Introduction

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, came as a shock to most observers despite the explicit revisionist claims made by President Vladimir Putin before the aggression.[1] Likewise, Hamas' murderous attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, stunned observers – including the Israeli government, which responded with massive violence and ethnic cleansing – and brought the Palestinian issue back to international attention. These events are far from the only major geopolitical upheavals that policymakers and scholars failed to anticipate. The collapse of the Soviet Union surprised not only Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev but also virtually all academic and policy experts. The words of John Lewis Gaddis, a leading historian who in the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR commented on the profound sense of uncertainty in world politics, remain as valid today as they were in the early 1990s: "Surprise remains one of the few things one can count on, and very few princes have succeeded in avoiding it, however assiduous the efforts of their respective wizards, medicine men, counselors, advisers, and think tank consultants to ward it off."[2]

Why these repeated surprises? Is it because world history is inherently chaotic, as Alan Bererchen writes,[3] or are analysts and practitioners simply using the wrong conceptual map? Although much research indicates the latter, the point is not that wars of aggression or other geopolitical shocks can be accurately predicted – they cannot be forecast with any more precision than geologists can predict the exact timing and location of an earthquake.[4] But we should expect that existing theories allow us to anticipate the very possibility of future events.

Most influential approaches to international politics fail to make sense of the "return of geopolitics" – the increased importance of power politics in recent years – that was ushered in by Russia's annexation

[1] Putin 2021, 2022. See also Stent 2022; Hill and Stent 2022.
[2] Gaddis 1992/1993, 5.
[3] Beyerchen 1992/1993.
[4] Tilly 1995; Cederman and Weidmann 2017.

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of Crimea in 2014.[5] Extending well beyond the example of Russia, other contemporary cases include the conflicting territorial claims of the Israelis and Palestinians;[6] China's wish to reincorporate Taiwan; Serbia's neo-imperialist ambitions in the Balkans;[7] and Turkey's Ottoman nostalgia, which has inspired territorial claims in neighboring countries.[8]

Crucially, these geopolitical developments do not merely raise the specter of large-scale political violence, although that is perhaps their most dangerous consequence. Most fundamentally, they also concern the stability of states' borders and even their very existence. Politicians on both sides of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict question the other side's right to statehood. Similarly, Russia's annexation of Crimea and its attempt to conquer and subjugate Ukraine constitute frontal attacks on the territorial integrity norm that outlaws land-grabbing wars.[9] Even though this norm holds in most places, it has come under increasing pressure from revisionist nationalists, a tendency that has become even more acute since Donald Trump took over as US president in January 2025.[10]

To better confront these challenges, scholars and policymakers need to overcome the historical myopia that dominates current expert opinion. Rather than treating the return of geopolitics as a recent phenomenon characterizing the early twenty-first century, it should be seen as part of a macrohistorical process that created and transformed the modern state. Instead of treating states as stable, unchanging units, we need to understand their emergence, dissolution, and reshaping through border change because such historical transformations are at the heart of today's geopolitical challenges.[11] Thus, it may be more proper to talk of the return of *nationalist* geopolitics.

Adopting such a long-term perspective, scholars studying contemporary conflict and development have increasingly turned to the deep historical roots of state formation.[12] Serving as a starting point for much of this research, Charles Tilly's classic theory of state formation in Europe suggests that internal and external processes of institutional change interact with warfare. His famous formula, "war made the state

[5] Mead 2014; Auer 2015; Trofimov 2020. Here, geopolitics is referred to in general terms as power politics rather than as a label for theories of geographic determinism, see Maier 2016, 135; and Nickel 2024.
[6] Silberman 2013.
[7] In 2020, Serbian Defense Minister Aleksandar Vulin called for the creation of a "Serbian empire" in order to revive Dusan's medieval empire, see Vulin 2020.
[8] Yavuz 2020. See also Trofimov 2020.
[9] Zacher 2001; Hathaway and Shapiro 2017.
[10] Simmons and Goemans 2021.
[11] Tilly 1995; Cederman 1997.
[12] See, e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson 2012; Fukuyama 2014.

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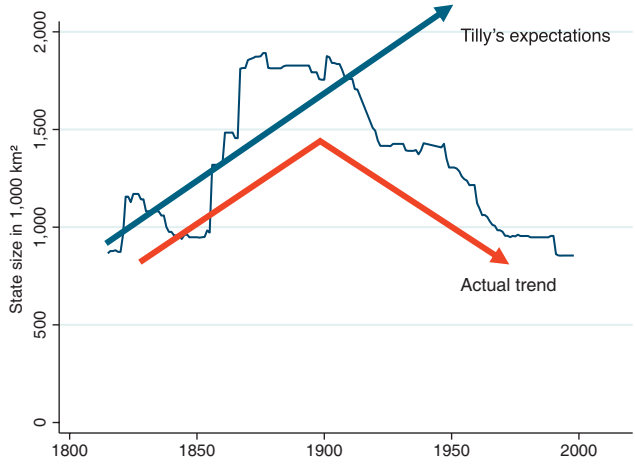


Figure I.1 Average territorial size of independent states.
Data from Lake and O'Mahony 2004.

and the state made war," captures a Darwinian logic by which wars lead to the survival of ever larger and more powerful states.[13]

Yet history has shown that Tilly's logic does not extend to the twentieth century. Figure I.1 plots the average size of independent states in the international system since the beginning of the nineteenth century and shows that the average state size was halved over the course of the twentieth century.[14] This trend is directly linked to the number of states. In 1816, after the Napoleonic Wars, there were about sixty states in Europe, many of which were small principalities and statelets in the central part of the continent. But even this multitude represents a massive reduction of polities compared to earlier centuries.[15] And following the unification of Italy and Germany, at the outset of World War I in 1914, only about one-third of the states that existed 100 years earlier remained. This low point in the number of states was followed in the rest of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by a trend of imperial collapse and the rise of smaller successor states. This shift culminated in the late twentieth century with the disintegration of the USSR and Yugoslavia, which

[13] Tilly 1975, 42.

[14] Here, we rely on global data that exclude colonial territories provided by Lake and O'Mahony 2004, 700–701, who adopt "a definition of sovereignty that focuses on recognition by other." For our own analysis of state size in Chapter 5, we will use our own data, which are introduced in Chapter 3.

[15] Tilly 1990.

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drastically fragmented the geopolitical map of Eastern Europe and further reduced average state size. In short, the earlier historical upward trend in state size turned dramatically downward in the first part of the twentieth century, ultimately reaching sizes in the post–Cold War period not seen since the early nineteenth century.

The global trend shown in Figure I.1 in many ways reflects the European experience – a decrease in state size followed by a steady increase in state numbers.[16] Imperial conquest, which continued well into the twentieth century, was followed by decolonization, especially after World War II. In the postwar period, as the huge European colonial empires gave way to a multitude of much smaller independent states in Africa and Asia, the average scale of polities shrank significantly.

I.1 Nationalism and the Transformation of the State

In this book, we argue that nationalism increasingly caused the most momentous border change since 1789, a process that helps to explain contemporary geopolitical upheavals. As such, today's return of geopolitics can be best understood as part of a macrohistorical process that started with the French Revolution.

What revisionist politicians, such as the Russian, Palestinian, Chinese, and other leaders who challenge the current world order, have in common is that they are not only typical populist strongmen[17] but also nationalists. Populists seek legitimacy directly from "the people" without interference from the rule of law or checks and balances.[18] But the resurgence of geopolitics cannot be reduced to the unbridled, ruthless lust for power of particularly unscrupulous leaders. Rather, it constitutes a profound expression of ethnonationalist challenges to the current world order.

We seek to better understand the geopolitical challenges of the current century by analyzing how nationalism has influenced state formation and continues to transform the state. We do so by developing a theory of nationalist state transformation that we empirically test in a rigorous and systematic way. Beyond affecting a state's internal composition and institutional capacities, nationalism causes its external reshaping.[19] Our theory focuses on the consequences of nationalism in terms of

[16] Griffiths 2016.
[17] Rachman 2021.
[18] See, e.g., Müller 2016; Brubaker 2020.
[19] Hintze 1975*a*.

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macrolevel outcomes – border change and warfare – rather than explaining its emergence. This tack amounts to shifting the analytical focus away from nationalisms that "bark" to those that "bite."[20]

Our main argument is derived from Ernest Gellner's classic definition of nationalism as a doctrine that requires congruence between the boundaries of states and nations.[21] Contrasting the nation to the formal and territorial organization of the state, we follow Max Weber in defining the nation as "a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own" and hence "tends to produce a state of its own."[22] Deviations from the congruence principle are likely to generate grievances and opportunities for key political actors, which in turn makes border change and conflict more likely. Seeking to rectify state-nation incongruence, nationalists generally attempt to change state borders either by enlarging the state's territory or by splitting it up along ethnonationalist lines.[23] The result of such efforts to solve nationality questions is a gradual alignment of political and ethnonationalist boundaries, yielding governance units that increasingly approximate the nation-state ideal. This, we argue, provides a convincing answer to the puzzle of declining state size within and beyond Europe.

Importantly, efforts to overcome incongruence – seen by nationalists as a violation of the nationalist principle – have been a leading cause of both civil and interstate conflict since the French Revolution. While unification of ethnic kin previously residing in separate states into a new single state tends to be more peaceful, attempts to break away territory from states usually trigger violence as states staunchly defend their territorial integrity. As illustrated by Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and more recently its ongoing invasion of the remainder of Ukraine, irredentist situations that feature both integration and disintegration with ethnic settlements spilling over state boundaries are especially prone to civil or interstate war.

But incongruence viewed as a structural condition at a particular point in time is only part of the reason for geopolitical instability. Nationalist frustrations with diverging state and national borders tend to get more intense when contrasted with historical memories of happier times

[20] Beissinger 1998.

[21] Gellner 1983, 1.

[22] Weber 1946, 176. By conceptualizing the nation as a community, this definition of the nation is not objective, but based on subjective, often contested claims. Throughout this book, we will focus almost exclusively on ethnically defined nations since they are by far the most common and the most consequential nations in terms of border change and conflict. However, nations can also be nonethnically defined, See, e.g., Mylonas and Tudor 2023.

[23] As we will argue later, other possibilities include ethnic cleansing and assimilation.

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characterized by a higher degree of congruence. Harking back to nineteenth century, Tsarist Russia, Putin's grievances following the collapse of the Soviet Union fall into this category and appear to at least in part motivate his desire to reintegrate Ukraine into Russia.[24] Likewise, Israeli and Palestinian nationalists invoke competing golden ages, dating back thousands of years in the former case and referring to a period before Israel's occupation in the latter.[25] China's desire to reunify the mainland with Taiwan is another example of this logic. Beijing views the island's reincorporation as a necessary step in its struggle to overcome the humiliating past of Western colonial domination. Such restorative nationalism seeks to regain state-nation congruence by reversing perceived injustices caused by foreign domination and division.[26]

Our focus on historical dynamics extends to reactive nationalism, which signifies nationalist mobilization against the state's penetration into, and modernization of, its entire territory.[27] In and of themselves, structural conditions, such as incongruence, say little about the timing of border change and conflict. But technological developments, such as the railroad and the telegraph, influenced the timetables of nationalism.[28] And, while states in Western and Northern Europe mostly managed to successfully assimilate their populations after the French Revolution, further east, imperial elites' attempts to integrate their multiethnic populations often triggered backlash and revolt, the legacies of which continue to haunt the region.[29] The centrifugal forces unleashed by these secessionist waves offer the most powerful explanation for growth in the number of states in Europe and the rest of the world. Furthermore, the quest for congruence indicates where the risk of border instability and conflict is likely to occur in the future.

But a focus on states and their borders does not suffice to capture the congruence principle of nationalism because ethnic boundaries are as geopolitically consequential as state borders. While state-nation congruence results from border change, states' policies of assimilation and

[24] Putin's imperialist claims seek control over the whole of Ukraine and not merely the ethnically Russian population. This project potentially goes beyond strict ethnonationalist congruence but conforms with what we will refer to as dominant nationalism.

[25] Silberman 2013.

[26] Sometimes backward-projected, restorative claims go beyond current settlement patterns because they refer to past areas from which the group was evicted, thus overshooting state-nation congruence. Furthermore, particularly expansionist strands of imperialist nationalism also explicitly violate congruence by insisting on evicting other groups through ethnic cleansing. In Chapter 11, we will return to these cases under the heading of majority nationalism.

[27] Hechter 2000.

[28] Maier 2016.

[29] See, e.g., Alter 1989; Roshwald 2015.

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ethnic cleansing contribute to the alignment of ethnic boundaries with state borders. Based on European data, our analysis reveals that fear of territorial losses motivated state leaders to engage in preemptive ethnic cleansing.

If state-nation incongruence increases the risk of civil and interstate conflict and sometimes motivates ethnic cleansing, it would be tempting to conclude that peace would follow if nationalists were given what they want. Indeed, the partitioning of multiethnic states along ethnic lines has often been proposed as a method of conflict resolution, and in theory, nationality questions could be addressed in this manner. But border change is not necessarily the only – or best – way to pacify ethnonationalist conflict. Rather, ethnopolitical compromise based on power sharing may remove ethno-political domination without the destabilizing side effects of border change, such as stranded revisionist losers and interstate disputes between newly partitioned successor states. Although there may be some cases in which partition is the only resolution – an Israeli–Palestinian two-state solution being a possible example – in most cases power sharing offers a robust and reliable path to peace.

I.2 Obstacles to Understanding the Subversive Force of Nationalism

Skeptics can be forgiven for thinking that there is nothing new or particularly surprising about these theoretical claims. But despite the intuitive appeal of these claims, disruptive geopolitical events, such as border change and conflict, surprise leading analysts and observers over and over again. This surprise is rooted in the continuing neglect of the dangerous consequences of nationalism. Ever since the French Revolution in 1789, nationalist upheavals have had the habit of shocking scholars and politicians alike. For example, despite increasing nationalist tension sweeping through the Habsburg Empire in 1848, Prince Klemens von Metternich ignored the signs and was promptly forced to resign.[30] Famous for his dismissive quip that rather than being a nation, "Italy is merely a geographical expression," Metternich had been the leading architect of the restored state system that was designed to resist nationalism across the continent following the Napoleonic upheavals. After the great statesman's resignation, there was little that could halt the surge of nationalism that ultimately put an end to the European land empires and set Europe on a path toward geopolitical chaos that produced two world wars.

[30] Taylor 1948, 61.

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In analyses of contemporary world politics, most experts seem to have learned little from Metternich's complacency. Liberal analysts and intellectuals have been particularly slow to grasp the gradual shift from globalization to nationalist geopolitics and instead put their faith in optimistic scenarios of a peaceful and integrated world.[31] From this welfare-oriented and borderless perspective, Putin's assault on Ukraine appears irrational and truly puzzling.[32] After the end of the Cold War, liberals anticipated that democratization would spread into Eastern Europe, even reaching Russia. Their general response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been to frame it as a battle between authoritarian and democratic rule.[33] And although liberal scholars have been right in their hope that the Western-dominated world order would secure peace among the world's leading powers and reduce ethnonationalist conflict in particular,[34] this order has now come under pressure from liberalism's internal and external enemies.[35]

For their part, realist scholars – Metternich's intellectual heirs – often criticize liberals for being hopelessly naive about the power realities of world politics.[36] Some even accuse them of undermining the stability of the international system, for instance by provoking Russia through NATO's expansion.[37] Although realists are keen analysts of geopolitics, they tend to underestimate the subversive influence of nationalism because they view it as a force strengthening, rather than weakening, states' power within given borders.[38] Convinced that Putin would carefully maximize Russian security by prioritizing defensive measures, most realists expected Russia to refrain from moves beyond the annexation of Crimea.[39] It would seem that the main reason for the realists' underestimation of this type of revisionism is their blind spot regarding the power of ideology and nationalism's subversive, border-altering sway.[40] Putin is clearly concerned not only about NATO's expansion but also about

[31] See, e.g., Fukuyama 1992; Ohmae 1990; Held 1995; Beck 2000. To some extent, this intellectual belief in the nation-state's obsolescence relates to "Western academics' own facility at escaping the bounds of the nation via international travel, research, and conferences," as argued by Roshwald 2022, 320–321.

[32] For instance, the prominent energy historian Daniel Yergin has labeled Putin's action "irrational," Hogg 2022. See also Berman 2022.

[33] See Branko Milanovic's 2022 critique of liberal assessments of the war in Ukraine. See also Erlanger 2022.

[34] Gurr 2000*a*; Cederman, Gleditsch and Wucherpfennig 2017.

[35] Recent statistical investigations, such as Braumoeller 2019, cast doubts on whether political violence has declined more generally as claimed by Pinker 2011.

[36] See, e.g., Carr 1939.

[37] Mearsheimer 2014, 2018.

[38] See, e.g., Clausewitz 1984; Posen 1993*a*.

[39] Douthat 2022.

[40] Cederman 1997.

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restoration of Russia's imperial grandeur.[41] Because of their theoretical tunnel vision, today's realists risk being as surprised by current events as were their realist predecessors in 1848.

Given the lack of appreciation for nationalism in liberal and realist perspectives, it is natural to turn to the literature that specializes in nationalism. Offering an invaluable conceptual and historical background for our analysis, this literature proposes sweeping accounts of how nationalist politics transformed the modern world, but most of it fails to realize nationalism's full geopolitical impact. We argue that the literature on nationalism offers only limited guidance in the analysis of the roots of geopolitical instability for four main reasons.

First, the prevailing nonspatial theorizing in nationalism studies fails to treat nationalism as the inherently territorial phenomenon it is.[42] This conceptual oversight makes it difficult to grasp the subversive power of nationalism vis-à-vis geopolitics. Although Gellner defines nationalism as a doctrine that requires congruence between political and ethnonational borders,[43] the link between violations of this principle and mass-based political behavior and macrolevel outcomes, such as armed conflict or border change, remains abstract and nonspatial in most of the literature.

Second, methodological statism – the tendency to treat the state as a natural, unexplained entity – further obscures processes of border change.[44] Subscribing to strongly constructivist principles, most studies of nationalism treat ethnic groups as caged inside fixed state borders and, as such, prioritize agency of the state over that of nonstate actors like ethnic nations.[45] In this view, governments are able to manipulate national identities within given state borders to reinforce their own power and maximize their chances of survival. Yet methodological statism of this kind obscures the limits and competition states face in shaping political identities as well as the fact that nationalist border change through secession and irredentism may end up shaping states in the image of nations.

Third, ahistorical modernism usually accompanies strongly constructivist stances. If state leaders are able to manipulate the ethnic map at their will, it follows that they are able to do so free from the ballast of the past while inventing fanciful, mythical justifications for their

[41] Stent 2022.
[42] Anderson 1988.
[43] Gellner 1983, 1.
[44] In Chapter 1, we will explain how this concept differs from the better-known and more general notion of methodological nationalism.
[45] Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990.

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social engineering.[46] Ahistorical modernism insists on the irrelevance of nations' premodern or recent pasts and views empires in an era of nationalism as obsolete.[47] Yet nationalist narratives can be particularly destabilizing when they rely on historical facts that are framed and distorted to serve contemporary goals.

Fourth, scholarship on nationalism continues to be haunted by incomplete empirical validation. The nationalism literature proposes either sweeping historical explanations[48] or more selective validation based on qualitative country-based accounts of nationalist identity formation.[49] There are several, more recent extensions to the latter category,[50] but with few exceptions,[51] such studies are usually limited to a single case, which leaves a considerable gap between the theoretical literature's claim to generalizability and the availability of systematic empirical evidence.

I.3 Overcoming the Obstacles to Understanding Nationalist State Transformation

In response to each of the weaknesses that characterize much of the nationalism literature, our approach to nationalist state formation rests on four principles, the first three being theoretical and the final one empirical.

The first priority is to represent state-nation congruence spatially by conceiving of states and nations in explicitly territorial terms, including their territorial boundaries. Overlaying these boundaries yields group segments nested inside states, which constitute the main sites of agency. Incongruence in terms of alien rule or ethnic division increases the probability of corrective action bringing about border change or conflict.

To overcome methodological statism, the second priority is to analyze how nationalism reshapes states through border-changing processes, rather than just freezing state borders. Assuming most ethnic groups to be relatively stable, long-lasting structures, our analysis demonstrates how changes in state borders are at least as important as, if not more important than, internal ethnic adjustments. Extending this analysis beyond Europe, we propose an integrated conceptualization of these processes, including secession, unification, and irredentism. This analytical sequence requires ethnically defined nations to be powerful enough

[46] See, e.g., Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.
[47] Gellner 1983, 1996.
[48] See, e.g., Gellner 1983; Anderson [1983] 1991; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.
[49] See, e.g., Brubaker 1992; Greenfeld 1992; Weber 1976; Colley 1992.
[50] See, e.g., Beissinger 2002; Cermeño, Enflo and Lindvall 2022.
[51] See, e.g., Wimmer 2013, 2018.

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to resist states' attempts to influence identification within their territories or to alter their outer boundaries.

Third, to counter ahistorical modernism, we extend the spatial focus with explicit historical theorizing, which allows us to assess the consequences of restorative and reactive nationalism. A nation's putative ethnic roots play an important role in its self-definition. Rather than focusing on debunking historical myths and distortions, our priority is to identify how nationalist grievances are formulated as perceived violations of the nationalist principle in relation to past golden ages. We find that this restorative logic relies on a three-step narrative that starts with a golden age that is subsequently interrupted through conquest or some other trauma and followed by a populist appeal to restore the nation's glory. A spatiotemporal perspective also allows us to examine reactive nationalism. Whereas naive modernization theories expect assimilating states to prevail, we follow the lead of more subtle modernist approaches that consider the possibility of backlash against the state's penetration of ethnically distinct peripheries.

Fourth, in contrast to the empirically incomplete coverage of the conventional literature, we analyze spatiotemporal data systematically, covering large areas and long time periods in a detailed manner. Specifically, such data resources allow us to conduct macrolevel analysis at the European and global levels rather than merely focus on specific countries or groups. Our approach is to digitize a number of historical maps depicting state borders and ethnic groups' settlement areas. The temporally open-ended nature of historical change assumed by these data circumvents the need to conceive of the nation-state as a teleological endpoint in history. Our methodological approach is mostly statistical, but ample case illustrations complement the analysis throughout the book. We have made an effort to protect the reader from excessive methodological detail. Thus, the empirical chapters convey the nontechnical intuition of our arguments and findings. A series of corresponding supplementary chapters, labeled S4–S10, provide all the information needed for empirical replication, including data descriptions and research designs.

I.4 Some Prefatory Considerations

Before turning to a summary of the book's structure, some clarification is warranted. First, because this book aims to study the consequences of nationalism rather than its causes, it is necessary to dissect rather than dismiss nationalist arguments.[52] Doing so means that we make

[52] Levinger and Lytle 2001.

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ethnonationalist assumptions for analytical purposes, including adopting an approach that presupposes nations' boundedness and their spatial extension as well as the historical stability of their ethnic cores, whether such assumptions are factually correct or not. Since nationalists take crucial geopolitical decisions based on such assumptions, we cannot ignore their motivations. Failure to engage with the nationalist worldview by dismissing it as flawed or dangerous would deprive us of the data needed to anticipate trouble. But such engagement has to be balanced against the risks inherent in such analysis because as it could lead to a blurring of what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as "categories of analysis" and "categories of practice."[53] We strive to prevent such blurring, but there is always a residual risk that the mere use of a concept could affect political reality.[54] Nevertheless, we think that the alternative of not taking nationalists seriously incurs larger risks. Indeed, our analytical use of ethnonationalist concepts and claims by no means implies that we endorse them. Our objectives highlight the need to understand nationalism to find peaceful solutions based on compromise and pragmatic solutions. Although our analysis shows that state-nation incongruence is an important driver of both civil and interstate conflict, it does not imply that responding to nationality questions through border change is the best way to prevent or reduce violence. On the contrary, our research shows empirically that sharing power within fixed borders often offers a more promising approach to conflict resolution.[55]

Second, we are not trying to knock down constructivist and modernist straw men. This book makes a contribution to such theorizing. But both paradigms are broad tents, and our concerns relate to a tendency to adopt extreme positions of either that lead to unreflective accusations of primordialism or worse. Just because nations are constructed, and in many cases quite fluid in specific periods and places, it does not mean that one should extrapolate from successful melting pots within the United States or elsewhere to other settings.[56] Likewise, radically modernist claims that the world after the French Revolution constituted a tabula rasa unconstrained by deep ethnic roots are clearly overstated.[57] Nor does it imply, as some have argued, that virtually all nations require an ethnic core to be successful.[58] Since our main aim is to study the consequences of nationalism, we are less interested in the degree to

[53] Bourdieu 1991.
[54] Brubaker 2004, 31–33.
[55] Cederman, Girardin, Muñoz, Valli and Wucherpfennig 2024, Partition, Power Sharing and Peace: A Spatial Analysis.
[56] Connor 1994.
[57] See, e.g., Gellner 1996.
[58] See, e.g., Smith 1986.

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which nationalist claims are based on objective historical facts but rather focus on whether nationalist claims that use available historical reference points are more effective in violent mobilization than those that rely almost entirely on fabrication and distortion.

Third, some may find our approach Eurocentric, and this for good reason. Our book focuses on Europe because nationalist ideology originally emerged there.[59] Still, beginning in the nineteenth century, nationalism continued to spread and evolve beyond Europe, exerting a revolutionary influence on the course of world history. Because nationalism exhibits a high degree of path dependence, any analysis of its consequences and diffusion beyond Europe must pay attention to its early development within the old continent. But this doesn't mean that one should extrapolate from its impact on European politics to the entire globe or ignore how the development of non-European nationalism has influenced nationalist ideology in Europe and beyond. That would be careless. Wherever possible, we attempt to extend our analysis to non-European parts of the world, but data challenges and scope limitations mean that much of this exciting agenda has to be left to future research.

I.5 A Brief Preview of the Book's Structure

Having introduced the main principles underpinning our approach, we preview the book's structure, which links the theoretical argument to a series of empirical analyses. Detailed synopses, including schemes that position each chapter within the overall theoretical framework, can be found at the beginning of each of the book's four parts. Part I reviews the previous literature (Chapter 1) and introduces our theory of nationalist state transformation (Chapter 2) and our empirical approach (Chapter 3).

Part II presents the empirical analyses that illustrate how states' borders have evolved from around 1500 CE through the current decade. Chapter 4 traces the development of states in early modern Europe. In it, we rely heavily on Tilly's of how war and state formation interacted in a dynamic process that reduced the number of states in Europe through persistent warfare.[60] Extending Tilly's perspective, Chapter 5 addresses the puzzle of why the average size of states started to shrink around the end of the nineteenth century in Europe and worldwide. We argue that nationalism triggered a set of specific border-change processes, including

[59] Benedict Anderson's [1983] 1991 attempts to relocate its origins to creole pioneers in eighteenth-century Latin America have been largely dismissed, see, e.g. Centeno 2002; Doyle and Pamplona 2006.

[60] Tilly 1990.

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secession, unification, and irredentism. Going beyond the focus on state size, Chapter 6 endogenizes states' shapes at the systemic level to trace the convergence of states and nations while controlling for other influences on borders.

Part III shifts from border change to patterns of armed conflict as the main outcome of interest. Chapter 7 takes a first step toward a systematic impact analysis by linking specific violations of Gellner's congruence principle, such as foreign rule and ethnic division, to conflict both within and between European states since 1816 and worldwide from 1946. Adding temporal depth, Chapter 8 evaluates the influence of past historical configurations, such as lost home rule or lost unity, on nationalist claim-making and conflict in post-Napoleonic Europe. Moving beyond mere structural analysis of configurations, Chapter 9 uses railroad maps to shed light on the link between modernization and the timing of reactive nationalist mobilization and conflict. As a complement to the previous chapters, Chapter 10 reverses the causal priority between nations and states by analyzing how governments employ ethnic cleansing and other types of one-sided violence to reduce the risk of nationalist conflict.

Last, Chapter 11 in Part IV summarizes the findings of the book and draws conclusions for future research and policy development.

You will find interactive visualizations for some of the chapters as well as complete replication materials in the online resources of the book available at https://nastac.ethz.ch/.

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