (New York: Greenwood Press, annual yearbooks for 1989–94).

<sup>33</sup> Gurr, *Peoples versus States* (forthcoming).

<sup>34</sup> Larry Diamond, "Is the Third Wave Over?" *Journal of Democracy* 7:3 (July 1996), 96.

minority rights were more likely to suffer than to improve. Thus, democratic consolidation reduced ethnic conflict, but the initial steps in the rocky transition to democracy increased it, especially in new states.<sup>35</sup>

Democratic transitions have also tended to coincide with involvement in international wars over the past two centuries. The chance of war in any given decade for the average state has been about one in six, whereas for democratizing states it has been about one in four during the decade following democratization. The democratizing states were more likely to be the attackers than the target of aggression in these wars. The most war-prone states are those at the beginning stages of democratization, rather than those that have nearly completed the consolidation of democracy. Especially at risk for war are newly democratizing countries that lack a strong centralized state to lay down firm rules for regulating popular participation in politics and for enforcing state authority.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, domestic political opposition to free trade rises significantly at the beginning of democratization, whereas successful consolidation of democracy tends to make states free-trading. Thus, the rise in nationalistic and uncooperative thinking affects economic relations as well as military matters.<sup>37</sup>

This pattern of war-proneness during the early stages of democratization echoes the history of virtually every great power. France, Britain, Germany, and Japan all fought aggressive wars, fueled in part by popular nationalism, on the heels of their initial phase of democratization.

<sup>35</sup> Gurr, *Peoples versus States* (forthcoming).

<sup>36</sup> See three studies by Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," "Democratization and War," and "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War." Although the databases used for these studies did not measure nationalism directly, we presented logical arguments and narrative historical evidence suggesting that nationalism was at least one of the factors causing this link. On the failure to consolidate and the heightened incidence of war, see Alexander Kozhemiakin, *Expanding the Zone of Peace? Democratization and International Security* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), Chapter 5. For studies showing variations in the strength of the link between democratization and war, see William Thompson and Richard Tucker, "A Tale of Two Democratic Peace Critiques," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41:3 (June 1997), 428–54, and other articles in that issue; John Oneal and Bruce Russett, "Exploring the Liberal Peace," paper presented at the International Studies Association meetings, April 1996, revised and shortened as "The Classical Liberals Were Right," *International Studies Quarterly* 41 (1997), 267–94.

<sup>37</sup> Edward D. Mansfield, "Democratization and Commercial Liberalization," paper presented at the 1996 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.



By today's standards, France was not a full-fledged democracy in the years immediately following the French Revolution of 1789: it had no stable rule of law, elections were irregular, and only some Frenchmen could vote. Nonetheless, the elected assembly was the focal point of the nation's politics, and the press was, at least for a time, free and lively. Under these free-wheeling conditions, one of the revolutionary factions, led by the newspaperman Jacques-Pierre Brissot, discovered that the best way to win popularity and power was to hype the foreign threat. Brissot was swept into power through his allegations of a conspiracy linking the Austrian monarchy to the French king and aristocracy. Soon the assembly and the Paris political clubs (which nowadays we would call "civil society") were demanding war. The troops of revolutionary France marched to the frontier in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity, as well as national defense.<sup>38</sup>

In comparison, British politics during the decades of partial democratization following the First Reform Bill of 1832 were far less volatile. Nonetheless, even here, public opinion among the newly enfranchised middle classes, inflamed by the nationalistic press, pushed the reluctant British cabinet into the Crimean War against Russia in 1853.<sup>39</sup>

World Wars I and II can similarly be attributed in part to the imperfect beginning stages of German and Japanese democratization. Before 1914, Germany had universal suffrage, an elected legislature that controlled the national budget, and habitual voter turnouts above 90 percent. However, it was not a full democracy, since the hereditary monarch, rather than the voters, picked the ministers who ran the executive branch of government. Over a million German voters were members of nationalist organizations like the Navy League, which demanded an aggressive policy of imperial expansion that led Germany into confrontation with Europe's great powers. Despite Germany's defeat in World War I, middle-class voters once again helped install a belligerent nationalist government in the waning days of the unstable Weimar Republic, voting heavily for the Nazis in 1932. Japan, too, experimented with electoral democracy in the 1920s. Japanese public opinion, encouraged by a relatively free press,

<sup>38</sup> T. C. W. Blanning, *The Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars* (London: Longman, 1986).

<sup>39</sup> Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War?* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1985).

turned sharply in favor of forceful imperial expansion on the heels of the 1929 economic depression and the Japanese military invasion of Manchuria in 1931.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the turbulent early stages of democratization in Germany and Japan were closely tied to the origins of both world wars.

Although these episodes may seem like ancient history, Argentina's ill-fated 1982 invasion of the Falkland Islands, owned by Great Britain, was spurred by a similar dynamic. The Argentine military regime, its popularity waning, had recently allowed more freedom of the press, which was in turn effectively exploited by nationalist voices clamoring for a seizure of the islands. Hoping that a successful military gambit would enhance its popularity and position it well for democratic elections that increasingly seemed inevitable, the Argentine military dictatorship gambled on attacking the sovereign territory of a nuclear-armed great power and NATO member.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, there are strong indications that nascent democratization and its close cousin, press liberalization, heighten the risk of nationalist and ethnic conflict in our own time, just as they have historically. What accounts for this correlation?

### Why Democratization Increases the Risk of Nationalist Conflict

Two contending views, which I label the "popular-rivalries" and the "elite-persuasion" arguments, offer opposite explanations for the correlation between democratization and nationalist conflict. The former contends that long-standing popular nationalist rivalries precede democratization. In this view, democratization gives expression to the long-held, popular aspirations of an already-formed nation, which are incompatible with the aspirations of other nations. The "ancient hatreds" argument is one form of this popular-rivalries explanation.

<sup>40</sup> Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), Chapters 3–4; Louise Young, "War Fever: Imperial Jingoism and the Mass Media," in *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998).

<sup>41</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, "Miscalculation in the South Atlantic," in Robert Jervis, et al., *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 98–99; Jack Levy and Lily Vakili, "Diversionary Action by Authoritarian Regimes," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *The Internationalization of Communal Strife* (London: Routledge, 1992), 118–46.



I argue the opposite. Before democratization begins, nationalism is usually weak or absent among the broad masses of the population. Popular nationalism typically arises during the earliest stages of democratization, when elites use nationalist appeals to compete for popular support.<sup>42</sup> Democratization produces nationalism when powerful groups within the nation not only need to harness popular energies to the tasks of war and economic development, but they also want to avoid surrendering real political authority to the average citizen. For those elites, nationalism is a convenient doctrine that justifies a partial form of democracy, in which an elite rules in the name of the nation yet may not be fully accountable to its people. Under conditions of partial democratization, elites can often use their control over the levers of government, the economy, and the mass media to promote nationalist ideas, and thus set the agenda for debate. Nationalist conflicts arise as a by-product of elites' efforts to persuade the people to accept divisive nationalist ideas.

It matters which of these two views is correct, because each points toward different prescriptions for averting nationalist conflict. If the popular-rivalries view is right, the preferred solution should often be to partition democratizing ethnic groups into separate states, even if it means moving populations.<sup>43</sup> Much of Eastern Europe has already undergone a vast "unmixing of peoples" in the twentieth century, most of it as a result of extermination and forced emigration during and immediately after the two world wars.<sup>44</sup> Why not, in this view, move people before the fighting rather than afterward? Where partition of a multiethnic state is impractical, the closest substitute would have to be adopted: powersharing between largely self-governing nationalities. Under this scheme, sometimes called "consociational democracy," people would have rights not only as individuals but also as members of a national or ethnic group,

<sup>42</sup> For related arguments, see V. P. Gagnon, "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security* 19:3 (Winter 1994/95), 130–66; V. P. Gagnon, "Ethnic Conflict as Demobilizer: The Case of Serbia" (Cornell University, Institute for European Studies Working Paper no. 96.1, May 1996); Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of the conditions in which partition is necessary, see Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security* 20:4 (Spring 1996), 136–75.

<sup>44</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, Chapter 6.

which would govern its own internal affairs and have group rights to proportional representation in the bureaucracy and the legislature.<sup>45</sup> However, if the elite-persuasion view is correct, such separation measures might serve to lock in divisive national identities, unnecessarily heightening distrust between groups. When this is the case, a better solution would be to take advantage of the fluidity of national identity during the formative stages of democratization to promote more inclusive, civic identities and cross-ethnic political alignments.

I will first summarize and assess the popular-rivalries view, in part because it seems so plausible, indeed commonsensical, to most American readers. Then I will briefly summarize my own elite-persuasion argument, which will be presented more fully in Chapter 2.

#### *Predemocratic popular rivalries: A simple but usually erroneous explanation*

A very simple explanation for the link between democratization and nationalist conflict sees nationalism as deeply rooted in popular attitudes that long precede democratization. If people of different cultures naturally want their own state, and if they inhabit the same territory, giving them the vote will unavoidably put them at loggerheads. In principle, these conflicting aims might cause conflict even if the contending groups had no predemocratic history of violence toward each other. However, if people of different cultures had learned through long-term rivalries to hate or distrust each other, that would make the rivalry even worse: the democratic process would express those entrenched popular animosities.<sup>46</sup>

In the popular-rivalries view, national strivings can be suppressed by empires and authoritarian regimes, whereas democratization gives voice to the true nationalist preferences of the average voter. Elections become a census rather than a deliberative process. Democratization will tend to

<sup>45</sup> Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

<sup>46</sup> Hurst Hannum, *Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1996), discusses problems arising out of demands for ethnic self-determination; Daniel Byman and Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on the Causes of Contemporary Deadly Conflict," *Security Studies* 7:3 (Spring 1998), esp. 33–35, discuss the conflictual consequences of the "tyranny of the majority" and of historic grievances of "hardened groups" in democratizing multiethnic societies.



produce either the tyranny of the majority or a pitched battle between the competing state-building goals of rival nations. Democratization, in this view, may also give rise to international conflicts, if a newly democratic nationalizing state seeks to capture foreign territory where its ethnic brethren reside.

Many Americans, steeped in Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of national self-determination, take for granted that humanity is divided into distinct peoples, each of whom has the natural desire to rule itself in its own way.<sup>47</sup> When the Soviet Union collapsed, for example, many Americans with Wilsonian instincts saw it as quite natural that each of the fifteen ethnically titled constituent republics of the USSR should exercise its democratic right to self-determination. This seemed all the more just because of the long history of Soviet repression of what U.S. cold warriors called the "captive nations": mass deportations of some non-Russian ethnic groups to Siberia and Central Asia, systematic campaigns of terror or starvation against others, and dictatorial rule from Moscow over all the subject nations at the periphery of the empire. Emerging from this history, the formerly captive nations had ample reason to desire self-rule rather than rule by Moscow.

But where ethnic groups live side by side in the same towns and regions, one group's aim to establish self-rule in its own state is sure to be incompatible with that of others.<sup>48</sup> Every successor state to the Soviet Union except Armenia houses a substantial minority, including the Russians who populated many of the cities and industrial enterprises of the non-Russian Soviet republics.<sup>49</sup> Under these circumstances, democratic self-determination by ethnic groups becomes a recipe for conflict if each group tries to establish a state in which it monopolizes citizenship rights and in which policies on linguistic or economic issues serve the interests of the dominant ethnic group. Because so few states in the former Soviet empire or in the developing world are ethnically homoge-

<sup>47</sup> For a critique of this view, see David Laitin, *Identity in Formation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 12.

<sup>48</sup> Hurst Hannum, "Rethinking Self-Determination," *Virginia Journal of International Law* 43:1 (Fall 1993), 1–69, points out the elusiveness of self-determination doctrine on the question of the boundaries of the self-determining unit.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Armenia, which had the smallest minority population even in Soviet times, expelled most of its Azerbaijani minority before independence.

neous, Wilsonians should not be surprised if many new democracies are conflict-prone.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the clear logic behind this popular-rivalries view, I argue that in most cases it gets the facts exactly backward. Mass nationalism is rarely well developed before democratization. More commonly, it rises during the earliest phase of democratic change. In the era before the majority of the population takes an active part in political life, their sense of belonging to a nation is usually weak. Typically, they are aware of cultural, linguistic, religious, and regional differences across groups, but they attach political significance to these differences only intermittently, if at all. At that stage of social development, politics is a matter for elites. It is true that cultural legacies or administrative arrangements based on nationality in the authoritarian regime may load the dice in favor of the *later* development of a particular form of nationalism, once the broader population becomes politically active. Even so, in most cases, this consciousness does not crystallize until people start to speak out in public and form mass political organizations along national lines.

For example, it would be wrong to view Serbia's war for autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century as an outpouring of ancient popular nationalist sentiment. As I show in Chapter 4, this struggle was more a commercial enterprise by a multiethnic cabal of pig-traders than a war of national liberation. Serbian national consciousness took shape only gradually from the 1860s to 1914, when Serbia had a surprisingly democratic though disorderly political system with nearly universal suffrage, competing parties, and a free press. The wars and hatreds of that period made a lasting impact on the national consciousness, in part because the public was already playing a role in political life. As in most of the European states, according to historian Miroslav Hroch, "the process of nation-forming acquired an irreversible character only once the national movement had won mass support."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 123. According to one survey, fewer than 10 percent of states are populated almost entirely by members of a single national group. Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 96.

<sup>51</sup> Miroslav Hroch, "Real and Constructed: The Nature of the Nation," in John Hall, ed., *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).



In short, nations are not simply freed or awakened by democratization; they are formed by the experiences they undergo during that process. The type of political experiences, institutions, and leadership that prevails during the initial phases of democratization can be decisive for the formation of national identity. How people are included in the political life of their state determines the kind of national consciousness that they develop, as well as the degree of nationalist conflict that democratization brings. Consequently, it is of immense practical importance, as well as academic interest, to explore in detail what forces shape the kind of nationalism that emerges from the crucible of democratization. Purported solutions to ethnic conflict that take predemocratic identities as fixed, such as partition, ethnofederalism, ethnic powersharing, and the granting of group rights, may needlessly lock in mutually exclusive, inimical national identities. In contrast, creating an institutional setting for democratization that de-emphasizes ethnicity might turn these identities toward more inclusive, civic self-conceptions.

#### *Elite persuasion: Selling nationalism in democratizing states*

Democratization gives rise to nationalism because it serves the interests of powerful groups within the nation who seek to harness popular energies to the tasks of war and economic development without surrendering real political authority to the average citizen. In predemocratic societies, military, economic, and cultural elites preferred to rule without taking the risk of arousing popular nationalist sentiments. However, with the rise of mass armies, commercial capitalism, and inexpensive printing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rulers who could attract the active support of their people gained a valuable advantage in competition against other states and against rival elites at home. In a growing number of countries, old elites either granted some democratic reforms, or else rising new elites forced such changes. Despite the pressures for democratization, both the old and new elites were typically reluctant to allow full democratic rights, since this could have endangered their parochial economic interests as well as their positions of power in society. Nationalism, a doctrine of rule in the name of the people but not necessarily by the people, provided a way for elites to be popular without being fully democratic.

A very effective tool for containing popular pressure for democratization is the use of nationalist doctrine to exclude so-called enemies of the

nation from enjoying democratic rights. Nationalist elites commonly argue that ethnic minorities, the working classes, rival elites, or other political opponents should be excluded from political participation, often alleging that these groups lack the proper national credentials and are in league with foreign powers. This tactic not only justifies curtailing the democratic rights of these purported "enemies within," but just as important, it has a chilling effect on freedom of expression among all citizens.<sup>52</sup>

The prospects for elite attempts at nationalist persuasion depend in part on the timing of democratization relative to the development of the country's economy and political institutions. Exclusionary nationalism is most likely to prevail when the democratizing country is poor, when its citizens lack the skills needed for successful democratic political participation, and when its representative institutions, political parties, and journalistic professionalism are weakly established during the early phase of the democratic transition. In these conditions, nationalist elites are more able to hijack political discourse. Moreover, in such a barren and unpromising political landscape, threatened elites are likely to have little confidence that a fully democratic regime could reliably guarantee to protect their interests after they surrender power. Under these conditions, gambling on staying in power at the crest of a nationalist tide will seem an attractive alternative. Conversely, exclusionary nationalism is less likely to thrive in countries like nineteenth-century Britain or contemporary South Africa that democratize after the necessary economic resources, citizenship skills, or political institutions are already in place.

These outcomes depend on both the motivation and the opportunity of elites to promote nationalist doctrines. The strength of an elite's *motivation* depends on the adaptability of its interests to a more democratic setting. The more the elite feels threatened by the arrival of full democracy, the stronger is its incentive to use nationalist persuasion to forestall that outcome. The elite's *opportunity* to sell exclusionary nationalism depends to a large extent on the character of the political institutions of the democratizing state. For example, where the state's bureaucracy is strong, yet its institutions for democratic participation and public debate are weak, state elites will be able to use their administrative leverage to promote national-

<sup>52</sup> Gagnon, "Ethnic Conflict as Demobilizer"; on the role of racial exclusion, see Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).



ism during the early phase of democratization. Conversely, when representative and journalistic institutions are already well developed during early democratization, nationalist arguments can be checked through more effective scrutiny in open public debate.

Together these two factors, the adaptability of elite interests and the strength of the country's political institutions during early democratization, determine the intensity of the democratizing country's nationalism and the form that nationalist exclusions are likely to take. Representing the resulting possibilities as a schematic simplification, this yields four types of nationalism: counterrevolutionary, revolutionary, ethnic, and civic (see Table 1.1). Three of these four entail severe exclusions of different kinds and are likely to lead to intense nationalist conflicts.

*Counterrevolutionary* nationalism is likely to emerge when elite interests are not adaptable, and when administrative institutions are strong, but representative institutions are weak. In that situation, my theory predicts that attempts at nationalist persuasion will be intense and effective. Threatened ruling elites will justify excluding political opponents from power by portraying them as revolutionary enemies of the nation. As in Germany before World War I, nationalism will take a counterrevolutionary form.

Conversely, *revolutionary* nationalism will emerge when state institutions have already collapsed, and opportunistically adaptable elites seek to establish a popular basis for restoring power to the state. Under those conditions, I predict that nationalist persuasion will be used effectively to rally support against foes at home and abroad. As in the French Revolution, nationalism will take an intensely exclusionary revolutionary form.

*Ethnic* nationalism is likely when democratization begins in a setting where the basic building blocks of political or administrative institutions have never been laid down. In this institutional desert, elites will by default be constrained to base appeals to loyalty on the only available alternative, traditional popular culture. As in nineteenth-century Serbia, an intensely exclusionary nationalism will take an *ethnic* form.

These three types of exclusionary nationalism—counterrevolutionary, revolutionary, and ethnic—are likely to produce violent nationalist conflicts with the excluded groups inside the country and with any of these groups' purported foreign allies. The fourth variant of nationalism, the civic type, is more moderate and inclusive.

Nationalism will take an inclusive *civic* form when elites are not partic-

ularly threatened by democratization, and when representative and journalistic institutions are already well established before the mass of the population gains political power. Under those conditions, as in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nationalists lack both the motive and the opportunity to purvey divisive doctrines. While civic nationalisms are not predicted to be pacifistic, they have far less reason to fall prey to the kind of reckless, ideologically driven conflicts characteristic of the other three types.

**Table 1.1 Relationship of Political Institutions and Elites' Interests to the Type of Nationalism during the Early Phase of Democratization.**

<i>Nationalist Elites' Interests</i>	<i>Strength of the Nation's Political Institutions</i>	
	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>
<i>Adaptable</i>	Civic: strong representative institutions (Britain)	Revolutionary (revolutionary France)
<i>Unadaptable</i>	Counterrevolutionary: strong administrative institutions (pre-World War I Germany)	Ethnic (pre-World War I Serbia)

### Making Choices in Today's World

These explanations for the connection between democratization and nationalism have significant implications for designing strategies to manage contemporary nationalism. The ethnic conflicts of the 1990s spurred a number of sharp policy debates among politicians, journalists, and scholars. Understanding how democratization causes nationalist conflict sheds new light on each of those debates.

The most general debate revolves around the nature of the coming epoch, whether it will be wracked with ethnic conflict, or whether it is heading toward an inclusive democratic peace. The analysis advanced in this book suggests that both perspectives are likely to be right. The democratic peace will prevail within and between states wherever democracy is quickly and successfully consolidated. Meanwhile, nationalism will be on



the rise in the many states that find themselves newly embarking on democratization, stuck in between autocracy and democracy, suffering from the consequences of failed democratization, or simply anticipating its unsettling effects. Insofar as great powers like China and Russia may face these dangers, dealing with democratization as a cause of nationalist conflict should remain high on the agenda of the international community.

More concretely, the management of these transitions provokes sharp differences of opinion. Some argue that international organizations, non-governmental human rights groups, and powerful democratic states ought to press all dictators to democratize immediately. *New York Times* editorials routinely insist that the authoritarian leaders of such countries as Congo and Malaysia should immediately announce multiparty elections. My theory suggests skepticism about that advice. Given the postcolonial pattern of patronage and political alignment in such countries, factionalism in politics during their democratization often follows ethnic lines.<sup>53</sup> And given that starting point, effective institutions for channeling social cleavages in other directions need to be well developed before democratization can be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Some argue that the international community should press for power-sharing between groups in multiethnic societies, with ethnic groups, not just individuals, enjoying rights.<sup>54</sup> My theory suggests that this is a last resort because it runs the risk of unnecessarily politicizing and locking in inimical cultural distinctions. Wherever possible, democratizing states should try to promote civic identities and guarantee rights at the individual level. For the same reasons, ethnically based federalism and regional autonomy should be avoided, since they create political organizations and media markets that are centered on ethnic differences.

Some argue that multiethnic states with a history of intercommunal conflict ought to be partitioned before the conflict recurs, even if this means moving people to new homes.<sup>55</sup> My theory suggests that partitions might be necessary where ethnic conflicts during formative periods of

<sup>53</sup> Mahmoud Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 300.

<sup>54</sup> Arend Lijphart, "The Power-Sharing Approach," in Joseph V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (New York: Lexington, 1991), 491–510.

<sup>55</sup> Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars," *International Security* 20:4 (Spring 1996), 136–75.

democratic development have already created entrenched institutions, ideas, and interests based on invidious ethnic distinctions. But for states that have not undergone significant levels of democratization, such partitions should be unnecessary if leaders are willing to adopt a strategy of civic institution-building *before* embarking on democratization. The gradual development of the rule of law, an impartial bureaucracy, civil rights, and a professional media, *followed* by the holding of free elections, should be able to create a civic national identity that trumps "ancient hatreds."

Many human rights organizations argue that individuals responsible for human rights abuses in waning authoritarian systems, especially their leaders, ought to be punished for their crimes against humanity. My theory, however, highlights the incentive that this creates for still-powerful elites to play the ethnic card in a last-gasp effort to forestall this fate. Indeed, democratization has proceeded most smoothly where authoritarian elites were given a "golden parachute" into a safe retirement, as in South America and northeast Europe. Where elites have felt most threatened, notably in Rwanda, human rights disasters have only intensified. Punishment is a prudent strategy only when the human rights abusers are too weak to wreak such havoc.

Finally, advocacy groups like Human Rights Watch propose greater freedom of speech and a more active "civil society" as antidotes to manipulative governments that foment ethnic conflict.<sup>56</sup> Yet in many infant democracies, the newly freed press becomes a vehicle for nationalist appeals. Weak democratic institutions often make society uncivil.<sup>57</sup> Unfettered speech and a vibrant civil society are forces for peace only when conditions are favorable, that is, when media audiences are sophisticated and journalists are professionalized. Projects to foster those preconditions need to precede proposals to unleash vigorous debate in a free press.

These are controversial prescriptions that run counter to the current conventional wisdoms of the international human rights community as

<sup>56</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Slaughter among Neighbors* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>57</sup> Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49:3 (April 1997), 401–29; Margaret Levi, "Social and Unsocial Capital," *Politics and Society* 24 (March 1996), 45–56; Sidney Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work across Time and Space," *American Political Science Review*, 90:2 (June 1996), 389–98.



well as many of the natural instincts of the American public. Nonetheless, I believe that the theoretical logic and case-study evidence presented in the coming chapters should make even the most avid proponent of spreading democracy and human rights think more carefully about devising prudent ways and means of pursuing those ends.

### **The Plan of the Book**

The next chapter fleshes out my elite-persuasion explanation for the correlation between democratization and nationalist conflict. It also discusses some possible alternative explanations. To probe the plausibility of these arguments, I examine historical as well as contemporary cases of democratization. I rely on a combination of two strategies: tracing causal processes within cases and comparing across cases.

Chapters 3 and 4 present historical case studies of the four types of nationalism: counterrevolutionary Germany before the two world wars, civic Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, revolutionary France, and ethnic Serbia in the century before 1914. These four cases have been focal points for much of the theoretical and historical literature on nationalism, and for good reason. Britain and France, the two earliest cases of nationalism, created a form of political loyalty that other states felt compelled to emulate. France and Germany carried out nationalist aggression on a continental scale. Serbia spans two centuries as the quintessential example of divisive ethnic loyalty. Any theory of nationalism must come to grips with these seminal instances. I devote all of Chapter 3 to the German case, which provides an exceptionally rich laboratory illuminating many of the mechanisms through which democratization causes nationalism and nationalist conflict. Chapter 4 sketches the other three cases and concludes by comparing all four types of nationalism. These paradigmatic cases illustrate patterns that help in assessing the contemporary case studies presented in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5 examines the impact of democratization on nationalism and ethnic conflict in the post-Communist states. It is important to analyze these cases both because of their intrinsic contemporary significance and because they constitute a hard test for my theory. Many of the post-Communist states democratized, yet not all of them experienced intense nationalist conflicts. Thus, this set of cases presents a challenge to see how

well each state's distinctive pattern of democratization can explain the degree of its nationalism.

Chapter 6 discusses the relationship between democratization and nationalism in the contemporary developing world. It begins with a broad overview of the conditions that have led to intense nationalist and ethnic conflicts in some democratizing states, and contrasts them with the conditions that have led to peaceful transitions in others. Then I look in more detail at a few cases that illuminate key issues for my theory. A comparison of the closely parallel cases of Sri Lanka and Malaysia shows how unfettered democratization triggered ethnic strife in the former case, whereas in similar circumstances, a scheme imposed by an authoritarian leader averted ethnic conflict in the latter one. Sketches of Rwanda and Burundi show the dangers of liberalization in states lacking an adequate institutional foundation, while the case of India illustrates the consequences that ensue when those foundations begin to atrophy.

Chapter 7 draws out the practical implications of the analysis, assessing various prescriptions for averting nationalist conflict. Overall, I argue that the international community should pursue a patient and sometimes indirect strategy for promoting the spread of well-institutionalized civic democracies. Shortcuts on the road to the "democratic peace" could wind up as detours to a counterrevolutionary nationalist backlash or to rivalrous ethnic pseudodemocracies.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> For a related argument, see Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76:6 (November/December 1997), 22–43.