Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict

Shadows of Modernity

ANDREAS WIMMER

4 Who owns the state?
Ethnic conflicts after the end of empires

Since the fall of the Wall, ethno-nationalist conflicts have outweighed all other forms of political confrontation. The intransigence of ethno-nationalist politics has led to catastrophe in Bosnia; on the southern borders of the former Soviet Union – in the Caucasus and in Tajikistan – a bushfire of separatist battles has been ignited; Sri Lanka finds no more respite than does Burma's hinterland or southern Sudan. This list could easily be extended: since the 1950s, the number of ethnic conflicts has continued to increase (Gurr 1993a: 101), and in three-quarters of all wars worldwide between 1985 and 1992 ethno-nationalist factors predominated (Scherrer 1994a: 74). Gurr lists a total of forty-nine fields of ethno-political conflict for the 1993–4 period alone (Gurr 1994: 369–74), when the trend reached its peak.

Why are these conflicts so frequent in our times? Most popular authors fall back on the very principles of nationalist thinking and thus naturalise the phenomena they seek to explain. They are being caught by the ideological 'tyranny of the national', to use Gerard Noiriel's (1991) rather drastic term.[1] Journalists join bestseller-producing sociologists such as Ulrich Beck (1997) in postulating a universal desire for cultural rootedness, accentuated under current conditions of globalisation and rapid social change. Globalisation makes people search for a secure national homestead and to react with an aggressive nationalism threatening existing state borders. One wonders, however, how earlier waves of ethnic conflict may be explained if 'globalisation' represents, according to these authors, a new world historical epoch of declining nation-states and ethno-cultural fragmentation.

Another widely held view was most prominently expressed by the late Ernest Gellner (1983) and later by Tom Nairn (1993). It is also quite common, if rarely openly expressed, among Western foreign policy-makers disenchanted with the prospects for preventing and settling ethnic conflicts in the East. The new states that issued from the former

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[1] Cf. also Bourdieu (1993); Wimmer and Glick Schiller (forthcoming).

Communist bloc are seen as being simply too heterogeneous in terms of ethnic or cultural diversity to be able to function as 'normal' nation-states. After the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, the hitherto 'frozen' drive for national self-assertion was liberated and will follow its natural course until homogeneous nation-states emerge (cf. Simpson 1994: 465). However, we now know that there is no clear causal pattern linking ethnic heterogeneity to violence.[2] A country like Switzerland is the former Yugoslavia's equal in every way in linguistic and cultural diversity, and has yet managed to avoid a pervasive politicisation of ethnicity, as we will see in the final chapter of this book.

Another popular thesis is Samuel Huntington's (1993) clash of civilisations replacing the competition between communism and capitalism during the Cold War. The thesis has received much attention despite its rather poor empirical performance. Ted Gurr (1994) has shown that the dividing lines in most of the conflicts since 1989 have not run parallel to the civilisational fault-lines that Huntington identified. It is not Orthodox versus non-Orthodox Christians, Confucians versus Christians, Muslims versus the rest, but rather Protestant versus Catholic in Northern Ireland, Muslim against Muslim in Iraq and Turkey etc.[3]

Other explanations, rarely made explicit but underlying much journalistic writing and debating, are inspired by popular versions of *Völkerpsychologie*. They point to the 'violent basic character' or to the 'culture of violence' of those peoples that recently have experienced extreme forms of ethno-nationalist conflict, especially in the 'ever troublesome Balkans' or in 'tribalistic Africa' (Staub 1989; cf. Bowman 1994). But the 'culture of violence' argument runs the risk of merely reproducing the mutual stereotyping between factions at war. Especially in situations

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[2] The dangers of the heterogeneity argument are also exposed by the fact that only 12 of 132 states (in the 1970s) could be seen as largely homogeneous, but by no means all remaining states have experienced ethnic conflict (Connor 1994: 29).

Morrison and Stevenson, as well as Barrows, looked at the relations between cultural pluralism and political instability in a sample of thirty-three African countries. The two studies yielded diametrically opposed results. Both are cited by Nelson Kasfir (1979: 386). McRae (1983: 23f.) combined measures of civil strife with indices of the relative religious, racial and linguistic heterogeneity of ninety countries. He found no clear pattern of correlation. The debate has been recently revived with Vanhanen's (1999) book in which he tries to establish, on the basis of new data, a linear correlation between ethnic heterogeneity and conflict. Bates (1999), however, arrives at a curvilinear relationship for a sample of African countries.

[3] Ted Gurr led a research team which gathered information on 227 politically mobilised ethnic groups and attempted to assess the causes of conflict by means of statistical methods. One of the results is that the degree of cultural difference clearly does not correlate significantly with the intensity of political conflicts (Gurr 1993b: 179). In subsequent footnotes I will relate the findings of this study which are most important to the argument presented here.

of pervasive violence, ethnic others are described as bloodthirsty barbarians barely controlling their cruel instincts. Such perceptions are the consequence of, not the cause for, conflict between minorities and majorities.

Thus, both the general public and social scientists are at a loss to understand the spread of ethno-nationalist wars, which arose as if released from Pandora's box (cf. also Brubaker 1998). Recently, however, we seem to have made some progress in understanding the 'logic of the infernal machine' (Kuper 1977: 19) working behind the events in Rwanda or Bosnia. Thanks to the works of Stanley Tambiah (1996), Paul Brass (1996) and Donald Horowitz (2001), it has become clear that ethnic violence is highly patterned. Contrary to appearance, riots and pogroms are driven by a 'calculated passion', directed at clearly defined targets in moments of uncertainty and confusion (Horowitz 2001). We still have a long road to go, however, when it comes to understanding how social and political constellations emerge that make such violence possible. While we know much more now about what happens in the eye of the cyclone, if a meteorological metaphor is allowed here, we still do not see clearly what general conditions produce such cyclones. Why did they appear in former Yugoslavia, but not in Switzerland; in Iraq, but not in Jordan? Why, returning to the starting point of this chapter, is ethnic violence so widespread now but was not twenty years ago?

According to the model developed in the last chapter, the current wave is to be explained, like the previous waves of the sixties and the twenties of the twentieth century, by the creation of new nation-states and the corresponding changes in the principles of political legitimacy – from sacred, inclusive hierarchies legitimising the rule of kings, caliphs or Communist cadres to the egalitarian ideal of a state governed in the name of 'the people' in its threefold meaning of citizenry, nation and sovereign. When the state apparatus is weak and no strong civil society has yet developed, this shift will lead to a politicisation of ethnic difference and to an ethnicisation of political conflicts. It is the aim of this chapter to make this proposition plausible and to analyse in more detail the mechanisms at work.

In the first section, I will briefly restate the general argument and give some empirical evidence for the supposed relation between nation-state formation and ethnic conflict. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to a step-by-step analysis of the dynamics of escalation of such conflict. In the second section, the emergence of ethno-nationalist movements opposing the project of state formation and nation-building will be analysed. If such movements spread, ethno-cultural distinctions are laden with conflictive significance and questions of ethnic membership and representation become politicised. In the third section, I will look at the factors

that enable such discourse of injustice to fall on fertile ground and thus lead to political closure along ethnic lines, replacing other modes of political contest and alliance. A fourth section will seek what determines escalation of such conflicts. For the sake of simplicity, I will disregard international influences here.[4]

'Like over like' – political legitimacy in modern nation-states

In empires and other pre-modern polities, ethnic distinctions may have played a certain role in defining the hierarchical strata that made up society. The balancing out of relationships between these estates may therefore have entailed some political mobilisation along ethnic lines (see, for example, Vail 1989). Thus, there is no zero hour for the politicisation of ethnic differences, as many authors, especially of the neo-romantic school discussed in the last chapter, have stressed (Armstrong 1982; A. Smith 1996). On the other hand, ethnic relations take on completely new dynamics within the sphere of a nation-state (Young 1976, ch. 3). This is shown by the development of some of the oldest European conflicts that are today classified as being of an 'ethnic' character. Safeguarding the autonomy and the privileges that the Spanish crown had once granted to the local communities of the Basque region becomes, as soon as the Spanish state is nationalised, the struggle of a 'Basque people' for a state of its own (Heiberg 1989, part 1). Similarly, the conflict in Northern Ireland originally developed within the framework of a medieval relationship between indigenous peasants and conquering overlords and their dependents; as soon as control over a modern nation-state was at stake, the dynamics and lines of conflict were realigned and the contesting groups became 'ethno-religious' (O'Sullivan 1986: 34–48; O'Day 1993).

The relation between state-building and ethnic conflicts can also be illustrated by aggregated data. Africa south of the Sahara provides good examples, since most of the declarations of independence fall into the time-span where reliable data on the intensity of ethnic tensions are available. Figure 4 shows the change in the intensity of ethnic conflicts (based on Gurr 1993a: 106)[5] as well as the number of declarations of independence and military coups (based on Nohlen 1987: 74f.). Without

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[4] See Shiels (1984); Boucher, Landis and Clark (1987); Ryan (1990); Heraclides (1991); Moynihan (1993). Carment (1994) gives an overview.

[5] The scales used are described in Gurr (1993a: 95); the index is based on a Guttman scale procedure.
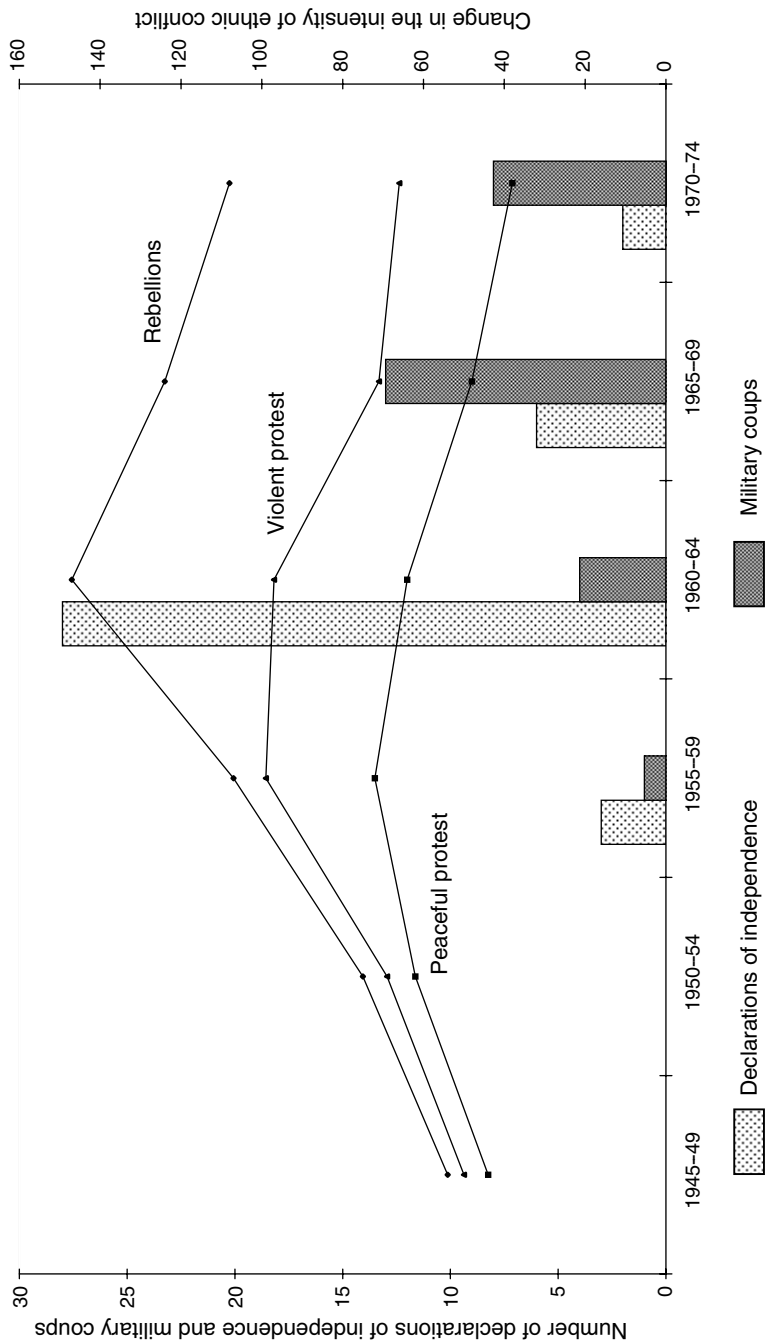
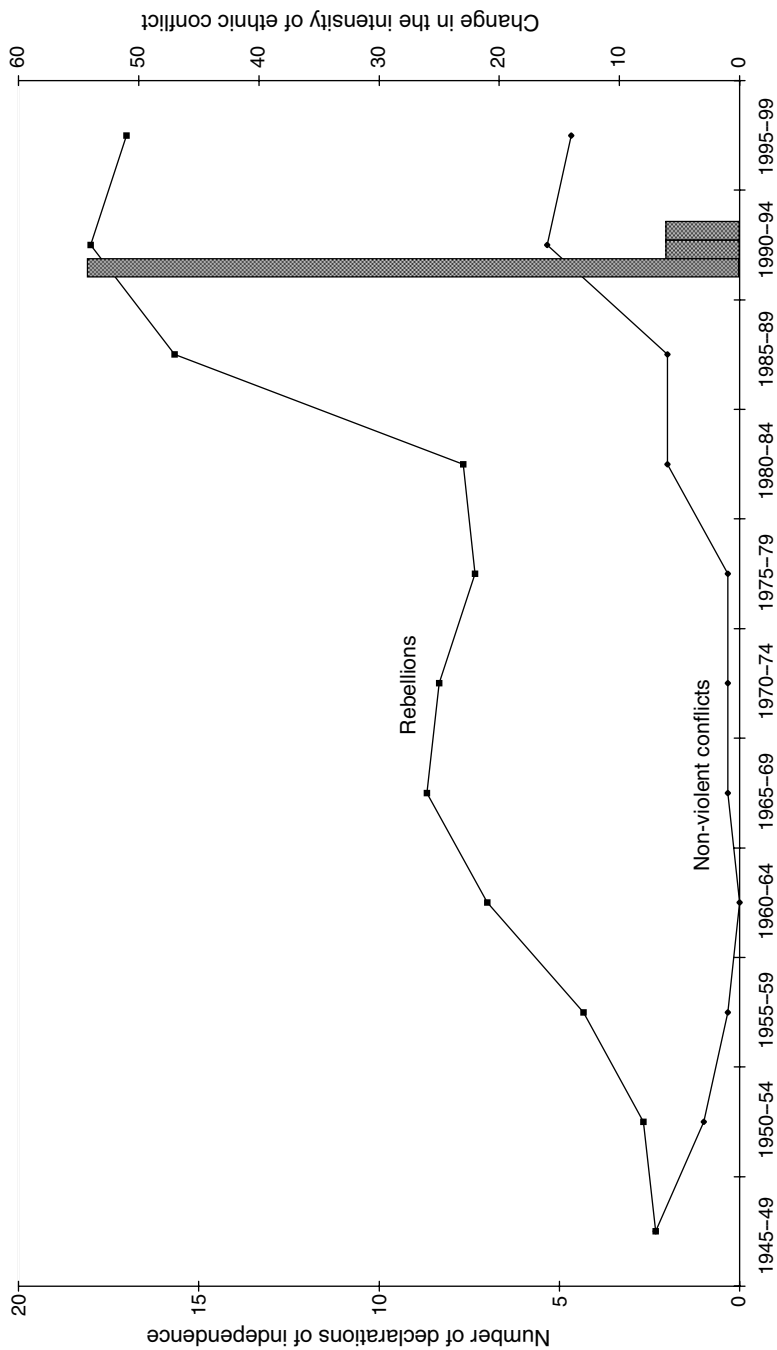Fig. 4. Ethnic conflicts and state-building in sub-Saharan Africa, 1945 to 1974.

Fig. 5. Ethnic conflicts and state-building in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1945 to 1999.

anticipating too many of the findings of the coming sections, the figure can be interpreted as follows: in the decade before independence, incidents of rebellion as well as of violent and peaceful protests based on ethnic claims began to rise sharply in number. During the years immediately before independence, they became radicalised and more violent (peaceful forms being substituted by violent forms), reaching a peak after the establishment of the independent states. Within a further decade, many conflicts were suppressed by authoritarian regimes, indicated by the rising number of military coups and the declining intensity of ethnic strife.

A similar pattern can be seen in the other world region where declarations of independence have been concentrated in a time-span for which aggregate data on ethnic conflicts are available. On the territory of the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe twenty-two new states were founded between 1991 and 1993. The ethnic tensions accompanying the shift to the nation-state model are again patterned in a similar way, as figure 5 shows.[6]

We see here some evidence, albeit still rather sketchy and indirect, for the propositions developed in the last chapter. When the state should, so to speak, be dyed by a nation's colour and designate the 'people' in whose name it rules over its territory, a wholly new field of tension arises in which political groups form and the state exercises its power. Within this field the meaning of ethnic distinctions changes radically. As the graphs show, in many cases the new elites are not capable of marshalling enough support for their project of nation-building – which in most cases implicitly or explicitly consists in generalising their particular *ethnos* to the whole population and thus transforming it into the nation. A fight erupts over which 'people' the state should belong to, and social closure proceeds along many ethnic lines instead of one national line. Sometimes this contest for the control of the state escalates into ethno-nationalist civil wars, destroying much of whatever social and political cohesion there was. My task is now to determine under which conditions state-building leads to such an outcome.

The politicisation of ethnic difference

The single most important development is the fact that the new state's bureaucracy is not representative of the whole population of the country,

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[6] The data on ethnic conflicts are again provided by Gurr's research team. They were downloaded from the website of the Minorities at Risk Project (version MARv 99), Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland.

but takes on ethnic hues. To be sure, it is not the unequal representation of different ethnic groups in the state apparatus as such that leads to a politicisation of ethnic differences. Only when those in power favour their own ethnic groups to the cost of others is a fertile ground for the politicisation of ethnicity prepared.

Two variants can be distinguished. When a majority population with a tradition of political centralisation takes over the apparatus, ethnicisation of the state and bureaucracy occurs automatically.[7] In Argentina or Egypt, for instance, it was never debated whether Indian minorities in the pampas or Nubians should be candidates for the states' nation. The new state classes automatically understood themselves to be Argentinians or Arabs and never really questioned in which nation's name they exercised power.

A similar effect can also be brought about by the introduction of federalism. For example, minority policies in the Soviet Union granted the titular nations preferential access to the bureaucratic-political apparatus of their republics (Roeder 1991; for Nigeria, see O'Connell 1967). In the newly independent countries, the state's elite stress the fact that they are representatives of this majority ethnic group turned into the state's nation, and try to show that they do indeed exercise power in the name and in the favour of this people. The minority groups at the peripheries of the state are not taken into consideration when policies of infrastructural development, educational reform, linguistic standardisation, growth promotion and wealth redistribution are designed, since they do not belong to the nation in whose name the state has now to act.

Where conditions of majority and power are unclear, ethnicisation of the bureaucracy can occur via the formation of clientelist networks. This second variant is less self-evident and may need a more detailed analysis. A modern state opens up chances to legitimise governmental power which did not exist to the same extent in the courts of pre-modern empires owing to their lesser ability to penetrate the social fabric and control their territories. Modern states are more powerful and have new goods to offer their populations: equal treatment before the law, protection from arbitrary violence, political participation, jobs within a vastly expanding bureaucracy, infrastructure projects promoting the progress of the nation, import and export licenses in a controlled 'national economy', public contracts and so on.

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[7] These cases resemble three closely related types in Young's (1976, ch. 3) much more sophisticated typology: the colonial states with historical personality, historical states affected by a colonial phase and traditional states. They are characterised by having a single, clearly dominant group and minorities, or a core culture, linked to central institutions, with various groups at the periphery.

In weak developing states, however, these modern goods cannot be spread equally over the entire population, simply because the state is not strong enough and does not have enough resources to make these accessible to everybody. Where only one freeway can be built on the entire territory, where tribunals cannot handle the mountains of cases they are responsible for, where there are resources only for one reasonably good university, where the police cannot possibly establish a well-staffed post in every neighbourhood of the capital, favouritism solves the problem. It also allows the new elite to create a group of followers and to secure their political support. In other words, the state and the economy[8] are pervaded by clientelist relations, further weakening developing states by yielding their autonomy to interest groups (Migdal 1988). Neo-patrimonialism is the term political scientists have created to describe a situation where the state is captured by clientelist networks (Bratton and van de Walle 1994).

If these networks form around ethnic solidarities, these gain new political significance.[9] But why should civil servants give members of their own ethnic group preferential treatment[10] rather than spread their favours over various groups? On the one hand, members of one's own ethnic group are most likely to be given preference in terms of trust (see Cohen 1974) because according to their own self-understanding ethnic groups represent a kind of extended kinship group whose members are obligated to mutual aid.[11] Most importantly, however, the new magistrates are expected to

[8] On the politicisation of economic life through bureaucratic measures, see Anne O. Krueger's (1974) well-known thesis of rent-seeking.

[9] Ethno-political conflicts are therefore most frequent and most intense in countries with low GNPs, as Gurr (1994: 359) has demonstrated. Furthermore, Grove's (1978) cross-national study shows that in countries with high GNPs the income differences between ethnic groups are comparatively small – whatever the policies pursued by governments (affirmative action vs welfare state measures etc.).

[10] Unfortunately, I am not familiar with any study that yields direct evidence of this, with the exception of observations made in the minority republics of the former Soviet Union (Roeder 1991: 208), in Indonesia (Brown 1989: 54f.), in Nigeria's first republic (Young 1976: 467f.), in Iraq (Batatu 1978: 1088ff.) and in Northern Ireland (Leyton 1975, cited in Banton 1983: 179). Grødeland, Miller and Koshechkina's (2000) study of Ukraine, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the most detailed research on the issue so far, is entirely based on subjective perceptions of discrimination. They report very widespread suspicion of ethnic discrimination but many fewer actually experienced instances of such discrimination.

More is known about discriminating hiring practices in ethnically heterogeneous industrial countries (Banton 1983: 384f.). It can be assumed that ethnic discrimination in societies with large networks of ethnic patron–client relationships is much more marked than in the anonymous industrial workplaces in Western Europe, where comparable obligations of loyalty towards applicants do not exist (Hyden and Williams 1994).

[11] Compare here Keyes (1976), Brown (1994: 5–25) or Horowitz (1985, ch. 2) who, however, takes the family analogy rather too literally.

take care of 'their own' (Sithole 1986; Hyden and Williams 1994), now that the British, the Ottomans, or the Russians have left the place and government should be responsive to the demands of 'the people'. For these reasons the formation of strategic groups within a bureaucracy[12] is likely to occur along ethnic lines, and one observes a general compartmentalisation of institutions on communal grounds (for Nigeria, see Young 1976: 467ff.).

This tendency is particularly marked where other, non-ethnic criteria for the selective awarding of modern state goods are lacking because a civil society consisting of parties, associations and other interest groups could not yet be established.[13] The sequence of historical developments determines whether this is likely to be the case. Where the colonial state is transformed into a national one before such networks of literati, of learned societies, of bourgeois clubs emerge (van Amersfoort and van der Wusten 1981: 483f.), ethnicity is likely to be used by the political elites in the very process of post-colonial state-building (Enloe 1978). This was not the case in the Christian parts of the Philippines, for example (Young 1976, ch. 9; Geiger 1994). It happened, however, in many developing countries that inherited colonial bureaucracies, and also in the successor states to the former Soviet Union, explaining why the ethnicisation of bureaucracy there has become practically ubiquitous.

It is interesting to observe that in the course of this process, pre-colonial clientelist systems of a trans-ethnic character also become rearranged along ethnic lines.[14] For example, the pre-colonial kingdom of Burundi owed its stability to the fact that the clans of various ethnic groups were bound together in an all-embracing network of clientelist relationships balanced out by the king. Laely (1994: 28) shows how this clientelist pyramid was restratified: Tutsi elites, systematically promoted by the Belgian colonial administration, began during the course of state modernisation and bureaucratisation to favour members of their own ethnic group and to discriminate against the Hutu majority. The trans-ethnic clientelism among clans and lineages was replaced with an intra-ethnic clientelism among individuals.

[12] On the concept of the strategic group, see Evers and Schiel (1988).

[13] Empirical support for this proposition can be found in Varshney's analysis of ethnic violence between Hindus and Muslims in India. His comparision of different cities with similar demographic structures and broadly comparable socio-economic situations shows that high levels of 'civic engagement' between communal groups lead to low levels of violence between Muslims and Hindus.

[14] This is not an automatism, however, as is again shown by the example of Philippine political parties: they are structured as powerful, clientelist pyramids, whose building-blocks originate from the most varied ethnic groups. On the integrative power of trans-ethnic clientelism in Africa, see René Lemarchand (1972).

So far, I have discussed two variants of how the modern state becomes related to specific ethno-national groups. In the first variant, the state elite starts acting in the name of a 'national majority'; in the other, less obvious case, the hidden mechanisms of ethnic clientelism produce an ethnic compartmentalisation of the state. In both variants, however, this alone does not lead to a pervasive politicisation of ethnicity. There have to be political entrepreneurs exposing these developments and denouncing them as illegitimate and unfair, and proposing a more just representation of 'the people' within the state's administration. If everybody accepts the state of the state's affairs, or remains silent about the monopolisation of the state by 'ethnic others', public political discourse may remain untouched by questions of ethnic representation and justice.

Usually, it is the educated middle classes who are the most interested in the politics of ethnic representation and who suffer the most from ethnic preference politics, since they are the ones who look for employment in government services and state enterprises.[15] I will now take a closer look at how such dissatisfied educated classes emerge, again distinguishing between the two variants – ethnically deeply divided societies and societies where a majority has been transformed into the state's nation.

In many ethnically heterogeneous societies, colonial practices of *divide et impera* gave rise to a disadvantaged educated elite. Members of early Christianised or English-speaking minorities were often given preference in colonial administrations, such as Ibo in Nigeria, Baganda in Uganda, Bengalis in East India, Ewe in Togo, Tamils in Sri Lanka, Sikhs in the British Indian Army and Tutsi in Burundi. During the post-colonial period, middle-class members of other ethnic groups, as latecomers to the struggle for positions within the state apparatus, were often left underrepresented. Basing their claims on the newly established ideal of democratic sovereignty and representation they begin to demand a bigger slice of the state pie.

Similar debates can arise in societies divided into a 'national majority', usually with a tradition of political centralisation, and several smaller ethnic groups. As part of the nation-building project, the state aims at assimilating the 'minorities' through education and language training and thus realising the vision of a unified citizenry, nation and sovereign. Resulting from these endeavours, an educational elite of previously marginalised

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[15] Research in Trinidad, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and the Ivory Coast has shown that at least three-quarters of all secondary-school students strive towards positions in civil service, while only a few envision future jobs as professionals or in the informal sector (Horowitz 1985: 114). This is hardly surprising considering the economic weakness of peripheral countries and the high risk involved in self-employment. According to other studies, ethnic prejudice is most clearly developed among members of those middle classes who have bureaucratic aspirations (Horowitz 1991: 140).

ethnic groups may emerge. It enters into direct competition with the established bureaucrats who close ranks, particularly during hard times (A. Smith 1979), and make 'passing' into the dominant group through assimilation difficult (cf. Rothschild 1981, ch. 5). The minority elite then begin to protest against discrimination and soon question the ethnonational basis of the nation-state or demand one of their own. The pan-Indian movement in Mexico (see chapter 5), the ethno-nationalist awakenings of the Oromo in Ethiopia (Scherrer 1994b), minorities in the Soviet republics (Roeder 1991) and Christian minority groups in southern Sudan (Gray 1971; Wirz 1982, ch. 2) are good examples of this process.

The vast majority of modern ethno-nationalist movements are led by educated middle classes, as numerous studies in the tradition of the instrumentalist approach have emphasised.[16] For they can formulate a discourse of protest which refers to the fundamental principles of the modern state: sovereignty of the people and representational justice. And, thanks to their organisational capabilities, they give a political movement the necessary impetus.[17]

The ethnicisation of political conflicts

Less well known, or even systematically overlooked, especially by those taking the instrumentalist perspective, is that successful mobilisation also depends on grassroots support. Many examples show that the minority elite does not always succeed in winning over their co-ethnics to its goals and in generalising its view of the political world. When ethnic elites fail to mobilise their constituencies, their claims may be overlooked in the political arena of the newly established states. The ethnic question might never enter the agenda of 'high politics'. In fact, history is full of failed, and therefore forgotten attempts at putting ethnicity at the centre of the political drama.[18]

In discussing the success or failure of ethnic mobilisations, perhaps a reminder is in order. Even when political leaders, warlords and other self-appointed representatives of minorities and majorities successfully

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[16] Particularly Rabushka and Shepsle (1972); Brass (1985, 1991); Vail (1989). Modernisation-theory approaches, which focus upon middle-class competition, are found in Bates (1974), Milne (1981) and Rothschild (1981). Other, more complex models that include middle-class competition as a central element are presented by Waldmann (1989) and especially by Anthony Smith (1979, 1984). Esman (1977) discusses the role of political entrepreneurs from the perspective of the theory of relative deprivation.

[17] See the so-called resource-mobilisation theory of social movements by John McCarthy and Mayer D. Zald (1977).

[18] See Cohen (1978: 396f.); Anonymous (1989); Macmillan (1989); Lanoue (1992).

mobilise their constituency, their followers never include the entire ethnic group. Sarajevo clearly shows that not all circles of society close ranks along ethnic lines even after the escalation of military conflict. Ethnic conflicts should not be conceived as confrontations between ethnic 'groups', but as conflicts where friends and foes are described in ethnic terms. We should be beware of 'groupism' in our analysis, as Rogers Brubaker (forthcoming) notes. On the other hand, it would be just as inappropriate to attribute intensification of ethnic conflicts to the manipulations of the political elite alone. The details of conflict escalation often show that many ordinary people define themselves as members of an ethno-national association of solidarity, declaring neighbours of other ethnic groups to be their personal enemies number one (Imhof 1996).[19]

This leads us to one of the most difficult issues in the analysis of ethnic conflicts (Kasfir 1979; Newman 1991): under what conditions can people who play no direct role in the struggle for bureaucratic posts and sinecures be mobilised for an ethno-nationalist project? Why do they contribute to the spread of conflict or sometimes, for example through their vote (Horowitz 1985, part 3), even give impetus to ethnicising political life?

Explaining ethnic mobilisation: economic interests, primordial bonds, psychological needs or the power of ideology?

Many answers to this question have been suggested. Some have speculated as to whether the universal desire for self-determination may explain why nationalist discourse often falls on fertile grounds (Varese 1983). Similar to the popular opinions discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this merely borrows from the ideology of nationalist movements without explaining how they come to be.[20] Conversely – in a position rarely held today – others have referred to the false consciousness shown by the lower classes, who do not recognise their true interests and follow the siren song of ethnic activists instead.[21] Yet four explanatory approaches deserve serious consideration and are discussed in the following.[22] Some

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[19] See examples of massacres reported in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (no. 170, 23/24 July 1994), based upon information from the Bosnian Documentation Centre for War Crimes in Zenica; for escalation of violence in Burundi in 1988, see René Lemarchand (1994, ch. 7).

[20] See Elwert (1989b, chs. 1 and 2); Wimmer (1995d, ch. 7).

[21] Sklar (1967); Díaz-Polanco (1978); Kasfir (1979); Wimmer (1995d: 144–9).

[22] My classification of approaches differs from the ones most often found in the specialised literature (e.g. Cohen 1978; MacKay 1982; Bentley 1983, 1987; Young 1983; Horowitz 1985, part 2; A. Smith 1986a; Richmond 1987; G. Scott 1990). Usually a 'primordial' is distinguished from an 'instrumentalist' and an 'internal colonialist' approach. The distinction is somewhat arbitrary, since the person usually credited as having founded the 'primordialist' school, Clifford Geertz, is, in his original text of 1963, not a 'primordialist' at all, as Young (1983, note 27) remarks. Anyhow, my 'interest-group approach'

have already been introduced in the last chapter, but will be more closely scrutinised here.

(1) Most social scientists in the 1970s were convinced that mobilisation along ethnic-national lines could be successful where these lines separate socio-economic interest groups. Various forms of this approach can be found, depending on whether regions, fractions of classes or certain professional groups are seen as corresponding to such groups.

Hechter (Hechter and Levi 1979) developed a much-discussed hypothesis, which derives from dependency theory. The process of uneven development experienced by dependent nations also leads, so the argument goes, to political and cultural hierarchisation of regions. Hierarchisation is particularly conflict-laden and high in tension when it places various ethnic groups in opposition to each other. According to a second variant of the interest-group argument, the world market for labour power has torn ethnic groups from the fabric of their traditional cultural environment and placed them in the ethnically segregated labour markets and slums of the fast-growing cities. In this way, class and sectoral interest groups coincide with ethnic communities. Ethnic conflicts are traced to intensified competitive group relations, to a breakdown in older patterns of segregated labour or housing markets.[23] Finally, Edna Bonacich (1973) developed a model to explain why trading minorities are so often victims of ethnic violence:[24] they are more competitive, because of their ethnic and family relations,[25] and they therefore depress the general level of wages, leading to an outbreak of hostility.

Why do these different interest groups not organise as labour unions, parties or regional associations based on non-cultural criteria? Abner Cohen's (1974) answer to this question is that interest groups cannot always formally organise as such, either because this is not tolerated by the central power or because it runs contrary to basic cultural principles (for example in theocracies). In recent times, this argument has been formalised and systematised by economists seeking to explain the advantages of ethnic organisations by their low transaction costs (Wintrobe 1995).[26]

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includes the 'instrumentalist' and the 'internal colonialist' theses; the social-psychologist approach adopted by Horowitz and Anthony D. Smith's theory are usually classified as 'primordialist' (although Smith himself criticised the primordialist school frequently (for example, A. Smith 1986a)). Most of the literature on ethnic elites discussed in the first section would belong to the instrumentalist approach.

[23] Bonacich (1974); O'Sullivan (1986); Olzak and Nagel (1986); Olzak (1993).

[24] See also Zenner (1987).

[25] The usefulness of ethnic relations in trading and business is widely acknowledged today. See Janet T. Landa (1981); Ward and Jenkins (1984); Boissevain *et al.* (1990); Wintrobe (1995).

[26] See with regard to the explanation of ethnic violence, Brubaker and Laitin (1998: 437–41).

The empirical shortcomings of the interest-group approach are clear by now. It is, after all, rare that all members of a politically mobilised ethnic group find themselves in similar economic positions.[27] More specifically, each of the variants above has its own empirical weaknesses: contrary to Hechter's theory of 'internal colonialism', most secessionist movements originated in ethno-regions which would hardly be capable of survival or which – like the Slovak part of former Czechoslovakia – even profit economically from the hitherto common state.[28] They strive for independence despite the considerable economic cost this would entail. Conversely, it is not, as claimed by Immanuel Wallerstein (1961: 88) and Peter Gourevitch (1979), always the more wealthy regions which tend towards secessionism.[29] And not all economically privileged regions that have a negative balance sheet with respect to the central state develop secessionist desires (Horowitz 1985: 194).[30] The automatism of the 'trading minorities' model is equally off the mark and fails to fit prominent examples: many trading minorities have lived long without difficulties in their 'host' countries, and they are not involved at all in many cases of ethnic conflict.[31] Finally, conflicts over jobs or housing frequently disappear just as rapidly as they arise, and activists normally make no demands for change in the basic rules of politics.[32] They are easily satisfied.[33] Without support from an educated elite such movements apparently lack the political resources with which to form a long-term perspective and to mobilise that large part of one's own ethnic group which does not see

[27] For references regarding this point, see Bentley (1987: 40).

[28] Horowitz (1981: 194); compare also Mayall and Simpson (1992); for contemporary Russia, see Graham Smith (1996: 401ff.). For general critiques of Hechter's model, see also Birch (1978), Page (1978), Brand (1985) and a special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (vol. 2, no. 3, 1979).

[29] Furthermore, in multi-ethnic states, secessionist movements trigger a kind of domino effect completely independent of economic cost-balance sheets of the individual group's relation to the central state: the minorities within those regions fighting for independence attempt either to split from these regions in order to form their own state or to join that region in which their own ethnic group represents the majority. For statistical evidence of the 'contagious effect' of ethnic conflicts, see Gurr (1993b: 181). On the choice between secessionism and irredentism facing many ethnic groups, see Donald Horowitz (1985: 281–6; 1992); for further examples of secessionist chain reactions, see Horowitz (1985: 267–70, 278f.).

[30] Neither among the Ashanti in Ghana, the Buganda in Uganda, the Yoruba in western Nigeria, nor the German-speaking Swiss was this the case.

[31] See examples in Horowitz (1985: 113–24).

[32] A critical reformulation of the competition model is presented by Sarah Bélanger and Maurice Pinard (1991). I will endorse this critique on two points: first, ethnic conflicts have more to do with *collective* than individual goods. Secondly, the perception of *illegitimate* competition plays a crucial role; the degree of conflict in group relations cannot be derived from objective conditions of competition, as a thorough reading of Olzak's (1993) most recent study shows (see chapter 7).

[33] Taylor (1987: 197ff.); see also examples in Olzak and Nagel (1986, part 1); Moodie (1992).

itself at the mercy of competition with other ethnic groups in the struggle for workplaces or customers.[34] It seems that ethnic conflicts are less concerned with individual economic goods than with the political, legal and moral goods of the modern nation-state.[35]

(2) In a second explanatory approach, social psychological research plays an important role. Sherif's and Tajfel's experiments demonstrated that even groups formed arbitrarily for experimental purposes begin to act as rivals. Because ethnic status is given at birth and thus cannot be changed, some see the struggle for group prestige in ethnically heterogeneous societies as inevitable as soon as uneven development fosters rivalry between ethno-regions. Donald Horowitz (1985), who has presented the most extensive and detailed comparative study of ethnic conflict to date, follows this line of argument, usually identified with a 'primordialist' approach. The question remains as to why just *ethnic* distinctions gain this political significance (Banton 1994). Moreover, ethnic categories usually show considerable flexibility, and attribution to an ethnic category does not prohibit passing to another group[36] or situational redefinition.[37] Social closure along ethnic lines and the concomitant transformation of ethnic categories into ethnic groups seems not to be the starting point, but rather the *result* of ethnic conflict.

(3) In order to explain why ethnic identities can be mobilised for political ends, psychological theories hint at the need for ego stabilisation through group identification, which is especially felt in times of rapid social change.[38] Psychological approaches do indeed help to understand the motives or unconscious dynamics behind the devaluation of others.

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[34] Compare also the results of a cross-national statistical analysis by Majstorovic (1995). According to Majstorovic, inequality of the overall income distribution clearly does not relate to the politicisation of ethnic differences. This finding stands in contrast to the thesis that ethnic conflicts are the outcome of a struggle over the distribution of individual goods. Ted Gurr's statistical analysis of 227 ethnic groups in conflict shows that material inequalities between ethnic groups and economic discrimination had only very weak correlations with ethno-nationalist grievances and rebellions (Gurr 1993b).

[35] An empirical study addressing the difference between individual and collective goods in ethnic competition and conflict is provided by Bélanger and Pinard (1991). Compare also the criticism by Williams (1989: 405–13).

[36] See references in Elwert (1989: 13f.); Wimmer (1995a, chs. 3 and 4); Baumann (1996: 18).

[37] Mercier (1965); Moerman (1965); Wallerstein (1965); Barth (1969); Nagata (1974); Sharp and Boonzaier (1994).

[38] See the summary of older approaches in Le Vine and Campbell (1972, part 3) or, more recently, Rothschild (1981), Brown (1994) and Scheff (1994); the crisis management theorem appears also in Bentley (1987: 43–8), who presents it in Bourdieu's terminology.
    Rothschild (1981, ch. 2) refers to a 'Greshamite flow-gradient of stereotypes from social-role to ethnic image pattern', that gives ethnic identities a superior attractiveness.

But they cannot explain how one group becomes classified as foreign and another group as one's own. The boundaries between 'us' and 'them' can be drawn around family, kinship, class, region, ethnic group, nation or 'race'. Religion may provide better orientation during times of radical social change than ethnic nationalism.

(4) In search of an explanation, some writers have found inspiration in the works of Foucault and other 'post-structuralist' philosophers. Connerton (1989), for example, argues that the impressions left on the senses by ritualised public events such as take place on national holidays are stored in an individual's unconscious and cannot be the object of rational thinking. The discourse of national pride therefore takes on a quasi-natural plausibility, and people find it self-evident that they should defend their nation or ethnic group.[39] More recently Anthony D. Smith (1992) also held that the 'power of ideology' plays a central role in explaining ethno-nationalist mobilisation: thanks to myths of being a chosen people and visions of a historical mission, ethnic communities can withstand pressure to assimilate for centuries. This explains the ease with which ethnic groups can be mobilised if they perceive the honour of the community or even its cultural survival to be at risk (A. Smith 1995b). As it seems to me, it is not enough to refer to the power of ethno-nationalist discourse without explaining why it proves effective under certain conditions and only for particular groups, while for other conditions and groups ethno-nationalist discourses fall on infertile ground. Looking at successful movements only conceals the fact that many ethnic communities did not experience a nationalist mobilisation, although there would be enough mythical material and pre-nationalist feelings of belonging available (see the examples given in the last chapter). Rather than pointing to myths and symbols of belonging, I would like to suggest that the success or failure of ethno-nationalist movements depends on the precise way in which state-building and social closure along ethnic and national lines interact (cf. Zubaida 1989).

Struggling over collective goods

According to this hypothesis, ethnic mobilisation and conflict is a consequence of distributing the collective goods of the modern state along ethnic lines: protection from arbitrary violence, equality before the law,

He fails, however, to explain the reasons for this hierarchy of appeal or to give empirical evidence for his proposition.

[39] Compare also Stack (1986) and Black (1988), who presents a socialisation-theory view; Alonso (1994: 382–90) reviews recent literature from the perspective of cultural constructivism.

political representation, social solidarity, economic infrastructure and the symbols of independence and state power. Ethnic constituencies can be mobilised by disadvantaged elites when the state is ethnicised in such a way as to have direct consequences for larger sections of the population: for farmers and craftsmen, small-scale entrepreneurs and workers, when applying for credit, gaining permits, legalising ownership of a piece of land or taking an examination to enter higher education. All involve considerable difficulties when civil servants systematically favour their co-ethnics and only a few of 'one's own people' sit within the apparatus. That ethnic discrimination matters and is perceived as an important reason for ethnic protest and contestation, has been shown by several research projects.[40] Prior to the first riots in Sri Lanka, to give one example, many Sinhalese were convinced that Tamil government employees would specially earmark documents of 'their own people' so that their requests would be handled with higher priority.[41]

These concerns about ethnic discrimination and preference are aggravated by the fact that modern states are greatly increasing their eagerness and capacity to interfere in the everyday life of their citizens. Indirect rule through local and regional power-holders, the usual power technique of empires, is replaced by direct administration. Trade and production are now administered closely in order to mobilise the resources necessary for 'nation-building'. Local educational systems become subjected to harmonisation and standardisation. New and nationwide institutions and laws replace traditional courts and other mechanisms of conflict resolution.

Dealings with this expanding bureaucracy are complicated when communication must take place in a foreign language or when use of one's own language is even prohibited by the nationalising state – as, for example, until recently, the use of Kurdish in Turkey. The language issue very frequently joins the interests of the educated middle classes – whose chances of advancing within the civil services are directly dependent upon the choice of official idioms – to the interests of broader segments of the population.

Thus, resources and services dispensed by an ethnicised bureaucracy do not appear to be *public* benefits available to all, but rather *collective* goods[42] attainable only by those who belong to the 'proper' ethnic group.

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[40] Horowitz (1985: 194); Hyden and Williams (1994); Grødeland, Miller and Koshechkina (2000).

[41] Horowitz (1985: 194), also including references to relevant literature on Malaysia and Nigeria.

[42] In strict economic terminology it would probably be more correct to speak of club goods (Buchanan 1965; Sandler and Tschirkart 1980), i.e. goods that are only available to

Competition for state resources is seen as a matter concerning not just individuals or associations of shared interests but rather whole ethnic groups.[43] The boundaries between them harden, and multiple identities become increasingly reduced to a single ethnic dimension.[44] Not until the final stage of this process of closure are ethnic categories effectively transformed into political groups of binding loyalty.[45] The role of the modern state in the politics of ethnic closure is also shown by examples in which smaller units began to form ethnic groups according to colonial district or other administrative boundaries – in this way often corresponding to the categories of colonial ethnographers (Geertz 1963).[46] Many processes of ethnogenesis actually followed the divisions of ethnicised bureaucracy.[47]

those who have contributed to their production. In the case of the collective goods of the state, the 'contribution' of dominant ethnic groups consists of their sufferings during the struggle for independence and in their efforts at state-building in general; they are thus not exclusively of an economic character, as in Congleton's (1995) analysis (cf. Williams 1989).

[43] It is precisely this effect that active preferential politics of a state bureaucracy can have as well (compare, for example, Nevitte and Kennedy 1986). Very often these policies initially lead to the mobilisation of the excluded or preferred groups, as for example the Ladino movement in Chicago has shown (Padilla 1986). Compare also Nagel (1986) who seeks to derive ethnic mobilisation generally from the bureaucratically administrated structure of political opportunities – a concept which in this form is perhaps too simplistic, as will be seen in the following.

[44] The hypothesis that group competition reinforces dividing lines while individual competition weakens them stands at the centre of Michael Banton's book (1983). This can be expanded as follows: as soon as competition can be regulated politically, politically expedient group membership becomes relevant, and ethnic divisions become reinforced.

[45] This thesis is again corroborated by Gurr's statistical research: violent political conflict (rebellion) is correlated with the political-bureaucratic subordination of an ethnic group, although the direct connection is only weakly significant. Yet active political discrimination against an ethnic group is detrimental to a rebellion (Gurr 1993a: 28); this is probably due to the costs of repression which would be incurred in such a situation.

[46] See, for instance, Rajah (1990) on the Karen, in whose ethnogenesis, however, missionaries played the decisive role; on the Bangala, Mongo and others, see Young (1965: 242–52); on the Yoruba, Peel (1989); on the Tsonga, Harries (1989); on Uganda, Kasfir (1976: 98ff.); on Nigeria, Melson and Wolpe (1971: 22–4); on southern Africa, Vail (1989); on the emergence of the 'Chicanos', Padilla (1986); on the adoption of the categories *indio* and *indigena* in Mexico and Guatemala, see the following chapter. For other examples of ethnogenesis, see La Fontaine (1969); Hannan (1979); Horowitz (1985: 64ff); Roosens (1989). For a failed attempt at creating ethnic solidarity on the basis of administrative districts, see the example of the Ciskei (Anonymous 1989).

[47] Here it can be noted that usually several ethnic identities are structured, as relational concepts of descent, in a segmentary hierarchy (see Keyes 1976). The question as to which of these simultaneously given levels of ethnic divisions will gain political significance also depends upon the structure of administrative-political processes. For example, at the time ethnic divisions first became charged with conflict in Uganda, most ethnic groups in the north joined together as 'Northerners' in opposition to the Buganda, who controlled the state apparatus left behind by the British (Kasfir 1976). Later, when this coalition of northern groups had succeeded in grasping power, the ethnic differences among them became politically salient.

It is hoped that this discussion has substantiated one of the central hypotheses of this book: that the formation of ethnic groups is comparable to establishing national communities – with the crucial difference that the ethnicisation of bureaucracy prevented a particular *ethnos* to be generalised, as in fully nationalised states. Ethnic favouritism was more likely to develop where the nation-state remained poor in political power and resources and where it emerged *before* a strong civil society could take roots. The state elites were neither sufficiently independent from the surrounding social forces nor sufficiently rich in resources to be able to offer social security, legal protection and welfare for all citizens independently of their ethnic background. Only this would have allowed them to transfer their expectations of solidarity to the emerging state and to enter into a nationalist culture compromise.

Thus, the once much-discussed nation-building in weak, peripheral states had little chance of going beyond the euphoric conjuration of national unity during the struggle for independence and immediately following its achievement (for Zimbabwe, see Sithole 1980; for Guatemala, C. Smith 1990). Instead, the ethnicisation of the state quickly resulted in the transformation of many ethnic categories into groups of political loyalty, instead of one national entity. Once ethnic identity and political interests bind together in this manner, the public sphere becomes a battlefield for competing ethno-nationalist demands. Bitter struggle takes place over who may speak his own language and whose emblems will appear on the national flag, because these are signs indicating 'ownership' of the state (Denich 1994).

Who pays the costs?

However, there is another aspect in the process of state-building that leads to social closure along ethnic lines and thus reinforces the ethnicisation of political conflicts.[48] Up to now, the state has been described as a gigantic dairy cow; fighting over its milk is the preoccupation of the various elite factions in a bureaucracy and their ethnic clientele. But – in a phrase coined by a Basque nationalist – the cow grazes in one field but has her udder in another. The resources of a state are not only distributed but

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[48] Perhaps it should be mentioned that for reasons of simplicity, I have restricted myself here to those aspects of the mobilisation of ethnic groups which stand in direct relation to ethnic categories. In many conflicts led in the name of ethnic or national sovereignty, political loyalties of another order do indeed play a significant role. Tribal obligations of support, to give an example, are an important factor in the Kurdish movement of northern Iraq, as will be shown in chapter 6; Shan princes can use the allegiance dependent farmers owe them as political and military capital in the war against Burmese central authority (Brown 1994, ch. 2).

must also be collected. For the broad masses of a population, unequal distribution of the *costs* of expanding state activities frequently plays a more important role than distribution of the gains. Costs include taxes paid by a particular region, which can be disproportionately high in relation to governmental expenditures profiting that region. Raw materials which are extracted by the state may also be perceived as costs, when locals are deprived of their use; the same holds for land that, in the course of governmental resettlement projects, is lost to outsiders.

However, regional distribution of state costs has, at least in principle, nothing to do with ethnic distinctions. We have already seen that political dynamics cannot be predicted from the objective balance sheet of relations between regions and the central state. State costs only become the fuel for *ethnic* conflicts if they appear to profit 'others', because the state 'belongs' to another ethnic group which alone enjoys its advantages (Young 1976: 522f.). Conflicts over distributional issues are therefore more apt to be reinterpreted as ethnic conflicts if the state elite engages in a nationalist discourse, which excludes one's own group from the realms of the national 'we' – if, in other words, an encompassing nationalist culture compromise did not emerge.

In some cases, there is a long history of such distributional conflicts between the central state and its regions, dating from the expansion of imperial or absolutist states into their hinterland and from the imposition of new taxes. Confronting expanding national states, these histories can be remembered and the corresponding stereotypes of the enemy be revived. Historical memories indeed play an important role in ethnic mobilisation.[49] The more intense competition over state resources becomes and the more the situation culminates in a general crisis, the more conflict definitions seem to come under the influence of such historical patterns of defining the ethnic 'other' (Imhof 1993). It is at this precise point in the process that the long memory of an *ethnie*'s history – the favourite subject of an entire research tradition – helps indeed to kindle the fire of ethno-national conflict.

The example of Mindanao illustrates this point. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Christian farmers migrated to this island divided between Muslim sultanates and non-Muslim tribes. In the 1950s and 1960s this migration was promoted and organised on a large scale by the government. The original inhabitants – whether Christians, Muslims or 'animists' – defended themselves, often in concert, against the intruders. At the beginning of the 1970s, however, perceptions of the conflict and the corresponding alliances changed. No longer was this a matter of

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[49] See A. Smith (1986b: 30f., 37–41); Atran (1990); Denich (1994).

individual land ownership. Rather those involved saw themselves as fighting in a new round of a centuries-old religious war – the struggle of small Muslim states against the Spanish and their heirs, the Christian state of the Philippines (Geiger 1994, based on George 1980).

For some groups, the struggle over the state becomes a struggle for survival *against* the state. This is true for *ethnies* in whose ancestral territories raw materials are discovered, dams are built or settlement projects carried out. As in the case of Mindanao, tribal groups frequently inhabit these areas.[50] In the eyes of the majority population, peoples of the hinterland stick like a thorn of primitiveness in the body of the nation (compare here, on Turkey, Möwe 1994). To strengthen national self-consciousness, it thus seems legitimate and virtually necessary to subdue 'the barbarians', to fill the 'cultural vacuum' (Wai 1979: 73), to declare their lands as state property and to populate them with one's own people. Non-national 'others' become the victims of politics, which may be appropriately called 'state terrorism' (Harff and Gurr 1989; van den Berghe 1990). Ethnic groups with warfaring traditions are more apt to defend themselves against such policies than are groups that normally react to conflict by withdrawing to more remote regions (see Geiger 1994). West Papua serves as an example of such a region of conflict where tribes attempt to defend themselves against Javanese settlers. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, various groups speaking Tibeto-Burman languages led a fight against the superior strength of Bengali settlers and troops (IWGIA 1988). Similar situations can be observed in Assam (Paul 1989) or Tripura (Bhattacharjee 1989). More often than not, human rights organisations in the West are the only ones who take notice of genocide and ethnocide.

The logic of escalation

We have seen how and why in resource-poor countries with weak civil societies, nation-state formation leads to a politicisation of ethnicity and to a process of political closure along ethnic lines. In such a tense environment, small groups of extremists can stir up conflicts and sustain them for longer periods,[51] thanks to what one scholar has called the ethnic

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[50] According to Gurr's analysis often cited above, expanding state apparatuses correlate positively with the frequency of violent uprisings of indigenous groups and ethnonationalists, and correlate negatively with peaceful forms of protest (Gurr 1993b: 183–5).

[51] Both the self-evidence of established concepts of the enemy as well as the representativeness of violence explain the extraordinary persistence and durability of inter-ethnic conflicts and are formidable obstacles to their resolution. In Gurr's analysis of 227 politically

representativeness of violence:[52] when friend–enemy perceptions are polarised along ethnic lines, violent acts can be aimed at any member of an ethnic group. *All* members thus become potential victims, and the *actual* victim represents them all.

Fortunately, however, the politicisation of ethnicity and the ethnicisation of political conflicts do not inevitably lead to a warlike escalation even when terrorist provocations are aiming at exactly this.[53] Neither in Thailand nor the Ivory Coast nor in Switzerland's Jura conflict did sporadic terrorist violence result in a civil war such as those experienced in Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Lebanon or Sudan. Our already long chain of argumentation must thus be extended with some further considerations. In order to explain when ethnic tension can rip apart all cross-cutting ties (cf. Kuper 1977), the nature of the political system and its reactions to the emergence of ethnic conflicts will now be examined (Young 1976; Jalali and Lipset 1992/3: 597ff.).

The structure of this system should itself be interpreted as the product of historical struggles, which means that the outcome of past conflicts determines current reactions to political tensions within the ethnic context. Thus, these reactions cannot be separated unambiguously from the politicisation of ethnic distinctions, because the ethnicisation of bureaucracy, as discussed above, is of course a political process in itself and forms part of the structure of incentives to which ethnic entrepreneurs and their followers react. But political institutions and political processes vary independently of one another and can thus be considered separately. I shall distinguish first of all between formally democratic and authoritarian variants and examine both with regard to their capacity to resolve political tensions resulting from ethno-nationalist mobilisations.

According to some of the leading specialists in the field, ethnic conflicts escalate most in a pluralistic, multi-party system with first-past-the-post elections.[54] A democratic party system quickly becomes reorganised

mobilised ethnic groups, the strongest statistical correlation shows that groups already mobilised and involved in conflict in the 1970s were still in a similar situation in the 1980s (Gurr 1993b: 182, 186).

[52] The concept is taken from Frank Wright (1987), who developed it with reference to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Leo Kuper (1977) analyses the mechanisms whereby the harmful and dangerous elements drive out those which would keep the conflict within bounds. Anthony Smith (1981) explores on a more general level the effects that wars have on ethnic solidarity.

[53] For an overview of different approaches to ethnic violence, see Brubaker and Laitin (1998).

[54] Compare here Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle (1972) and Horowitz (1985, ch. 7). This contention appears to contradict the results of Gurr's statistical analysis, according to which a high degree of democratisation correlates with peaceful forms of resolving ethnic conflicts (Gurr 1993b: 183f.). Furthermore, in stable, democratic systems, peaceful

along ethnic lines as soon as ethnic distinctions, for reasons discussed in the previous sections, gain paramount political importance. Under such conditions it is rewarding for politicians to found parties which appeal exclusively to the solidarity and shared interests of an *ethnic* group and demand their 'fair' representation in the framework of state institutions. Because the criterion for voting decisions is much clearer for ethnic parties than for parties representing a certain political conviction, sure votes can be gained with little exertion when inter-ethnic relations are strained (Horowitz 1985, ch. 7). If a successful ethnic mass party appears on the political scene, other parties reorganise themselves, in a type of chain reaction, according to ethnic lines.

This can be seen clearly in the case of Trinidad. Following independence, a first mass party was formed under the banner of a left-wing nationalist programme. The party was chaired by a Creole but also had some Indian representatives of the urban intelligentsia. The party won the first parliamentary election, as it gained the majority of city votes. An opposition party, also ethnically mixed, won the next election, thanks to rural support. However, this party soon broke apart along ethnic lines, because it became clear that its success was due mainly to the virtually unanimous block of Indian votes. These voters viewed the opposing party as Creole, and they would not have approved concessions to Creole members of their own party's leadership. Thus Indian party leaders decided to cleanse their ranks of Creoles (ibid.: 312–15). A similar process of the ethnicisation of the party system could be observed in Nigeria before independence (O'Connell 1967; Young 1976: 289–95).

According to Horowitz (1985, ch. 8), in an ethnic party system of this kind, political positions very often become radicalised.[55] In non-ethnic

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protest seems to be more intensive. However, Gurr's sample also contains many Western democracies, which for reasons to be discussed below, are better able to resolve conflict by means of redistribution and decentralisation. Furthermore, Gurr shows that *democratisation* in the South between the years 1975 and 1986 had the effect – when case examples are studied one-by-one (ibid.: 184f., 187) – of intensifying conflicts and frequently ended in reauthoritarisation of the political system (ibid.: 184f.). The same holds true for ethno-political conflicts in the 1990s, as Gurr's (1994: 362) new data and analysis show. Snyder's (2000) book on the relation between democratisation and ethno-nationalist violence confirms that the instability of mass politics in democratising polities can lead to nationalist mobilisations by endangered elites and corresponding counter-mobilisations and violence.

[55] Paul Brass (1991, ch. 9) believes, however – in contrast to Rabushka and Shepsle (1972) and Horowitz (1985) – that pluralistic party systems with maximum party competition do not necessarily heighten tensions, as sooner or later even majority ethnic groups split into several competing parties, which makes coalitions necessary, so that finally non-ethnic party alliances arise.

While this may be valid in the case of India, where there is an impressive diversity of groups and subgroups and where a strong national non-ethnic party can therefore act as

party systems, simply speaking, politicians must mainly court the float-
ing voters in the middle of the political opinion spectrum and therefore
move away from extremes. In clientelist party systems, one campaigns
with diffuse promises to gain the support of voters who are flexible in
their choice of patrons.[56] An ethnic party, in contrast, seeks its support
only *within* a clearly defined segment of the population, because as ethnic
tensions increase, group membership of the individual is hardly subject
to debate any more. For this reason, it is worthwhile for ethnic party
leaders to take radical positions in order to forestall competition over
representation of 'true' group interests; moderate votes in an ethnically
divided electorate are secure in any case. When the demographic distri-
bution of power is clear and political competition is open, the political
subordination of minorities is, after all, permanently fixed. Change can
be brought about only through means of force (ibid.: 342–9). In Nigeria,
such ethnicisation of the political scene and, after several coups, an ever-
clearer polarisation of political positions resulted in the outbreak of a
bloody secessionist war (Diamond 1988). In Burundi as well, elections
at the beginning of the 1960s led to rapid ethnicisation of the party sys-
tem and to the takeover of power by the threatened minority elite (Laely
1994). The introduction of multi-party elections in Estonia resulted in
the positions of the parties leaning more and more towards that of the rad-
ical nationalists and the denial of citizenship status to people of Russian
origin (Metcalf 1996).

But it would be simplistic to say that the institution of public voting
alone was responsible for such developments (see van Amersfoort and
van der Wusten 1981). For under certain conditions, a grand coalition of
elites of differing ethnic origins can be formed which negotiates a stable
institutional compromise.[57] Thanks to ethnic quotas in government and
bureaucracy, reciprocal affording of veto rights and regional autonomy,
inter-ethnic tension can be appeased and escalation avoided despite the
holding of elections. Frequently the most important ethnic groups are
represented through their own parties, and any disagreements which de-
velop are dealt with and negotiated upon by party leaders. The common
interests of the elite cartel thus prevent escalation of conflicts. This form

political glue (Young 1976: 308–26), experiences in other countries such as Sri Lanka,
Rwanda or Nigeria speak a different language. However, there certainly are cases of
small countries like Trinidad and Tobago, where a pluralistic and largely ethnicised party
system does not lead to radicalisation of positions, despite the absence of a consociational
regime (compare also van Amersfoort and van der Wusten 1981). Much further research
is needed to understand the precise relationships between democratic institutions and
ethnic tensions (see the contribution by Rothchild, forthcoming).

[56] See, among many others, the Indian example discussed by Mayer (1966).

[57] Nordlinger (1972); McRae (1974); Esman (1977); Lijphart (1977).

of conflict resolution corresponds to the much-discussed ideal-type of 'consociational democracy' as characterised by Lijphart (1977).[58]

Such regimes may be able to function in relatively small and wealthy countries with long traditions of statehood such as Belgium or Switzerland.[59] Yet, as already discussed, in many developing countries sufficient state resources to satisfy all groups involved in such an arrangement are lacking. Under such preconditions, it is extraordinarily difficult to set up a consociational regime, as shown by Trinidad's experiment with a trans-ethnic, multi-party government after 1986 (Premdas 1993). Furthermore, a political culture of moderation and compromise is little developed among the elites of countries where a strong civil society could not develop *before* the modern nation-state took root.[60] Thus, if the educated elite of an ethnic group not yet represented in the elite cartel enters into the field of competition, perhaps as a result of the assimilation policy of the modernising state, or if demographic power relations change, the willingness to renegotiate compromise is lacking, and the consociational regime breaks apart (van den Berghe 1991: 191ff.). In fact, as Simpson (1994: 468) has remarked, 'the list of cases where consociational arrangements applied reads like an obituary page'.

In Lebanon, the 'magic formula' of governmental representation by religion had been broken up by the mid-seventies. From the population of Shiites, which for centuries had been made up mainly of illiterate farmers, an urban class of professionals had formed. They soon began to demand a larger slice of the government's pie for their group, which no longer made up one-fifth, but rather one-third of the population (according to Picard 1986). At present in Ethiopia, an attempt is being made to build a consociational and federalist system. The chances of its success are not very good, as Tigre rebels currently dominating the political scene hardly seem interested in division of power and have formed branch organisations in all regions intended to prevent the development of political dynamics independent of the new centre.

Frequently, dictatorial regimes have arisen from broken democratic systems. In ethnically divided societies, the authoritarian state is often dominated by one single ethnic group,[61] or most often by one of its subgroups or clans. Given the obvious break with the modern ideal of

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[58] Arend Lijphart (1977) uses the concept both descriptively and normatively – as a model for resolution of conflicts in ethnically divided societies. Extensive controversy has developed over the two usages; see recent critiques by Paul Brass (1991, ch. 9) and Lemarchand (1994, ch. 9). Older discussions are summarised in Lustick (1979).

[59] McRae (1983); but see, for the Swiss case, Steiner and Obler (1977).

[60] Nordlinger (1972, ch. 4); Rothchild (1986); Jinadu (1995).

[61] Compare Lustick's (1979) 'control model' or the 'plural society' of M. G. Smith (1969).

'representing the nation', the strongman can only rely upon a narrow circle of relatives or ethnic acquaintances, which even further reduces his legitimacy and enhances the need for relying on 'his own people'. And so, in a round dance of coups and palace revolts, ever smaller and more closely knit groups assert themselves. Finally, a small clique holds all the threads of power in its hands, playing one secret service or group of officers off against others and skilfully enacting gestures of paternal care for the people (see Horowitz 1985: 486–501). Ethnic conflicts are not expected to escalate under such conditions.

Syria can serve as an example of this type of political regime. Its state apparatus is dominated by the Numailatiyya clan of the Matawira tribe, a small subgroup of Alawites (Batatu 1981). On one hand, the regime severely suppresses any expressions of dissent (for example, from the Sunnite majority) but, on the other hand, seeks legitimacy through pan-Arabian nationalism and Syrian patriotism (van Dam 1979). Similar conditions prevail in neighbouring Iraq, where the al-Begat section of the Al-bu Nasir tribe of the Sunni town of Takrit holds all threads of power in its hands (Batatu 1978: 1088ff.). And finally in Burundi, the Hima, a Tutsi subgroup, gained power following a number of coups and purges. In the official discourse, ethnic distinctions in the Barundi nation are denounced as colonial fantasy and completely denied.

The example of Burundi also shows that minority regimes are often only able to hold onto power thanks to ruthless deployment of military and police forces. Yet repression increases the very tensions which it is intended to suppress (Kuper 1977).[62] In Burundi during 1972, 1988, and probably also in 1993, a great number of the more educated Hutus were massacred in land-sweeping pogroms as they dared to question the supremacy of the Tutsi elite (Lemarchand 1990; Laely 1994). Political tensions can also escalate when the central power weakens. Kurdish and Shiite rebellions against the Baghdad regime, which was exhausted and debilitated by the Gulf War, are recent examples of this. Multiplying ethnic independence movements in the last years of communist Ethiopia (Fukui and Markakis 1994) represent another.

However, not all formally undemocratic regimes should be seen as dictatorships. Less totalitarian, for example, are such one-party systems as seen in Kenya under Kenyatta, the Ivory Coast under Houphouët-Boigny (Rothchild 1986) or Indonesia under Suharto (Brown 1994). These lacked both the state power for authoritarian control of the whole

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[62] This can lead to the most severe forms of escalation of violence, namely genocides and 'politicides': Helen Fein (1993) has shown that most genocides and 'politicides' after 1960 were responses to communal rebellions against state policies of discrimination and political exclusion.

territory and the conditions necessary for consociational democracy. Representatives of the ethnic clientele negotiate the price for political support behind the scenes – whether in the lap of the monopoly party or the bureaucracy. Thus ethnic clientelism did not manifest itself in public politics, and an aggravation of conflicts caused by agitation of ambitious politicians could be avoided. Donald Rothchild (1986) described this type of political system as the 'hegemonial exchange model'.

However, in times of economic crises, the state resources, which the central elite can pass on via the ethnicised bureaucracy all the way to the heads of individual villages, run dry. Rival leaders will enter the political arena and orchestrate the dissatisfaction of their ethnic following. The resulting conflicts can no longer be held in check by the regime (Rothchild 1986: 74). Similar processes can be observed when a political system is forced to 'democratise' by external pressure. Ethnic divisions then turn up in the party system, and positions become more radical. Developments in Kenya and Zaire seem to confirm this thesis.[63]

Conclusion

A violent escalation of ethnic conflicts can occur in all types of political systems discussed, though for different reasons: under conditions of open political competition, an ethnicisation of politics and radicalisation of positions seems likely; consociational democracies often fall because of the rigidity of their quota systems; the attempts of dictatorships to suppress ethnic conflicts can backfire; clientelist one-party systems disintegrate during democratisation or when the state budget shrinks too much. Here too, the struggle over the state may eventually end up by destroying it, leaving what in the technocratic jargon of development specialists is called a 'failed state'.

But before ethnic conflicts develop this destructive force, the population has to be mobilised along ethnic lines so that it perceives the political landscape as being made up of different ethnic groups each sharing a common destiny. It is not difficult to see why disadvantaged educated middle classes adopt such a view. Corresponding analyses predominate in the social science literature as well. It is more challenging to understand why non-elites begin to see politics as a domain where ethnicity matters and begin to involve themselves in the struggle over the state. I have argued that this occurs when the benefits and costs of a modernising state are distributed unequally along ethnic lines. Such ethnic clientelism especially flourishes in the absence of a strong civil society and in weak

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[63] See also conclusions reached from statistical analysis in Gurr (1993b: 189); for developments in Africa, see Rothchild (1995).

states that lack the resources for equivocal distribution of the goods of modernity. State resources now appear as collective goods accessible only to those belonging to the 'proper' ethnic group, social closure proceeds on the basis of ethnic membership, and political loyalties become a matter of ethnic affiliations.

The politics of ethnicity and nationhood are thus not an archaic pattern which modernity has not yet managed to wear away but rather an effect of political modernisation itself. For only when rule by the Grace of God has been replaced by rule by grace of 'the people', when like should be governed by like, does the identity of this people matter. Taking this perspective, it is understandable why it is precisely during the past decade that ethnic conflicts increased worldwide: during the political thaw that the end of the Cold War and the new hegemony of democratic state ideals have brought, the last multicultural empires dissolved. They were transformed into modern nation-states before strong civil societies could take root. In the newly nationalising states, politics was quickly transformed into an arena of ethno-nationalist competition.

5 Nationalism and ethnic mobilisation in Mexico

On New Year's Day 1994, Subcommandante Marcos stepped out of the Lacandon forest and made his first public statements, surrounded by masked men in guerrilla uniforms armed with rifles. He declared that they were the heirs of the Mexican revolution, determined to continue the struggle against the forces of imperialism and to give a final blow to the bourgeois regime that had corrupted the ideals of the revolution. And indeed, the Zapatistas could draw on the support of the peasant organisations who had struggled, since the middle of the seventies, against the monopolisation of land and power by a small elite from Tuxtla Gutiérrez and San Cristóbal (Wimmer 1995c; Harvey 1998).

One year later, however, the Zapatista army fought for the cultural and political rights of the indigenous peoples of Mexico, for political autonomy of their communities and the official recognition of their culture – a considerable shift of discourse, well received by the national and international audience of NGOs, intellectuals and anti-globalisation groups for whom Marcos and his followers became heroes of the same quasi-mythical stature as Che Guevara. As it seems, the widespread support for indigenous rights and multicultural justice had led the insurgents to present themselves as an Indian uprising rather than a peasant revolution. The issues of land and power, central to the guerrilla movements of the seventies and eighties, have been relegated to the bottom of the political agenda.

The events in Chiapas have brought the so-called Indian question again to the centre of political debate in Mexico. Since the time of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, the relation between the state and the indigenous population has again and again appeared as one of the major issues of contestation. This chapter follows the major lines of historical development and shows how the role of ethnicity changed profoundly as soon as modern principles of political organisation were introduced. The first section describes colonial ethnic relations as part of a universalist and

Parts of this chapter have been translated from German by Isabelle Schulte-Tenckhoff.

hierarchical mode of political organisation based on indirect rule and communal segregation. I then describe how this hierarchy was transformed when independence introduced citizenship, democracy and national sovereignty. One of the ethno-racial estates became the national people in whose name the new elite was now supposed to govern. This Creole elite relegated the Indian majority to the status of second-class citizens excluded from the realms of sovereignty. The last sections focus on the more inclusive post-revolutionary project of nation-building through assimilation and integration of the 'ethnic minorities'. Close attention will be paid to the gradual contestation of this project by social movements claiming political autonomy and cultural rights for the 'Indian peoples'. This new politicisation of ethnicity finally led to the peculiar form of multi-ethnic nationalism that we find in present-day Mexico.

Mexico is thus a case in point for the path of development described in the last chapter, where the domination of the state apparatus by an ethnic majority is contested at a rather late stage of political modernisation. Conforming to our model, only the integration and assimilation endeavours of the fully developed nation-state produced the educated minority elite that finally formulated an anti-nationalist discourse. Prior to the emergence of this Indian intelligentsia, the nationalist project of state penetration and ethnic homogenisation was contested in other ways, less visible in the public space of national politics. These other reactions will also be considered in the corresponding sections.

The colonial order

The Spanish colonial empire is my first example for the hierarchical and universalist form of political integration characterising pre-modern polities. The parallels to the Ottoman empire and to the Swiss *ancien regime* are striking, but will not be fully analysed here. Rather, the emphasis will lie on the contrast with the Mexican nation-state that developed on the ruins of the empire. As we shall see, the implications for the political role played by ethnicity are profound.

The mosaic society

Immediately after the conquest, the Spanish crown attempted to prevent the rise of a landed and politically independent stratum of conquistadores, that is, of a properly feudal class.[1] On the other hand, the kings

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[1] The following five paragraphs are based on Wimmer (1995a), where an extensive bibliography can be found.

sought to protect the declining Indian population from overexploitation and displacement by the colonisers. These goals were reached by blocking, through the institution of the *encomienda*,[2] the direct access that Spaniards might gain to land and the indigenous workforce. The administration by royal functionaries was facilitated by so-called *reducciones*: the indigenous population, which had traditionally lived in widely dispersed settlements, was relocated to permanent villages. This led to the creation of corporate peasant communities, the so-called *repúblicas de indios*. Each received a piece of land, was expected to maintain, within its boundaries, law and order, and to generate taxes and tributes.

This system of indirect rule relied on the pre-colonial stratum of nobles, the *principales*. Their social standing was reinforced and consolidated over many centuries of colonial rule. The Indian royal dynasties, on the other hand, that had ruled over entire empires, lost, mainly over the course of the seventeenth century, the political prerogatives and territorial possessions initially conceded by the conquistadores.

Where no silver was mined and where the Spaniards did not consider it worthwhile to engage in agriculture and animal husbandry, the Indians were not deprived of their land, nor driven away or enslaved. In these areas, the indigenous communities formed the hinterland for a provincial town mainly inhabited by Spaniards and *mestizos*. According to colonial law, Spaniards and *mestizos* were given the prerogative of engaging in trade and producing crafts. Under the prevailing system of forced trade controlled by the state (called *repartimiento de efectos*), they acquired agricultural products such as cochineal, cotton and indigo from the surrounding Indian villages.

In political and juridical terms, however, the *repúblicas de indios* enjoyed considerable autonomy. The *principales* exercised lower jurisdiction, levied tribute and organised the allocation of communal lands. The royal functionaries appointed in the indigenous regions, referred to as *alcaldes mayores*, only intervened in case of grave internal conflict or to solve legal disputes between Indian communities and Spanish settlers or mine-owners who, as *encomenderos*, were entitled to levy an Indian workforce.

As in other empires, this system of indirect rule corresponded to a legal segregation of the population into various ethno-cultural strata.

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[2] *Encomiendas* were created in the first decades after conquest in the form of a temporary fiduciary title. The crown's right to levy tribute was ceded to a Spanish conqueror who became entitled to use the Indians' workforce – but not necessarily the corresponding landholdings – in exchange for his military services. The strict segregation of Indian villages from the residences of the *encomenderos* figured among the conditions that the crown attached to the granting of *encomiendas*.

Scholastic state theory, which predominated in the Spanish empire until the era of Bourbon reforms, viewed these groupings as parts of the state body: each had to provide its share to ensure the orderly functioning of the whole. Conformingly, social mobility was discouraged, as well as any shifting of lines between the different ethno-cultural groupings. A state-organised process of assimilation and absorption of the Indian or of the black segments of the population was out of the question. Rather, the crown introduced a whole range of laws and regulations to safeguard the separation and stability of the various parts of the state body.

Most importantly, a special legal corpus, the *Leyes de Indias*, and a separate tribunal, the Juzgado General de Indios, were set up at the end of the sixteenth century. They were meant to protect the Indian population from abuses and overexploitation by the *conquistadores* and their descendants, and especially to defend the land titles granted to the *repúblicas*. The *Leyes de Indias* contained a separate legal apparatus for the Indian population, modelled after the special laws of protection for widows, children and the poor which together made up the category of *miserables* in Spanish law (Borah 1985: 90ff.). Equality before the law was a non-issue in this pre-modern system of ranked rights and privileges. Legal segregation and, accordingly, unequal treatment was the rule.

Only in religious matters did the colonial administration and its main ally, the mendicant orders, insist on a process of uniformisation (cf. the classic study by Ricard 1986). From the early sixteenth century onwards, the colonial project centred around conversion to Catholic Christianity by which the Indians were at the same time made vassals of the king. Indeed, only conversion justified conquest in juridical terms, as several papal bulls had established.[3] Despite the differences between humanistic and authoritarian-aristocratic tendencies, as they came to the fore in the famous Valladolid debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan de Ginés Sepúlveda, all colonial ideologists agreed on one point: the Indian's way of life violated, at least in part, Aristotelian 'natural law'. Consequently, both voluntary conversion to Christianity (de las Casas) and forceful conquest and submission (Sepúlveda) seemed to be justified on the basis of similar scholastic principles (cf. Brading 1991, ch. 4).

Like other variants of imperial thinking, but unlike modern nationalism, Spain's colonial ideology was grounded in a potentially universal and inclusive principle: since the papal bull *Sublimis Deus* declared the inhabitants of the New World as being endowed with reason and thus, in theological terms, as equals, they were as capable of being included

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[3] Parry (1974); Pietschmann (1980: 52–75); for later periods of juridical reasoning, see Brading (1991, ch. 10).

in the Christian community as the subjects of European princes, provided a wise government preserved them from lapsing into heathenism and barbarity.[4]

This inclusive and universal ideology was supplemented by a hierarchical graduation and classification of society. Modelled on feudal relations in Spain, the New World society was differentiated into groups by descent and race according to 'purity of blood': Spaniards and their Mexican-born descendants (the *criollos*) stood at the top, the so-called *castas* of 'mixed blood' such as *mulattos* (and later *moriscos*) and *mestizos* (later differentiated into *castizos*) in the middle, while the vast majority of *indios* and the black population occupied the bottom of the hierarchy.[5] The 'purer' the bloodlines of a group, the more it was called upon to serve crown and Christianity and to occupy a privileged position in the colonial edifice. Combined with the notion of racial purity was the idea of a civilising mission. The Spaniards occupied the top of the pyramid because they were given a special mission by God (and his representatives on earth) to spread the gospel and to plant the roots of civilisation in the Americas.

To a large degree, membership in these ethno-racial groups determined a person's legal status – whether he or she had to pay tribute, was able to fill an official post, to exercise certain professions, to carry certain categories of weapons, to be mounted and so forth. But in spite of the ideology of descent and of the frequent use of the term 'race', these estates were defined culturally and politically rather than somatically. Many rich Indian princes, if they possessed sufficient political influence and were converted Christians, could have themselves declared Spaniards and enjoy all the privileges attached to this status. Most Creoles of the seventeenth century had some Indian ancestors too. Some nobles in the *repúblicas* were socially Indian, while being (mostly illegitimate) sons of Spaniards. Chinese and Philippine labourers and traders were classified as 'Chinese Indians' and legally treated as Indians (Israel 1975: 61f.).

Contrary to modern racism, the estate system did not fixate on somatic traits but rested on the transmission of rights in a hierarchically organised and ethno-culturally segregated society. Group membership could be changed through a formal legal process (or through favouritism or forgery). It was determined by the identity of one's parents and the

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[4] On the political use made of the papal bulls by the Spanish kings, see Pietschmann (1980: 52–75), who provides a well-stated corrective to the view that the conquest was mainly driven by legal and religious considerations.

[5] For the colonial caste system, see Mörner (1967); Israel (1975); Seed (1982); and Aguirre Beltrán (1989); for individual regions of Mexico, see Chance (1978); Farriss (1984); and Carrol (1991).

socio-economic status one was able to achieve rather than one's skin colour. In the final decades of the empire, processes of mobility and group change were even provided for, and actively promoted by, the crown (Chance 1978). They were facilitated because the estates represented elements of a legal-political system of classification but not genuine ethnic groups with consciences of their own – with the exception of the elite of merchants, priests and functionaries born in Spain, to whom fell the task of administering this system, and of the Creoles who felt excluded from elite positions. Consequently, it was rather easy to adapt the caste structure to suit changing circumstances, brought about by social mobility and intermarriage.

However, only individuals crossed the boundaries of the tiers of the pyramid – the structure itself was safeguarded with an extended corpus of decrees and laws. The inferiority of the Indian group, for instance, was reinforced and inscribed into everyday practice by etiquette, forms of greeting and address, a detailed dress code, as well as by specific regulations, e.g. that only Spaniards were permitted to use the pavement. Over the centuries, this perpetually renewed pattern of subordination has evolved into a habitus of hostile subservience that determines the behaviour of Indian peasants *vis-à-vis* outsiders to this day.[6]

Thus, the ethno-racial strata were important for defining an individual's social standing, but they did not form communities in the sociological sense of the term: groups with dense networks of relations among their members and a shared sense of solidarity. The strata were fragmented into myriads of small-scale communities, organised into religious brotherhoods, guilds of merchants and artisans, Indian peasant communities, urban neighbourhood parishes etc. These communities all had their symbols of belonging, their privileges of status and autonomy guaranteed by the royal courts, their internal hierarchies and *rites de passage*.[7] Rather than the official ethno-racial categories, it was this densely woven network of overlapping communities that shaped everyday life in the empire and that determined the different perspectives on the social world of its inhabitants.

Creole patriotism and historical indigenismo

During the last fifty years of the empire, important changes in this political and social fabric occurred. One of these was the development of a Creole patriotism. *Criollos* and light-skinned *mestizos* had been put on a relatively

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[6] For inter-ethnic relations under colonial rule, see, for example, Aguirre (1967; 1982) and McLeod and Wasserstrom (1983).

[7] See McAlister (1962) and the case studies of Liehr (1971) and Seed (1982).

equal footing under the late colonial legal order and had drawn closer to each other in terms of social composition. The *criollos* had, from the early seventeenth century onwards, dominated the lower rungs of the imperial bureaucracy and become a landed elite with important commercial and mining interests (Florescano 1997: 214f.).

During the Bourbon reign, the educated members of this elite founded learned societies, reading circles, clubs of enlightened debate and newspapers and gazettes, mainly inspired by the peninsular, state-controlled version of the Enlightenment movement. The common aim of these circles of *ilustrados* was to overcome the baroque style of thinking, writing and painting and to replace it with the more disciplined modes of modern philosophy and with paintings and sculptures modelled in the clear-cut style of the classical age and the Renaissance. They experimented with new forms of agriculture based on the most advanced techniques of cultivation and advocated a new system of economics that would free merchants from the royal monopolies. In a parallel movement, they started to discover the richness and diversity of New Spain and to describe its topography, fauna and flora and the populations of the various regions. The summa of this movement was the work of Alexander von Humboldt who, in his *Ensayo político sobre el reino de la Nueva España,* summarised the knowledge that the *criollo* literati had produced in the previous decades (Florescano 1997: 297–317).

These networks of *ilustrados* remained, however, confined to the *criollo* elite. While they developed patriotic programmes for the betterment of human society through knowledge and education, the application of the sciences and a rational system of government, among the vast Indian majority, 'miracles followed upon each other, new Messiahs appeared, and various signs promised to reinforce the cohesion of the communities', as Florescano has remarked (ibid.: 302; cf. 317).

Conforming to the model outlined in chapter 3, the rise of these literate and learned circles was closely associated with the transformation of the imperial state. The Bourbon kings aimed at remodelling the empire after the absolutist states and especially France, in order to compete more successfully, both on the battlefield and in economic terms, with the rising powers of Northern Europe. The reforms had several pillars, including the abolition of the state monopolies on certain trades and the introduction of mercantilist economic policies; the expulsion of the Jesuits from the empire and the implementation of Jansenist church policies; and, most importantly, administrative centralisation and the replacement of the system of indirect rule in order to enlarge the tax basis of the crown.

The *alcaldes mayores* were replaced by *subintendentes* who were now entitled to oversee directly the payment of taxes – hitherto a privilege of

the *gobernadores* – and to intervene directly in legal cases opposing Indian parties. In order to overcome the financial crisis of the house of Bourbons, which in turn was related to the high costs of warfare, the crown even dissolved corporate institutions such as the *cajas de comunidad*, which hitherto had served to finance communal infrastructures. This more centralised form of administration relied on the new forms of knowledge that the *ilustrado* circles were producing, on better maps and descriptions of the country and on refined techniques of record-keeping and fiscal control, all associated with the rationalist moods of the literate elite.

However, the *criollos* complained bitterly and with rising indignation that they were excluded from the higher echelons of this newly empowered bureaucracy[8] and demanded that filling these posts become the exclusive right of persons born in the New World (Brading 1985: 15). The administrative unification, the increased tax burden and their exclusion from the powerful administration fostered their sense of Mexico being more than a mere assembly of provinces, each with its own peculiar balance of power between Creole communities and the royal functionaries. Mexico was now seen as an integrated fatherland, and the Creoles felt more and more responsible for its future destiny. This new spirit of public concern and political responsibility markedly contrasted with the earlier politics of gaining further privileges for one's brotherhood or neighbourhood parish.

Creole patriotism had three pillars: a new concept of the past, elaborated during the eighteenth century by authors such as Clavijero and, later, Teresa de Mier and Bustamante, who saw the conquest as an illegitimate attack on the sovereignty of the Aztec nation, as whose successors the *criollos* came to understand themselves; secondly, a nationalised, Jansenist Catholicism centring around the veneration of the *virgen de Guadalupe*, a brown-skinned Mary that allegedly had appeared to an Indio in the sixteenth century; and finally, the liberal vision of a democratic state where the hierarchical organisation of the society into estates and corporations would be abolished in favour of the equality and freedom of all citizens (Florescano 1997: 334–46).

The importance of these three strands of thoughts varied over time, as we shall see in what follows. Liberalism developed only when the independence movement was already gaining strength and was principally inspired by the republicanism *afrancescado* of the Cortes of Cádiz

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[8] It is not entirely clear whether the new posts of the *subintendentes* were open to persons born in New Spain, as maintained by Pastor (1987: 195–201, 259–62); see also Farriss (1984, ch. 12). Brading (1985: 15 and *passim*) seems to hold that the *criollos* were more and more excluded from the colonial administration.

(from 1810 onwards). Historical *indigenismo* and *Guadalupismo,* on the other hand, were the most important strands of thought in the earlier popular uprising of Padre Hidalgo against the Spanish empire and ceased to be of political importance after the second declaration of independence of 1821.

Historical *indigenismo* should not be confused with a genuine romantic nationalism that would emphasise the continuity of a people's world historical mission. It was always clear that the Aztec past, now reinvented as Mexico's classic age comparable to Greek and Roman antiquity, had ceased to be relevant after the conquest. Its horrors and injustices, usually described with reference to the classic works of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, were to be redressed by handing over the country to the heirs of Bartolomé, the *criollos*, and not to the descendants of the Aztec princes.

Leading intellectual figures such as Teresa de Mier were outspoken aristocrats and resented the idea of popular representation essentially because it would have implied that the 'Indian race' would outnumber the Creole population and eventually be led to demand that the injustices of the conquest be redressed, their ancestral lands restituted and that they be made rulers of the country (Brading 1985, ch. 5). The indigenist patriots used the argument of Aztec sovereignty and nationhood, violated by the conquest, to advance the idea of independence. But not even in their dreams would it have occurred to them that the future Mexican nation should be built on the foundation of the Indian majority transformed into a sovereign, a nation and the citizenry (cf. also Lira 1986). They were still too clearly stamped by the colonial view of society and they had too much to lose from such a definition of peoplehood. In words recalling the colonial despisal of the subjugated population, Teresa de Mier later in his life wrote, in the preamble of a proposal for a new constitution, that Mexico was not 'a village of Aztecs', and he deplored the fact that 'more than half of the population is composed of Indians, stupid and ignorant' (cited in Brading 1985: 62, 90).

Historical *indigenismo* and *Guadalupismo* were the main ideological driving forces of the popular uprising of Indian peasants and sections of the Lumpenproletariat under the leadership of the lower clergy. The higher tax burdens, the expulsion of the Jesuits, the new influx of Spanish entrepreneurs and settlers and the dissolution of the *cajas*, among other factors, had provided the fuel for this popular rebellion against the colonial metropolis. The insurgents rallied around the *virgen* as the symbol of an independent Mexican Catholicism, while messianic expectations of the end of the world and a restitution of just order were circulating among them. The educated leaders of the movement, on the other hand, brought forward natural-law arguments in the scholastic tradition, referring to an

original contract between the conquerors and the crown, in order to justify the first declaration of independence of 1813 (ibid.: 43f.). However, the insurgent armies led by Hidalgo, Morelos, Guerrero and others were soon defeated by the *criollo*-dominated royal troops.

Both *indigenismo* and *Guadalupismo* became minority trends in the subsequent decade. When, in Spain, the Cortes of Cádiz replaced the absolute monarchy and the Napoleonic troops had finally been defeated, liberalism and French republicanism also became the major currents of thought among the Mexican delegates to the Cortes, and natural-law arguments were quickly replaced by the appeal to the right of national sovereignty. The second declaration of independence, of 1821, which was to initiate the short-lived Mexican kingdom of Iturbide, was still based on *indigenismo* arguments and protected the church from expropriation and political assaults (ibid.: 56f.). With the fall of Iturbide, however, liberalism and republicanism became the dominant ideological and political trends for almost the next hundred years. A weak current of historical *indigenismo* was revived only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when a state-sponsored nationalism began to flourish and an ethnicised notion of the Mexican nation appeared.

The nationalisation of the state, 1821 to 1910

The process leading to the foundation of the Mexican state thus largely conforms to the model that I have described in chapter 3: competition and war between sovereign states compelled their elites to centralise the administration and to demand higher taxes. The networks of literate circles emerged in parallel and in close connection with the reform of the state and the new economic opportunities that opened as soon as some of the most severe restrictions on trade and commerce were lifted. The *ilustrados* developed a new idea of Mexico as an independent fatherland. Only national independence would allow it to control the strengthened and unified state administration and submit it to the popular will, rather than continue to finance wars on the old continent. We will find similar historical constellations and transformations in the case of the break-up of the Ottoman empire, described in the next chapter. In what follows, I will show how the introduction of modern principles of government entailed a reordering of the principles of inclusion and exclusion – more precisely, how these principles became tied to ethno-national dividing lines, some of them inherited from the colonial past.

Social closure along ethnic or national lines developed at different rates and in different forms in the spheres of law, politics, the military and the systems of social solidarity. In a first step, to be discussed in this section, the notion of citizenry was nationalised and all inhabitants not considered

part of the citizenry expelled from the country. This first step was intimately connected to legal and military closure along national lines, paralleling the introduction of equality of rights and duties towards the state. Contrasting with these inclusive dimensions, a political integration of the masses and an encompassing national ideology were not yet achieved – this second step had to await the Mexican revolution. A compromise of interests between the new state elite and larger sections of the Indian population did not develop during the nineteenth century and political closure proceeded along ethnic, rather than national, lines. Thus, the concept of nationhood was narrowed down to one of the ethno-racial estates of colonial society, the *criollos*. The modern principles of political inclusion were applied to this small segment of the population only, while the large Indian majority were relegated to their former status of subjects, but at the same time deprived of the protected social and economic space that the empire had reserved for them.

Liberalism, republicanism and anti-Indianism, 1821 to 1876

While independence certainly brought about the collapse of the colonial system, the fabric of transnational relations inherited from the empire was not immediately cut apart. At the beginning, all Spaniards loyal to the declaration of independence remained in their posts. The royal army that had fought the insurgents of Hidalgo and Morelos became the institutional backbone of the new regime and its generals served as presidents up to the middle of the century. However, principles of exclusion and inclusion were more and more nationalised. The violent pogroms and massacres against Spanish-looking persons during the first independence war were still fought by the royal army under Creole command.

After independence, the new elite started to discriminate against their former allies. The Spanish elite was no longer considered the capstone of the colonial edifice, but, rather, the main obstacle on the way to full national self-determination. At the end of the twenties, all persons of Spanish origin not born in New Spain were expelled from the country (Brading 1985: 93). Most former employees of the royal administration left. After the exodus of the hated *gachupines*, the number of priests had decreased by two-thirds in comparison with colonial times (de la Peña 1980: 84). The concept of citizenship was now fused with the notion of the national community, and all those not belonging were deprived of the privileges of equality before the law and protection from arbitrary violence – an equality, however, that also entailed the removal of the separate legal status and protection for the Indian population, with disastrous consequences for their social and economic standing, as we shall see later on.

While legal closure proceeded along national lines, in the realms of politics the concept 'sovereign' was comparatively more narrow and did not include the Indian population. Still at the Cortes of Cádiz, the Mexican delegates firmly opposed the idea, put forward by peninsular liberals, to restrict voting rights in the cross-Atlantic republic they had in mind to peoples of Spanish stock, and to exclude Indians and *castas*. This would have put the Americans in a perpetual minority in the assemblies of the republic, and was one of the major reasons for the delegates of Mexico embarking upon the course of independence. Thus, at that time, the Mexican people was still conceived as consisting of all inhabitants of the provinces of New Spain – *criollos*, Indians and *castas*. However, the more encompassing national ideology of the early independence movement was gradually overlaid and supplanted by an identification of the sovereign nation with the *criollos*. It was completed with the rise to power of the liberal elite, both intellectual, political and military, after the first years of independence. They even rejected historical *indigenismo* and identified the corporations of the Indian communities and the church as the two main obstacles to realising the republican project (Brading 1985: 73f.).

Not only liberal intellectuals and politicians such as the well-known José María Luis Mora, but also conservatives such as Francisco Pimentel were perfectly clear that the Indians were not suited to be part of the democratic sovereign of the new state. Only a complete process of assimilation, including the loss of language and religious culture, would ever, so Pimentel argued, make a unified and civilised Mexican nation possible (Powell 1968: 21; Florescano 1997: 368f.). Both Mora and Pimentel saw the *criollos* as the embodiment of the Mexican sovereign, and indeed, it was the *criollo* elite that monopolised the incipient state apparatus, with the exception perhaps of the governments controlled by the freemasons of the York rite in the late twenties (Brading 1985: 92f.).

Why should we observe such a narrowing down of the notion of peoplehood? Why did a trans-ethnic nationalism *à la Suisse* not develop, despite the markedly non-ethnic, liberal nationalism of the new elite? Why did their complete ignorance of the writings of Herder and Fichte not help them to build a non-ethnic nation-state? On the one hand, this was a matter of conscious choice, because it was perfectly clear to them that an identification of the sovereign with the Indian majority would have jeopardised their political and economic standing inherited from their privileged position in the colonial edifice. Handing over power to the Indians could only mean, in their eyes, being denied their right of existence and becoming the object of revenge of the formerly colonised (ibid.).

The period between independence and the 1870s was indeed a time of numerous rebellions of peasant Indian villages or coalitions of such villages against the encroachments of *mestizos* and Creoles and against

attempts at reducing the autonomy of the former *repúblicas* in the name of the equality of all citizens. Some of these rebellions evolved into full-scale wars and were sustained over decades, especially in the peripheral regions of the country, in Yucatán and among the Yaquis and Mayos of the sparsely populated north where the indigenous population had maintained a degree of supra-local political organisation and co-ordination not known in other parts of the country. It is telling that these uprisings were not perceived, by the political elite and in the published opinion of newspapers and journals, as protests against the loss of certain rights and protections, but as 'una guerra de castas'. In their eyes, the Indians were aiming at annihilating the white race, driven by a barbarian thirst for blood and revenge (Florescano 1997: 350–71; 406–16).

A racist discourse of exclusion flourished especially after the formidable defeat of Mexican troops in the war against the United States and the loss of large areas of territory in the north. The lack of national unity and the presence of alien 'nations and races' amidst the civilised population of Spanish stock was perceived as one of the major reasons for the humiliating experience. With the insurrections and rebellions in the north and in Yucatán gathering momentum, the general fear of a unified Indian uprising and a caste war of national dimensions was becoming widespread. The measures taken to subdue the rebels were accordingly harsh. In the war zones, the Indian population was now even deprived of the status of full citizens, as is shown by the official practice of selling captured Maya Indians in Yucatán as slaves to Cuban sugar planters (ibid.: 396f.).

The liberal project of nation-building thus did not aim at integrating the large Indian majority of the country in the national sovereign, but at overcoming the 'Indian problem' by eradicating these remnants of the odious colonial past. Characteristic of this mainstream of thought was the liberal thinker and politician José María Luis Mora, who was clear and explicit that the Mexican nation was synonymous with the white race. He proposed to drive the rebellious Indians in Yucatán over the border and to populate the country with immigrants of white, preferably Spanish, stock, thus repeating what he and others perceived as the success story of nation-building in the United States (cf. Hale 1972, ch. 7).

However, the exclusion of the Indian population from the realms of politics was not only the result of a simple equation of power according to which Creoles or Indians would become the new rulers and claim to be the people of the democratic state to the exclusion of all others. Conforming with the hypothesis developed in the last two chapters, it was also the consequence of a particular sequence of developments. Independence was won at a point in political evolution when civil society

organisations had only just started to appear and still had not permeated and penetrated larger sections of the society. As already mentioned, the literate circles and political clubs, within which the patriotic and later liberal ideas were circulated, remained restricted to the *criollo* urban elite. No trans-ethnic association spanning the divide between *criollo*, *mestizo* and Indian, comparable to the trans-ethnic associations of Switzerland to be discussed in the final chapter of this book, could develop.

One of the few truly trans-ethnic organisations remaining after the fall of the empire was the church. And indeed, the first independence movement relied on the organisational infrastructure and the leadership of the church. It was a popular movement, contrasting with the elite circles that gathered for the second declaration of independence in 1821. It is idle to speculate what would have happened if this trans-ethnic movement had won the first wars of independence. Perhaps an encompassing, religiously defined, populist nationalism *à la Grecque* would have developed and led to the political integration of the large majority of the population, the Indians, as well as the *mestizos* and blacks.

In reality, however, the ethno-racial groups of the colonial hierarchy were politicised and relations between them changed from an inclusive system of paternalism and deference to competition and exclusion. The national project was embodied by *gente de razón* (Creoles and socially 'white' *mestizos*), called upon to advance civilisation against the backward Indian barbarians. The segregationist regulations, which had sheltered the different pieces in the mosaic of imperial society, were now abolished in the name of the equality of all citizens and of national progress (cf. Hale 1972). Long before the corresponding laws were passed at the national level, most provinces had followed the liberal credo and – at least on paper – abolished communal land ownership, which was seen as incompatible with the principles of individual freedom (Florescano 1997: 365f.). They hoped that in this way 'the Indian problem' would be resolved, the members of Indian communities being converted into individual citizens. They would be freed from the constraints and social control of the *repúblicas*, their languages and 'backward customs' would be forgotten, their 'low morale' raised to the high standards of a republican spirit. The Indian problem, in other words, was a remnant of the corporatist and paternalist politics of the empire and would disappear with the emergence of a modern citizenry freed from the bonds of collectivism and superstition.

However, the generals of the former royal army that ruled the country were not able to realise this project effectively. They lacked the political power to do so, since the collapse of the colonial administration brought about a pervasive political fractioning of the country. The scene

was dominated by *caudillos*, most of them military leaders who had risen to power and prominence during the independence wars. At times they acted as commanders of state troops, at other times they filled political functions or led rebellions against the central government. Through changing alliances with major conservative Creole landowners or *mestizo* liberals, they formed a succession of regional power cliques, fought against each other and resisted any attempt to be brought into the fold of the central government (cf. Díaz Díaz 1972; Florescano 1997: 338–46). In the regions inhabited predominantly by Indians, their ties with the rural population were often crucial for military success and they offered the Indian peasants protection against the expanding state administration or attempts made by *hacendados* to expand their landholdings to the detriment of Indian communities (e.g. Hart 1988); in exchange, these secured the *caudillo* a regional power-base, as well as military support in their struggles against other *caudillos*.[9] Thus, the only opportunity for participation by the Indian population was as followers of powerful Creole *caudillos*. All other channels were closed to them and the centres of power remained in the hands of the Creole elite.

However, there was a second moment of closure along national lines when the distinction between *criollo* and Indian was largely suppressed and partly overcome. Not only were members of both groups regarded as equal before the law and citizens of the new state (excluding Spaniards and other aliens), they were also called upon to defend the fatherland from foreign intervention. The rights of citizens were complemented with the duty to defend these collective goods in times of danger. Military closure along national lines was greatly advanced by the wars against foreign invasions, both by the United States and, later, by the French troops imposing Maximilian of Habsburg as king of Mexico.

The regular troops, under *caudillo* command, were spectacularly defeated by the American army, which even captured the capital city. This led to the formation of the National Guard in 1847, the first army based on universal conscription of all male citizens, modelled after the French revolutionary troops as an 'armed citizenry' (Florescano 1997: 400f.). Every male Mexican citizen, Indian or *criollo*, between 18 and 55 was called to serve in the *guardia nacional* and lost his citizenship rights if he refused to do so. The new army was to be placed under the strict control of democratically elected authorities, thus trying to overcome *caudillismo* military practice, where the troops owed loyalty to a particular leader and

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[9] For almost half a century, Indian communities experienced a degree of autonomy they were never again to enjoy in history (de la Peña: 83ff.; Pastor 1987, part 3, especially 420ff.; Dehouve 1990: 227ff.). Moreover, in many areas, clerical authority had been dismantled after the expulsion of Spaniards.

where the advancement of one's own political and economic position was considered more important than the defence of an abstract national good (cf. Thomson 1990). Even the officers of the *guardia* were to be elected democratically every two years. However, amidst factional fights and civil wars, it was impossible to realise the ideal of universal conscription. The participation especially of Indian soldiers was often achieved in exchange for tax exemption or sometimes even the promise of land.

The *guardia* and its popular philharmonic bands were not the only institutions through which a new liberal patriotism was infused to the population. In the sixties, the victorious liberal regime tried to create a *junta patriótica* in every major village which was supposed to organise the festivities on the newly introduced national holidays celebrating independence as well as two victories over the French troops. This new patriotic spirit took on a distinctively republican character after the liberal victories. The constitution and the reform laws would provide the basis for national integration, so the elite believed. Contrary to the libertarian credo of the first generation, however, they now believed that it was also necessary to educate the people in this republican spirit and to make them accept the constitution as the mantra of national identity. This civic education was advanced by nationalist history books, by the edifying editorials of newspapers, by republican novels and poems, by including a 'history of our national heroes' in the curricula of teachers and by teaching the 'fundamental principles of the republican system' in all secondary schools (Florescano 1997: 434f.).

This nationalism of the reform era was no longer explicitly anti-Indian, as had been the case with the liberals of the preceding generation. In their republican enthusiasm, men such as Ignacio Ramírez and Ignacio Manuel Altamirano believed that a national community, including the Indians, would constitute itself through the political will of all citizens and through the defence of the fatherland against the forces of imperialism. According to their view of history, the nation had already been born with the independence movement in an ex-nihilo act of auto-constitution. It did not need, as was the case by the end of the century, a historically thick past and much cultural substance. The indigenism of the Creole patriots of the preceding generation was forgotten (Brading 1988: 126–38).

The wars against foreign interventions had also been wars against the conservative forces advocating a colonial paternalism towards the Indian population and reserving a strong role for the Catholic church in educating the population. With the defeat of the conservatives, the reform laws of the fifties were passed, which radicalised the liberal programme and stipulated on the national level what had been foreseen by many provincial constitutions since independence: the abrogation of all protective

measures separating Indians from non-Indians, especially the communal property rights on land that had formed the juridical backbone of the Indian communities. Since during the wars it had become clear that the true fatherland of the church was Rome, as one liberal leader had expressed it, the dismantling of the immense land holdings and other corporate possessions of the church became another major aim of the reform laws, following the credo that only individual freedom from all collective obligations would lead Mexico on the path to progress.

Progress and early ethnic nationalism, 1876 to 1910

During the last quarter of the century this programme was put into practice on a massive scale. The almost utopian, ethnicity-blind republicanism of the reform era lasted only briefly and was now overlaid by a social Darwinist ideology in which the Indian population again played the role of a backward race to be vanquished by a combination of white immigration, cross-breeding and assimilation through education. The subordination and dispossession of the Indian population by the modernising state was now taking shape and led to its dramatic marginalisation, both political and economic.[10]

Starting in 1876, the ex-general Porfirio Díaz quickly put an end to the decentralisation and regional autonomy that had characterised Mexico since independence. The *caudillos* were incorporated into a new political and administrative hierarchy or eliminated in battle, the bandit groups were taken over into the mounted constabulary or wiped out by the latter (cf. Vanderwood 1992), the rival upper-class fractions in the capital and the conservative clerical circles were tied into a system of prebends and overlapping alliances. The Indian communities now formed the last link in a chain of authority, reaching from the president via the governors appointed by him in the federal states and the *jefes políticos* of the newly created districts down to individual communities.

In sharp contrast to the *alcaldes mayores* of colonial times, the *jefes políticos* were authorised to supervise the dismantling of church and Indian landholdings, and to appoint municipal governments more or less openly, for which they chose villagers who were wealthy and spoke Spanish. In ethnically mixed municipalities, *mestizos* and Creoles now had unlimited access to power, for as members of the nation they were legitimated to fill all important political posts and put an end to colonial segregation and

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[10] Katz (1986); see also the local studies by Friedrich (1970, ch. 3); Lomnitz Adler (1982); Dehouve (1990: 236ff.); Schryer (1990, ch. 5).

self-rule. Through the operation of this political hierarchy, the Indian peasants were compelled to work on the plantations. In many regions of Mexico, they were enticed into debt servitude by employment agents who enjoyed the protection of the *jefe político*.

Capitalist enterprises enormously expanded their production for the world market and extended further and further into the Indian lands (cf. Knight 1987): *haciendas* with a resident population of farm labourers (the *peones*), large family farms operating with hired seasonal labour, and plantations run by overseers and masses of migrant labourers from peasant villages. The autonomy of the *comunidad indígena* was now jeopardised by the influx of Creole and *mestizo* merchants and agricultural entrepreneurs, enjoying the protection of the *jefes políticos*, by the dissolution of collective land titles under the *leyes de reforma* and by the colonisation laws enacted under Porfirio Díaz, that eventually turned the land of the former *repúblicas* into an object of speculation.[11] The colonisation laws were meant to help to populate 'uncultivated lands' with immigrant settlers, preferably from Spain and Europe, and thus to whiten Mexico and solve the Indian problem through racial mixture and upgrading (Powell 1968: 21f.).[12]

By the end of Porfirio's reign, almost 90 per cent of the land area held communally at independence (which was approximately 40 per cent of the total) had been transferred into private property (Katz 1986: 48). The land of an estimated 85 per cent of Indian communities was privatised (Hansen 1981), and much of it was lost to the newly established local elite of capitalist farmers, to *haciendas* and plantations. A large number of villagers became labourers on the coffee, sugar, banana, cotton and sisal plantations, often under conditions of debt servitude. Within a few decades, many lost their Indian identity and culture, and dissolved into the *mestizo* population. Because of limited demand on the world market the expansion of these farms, *haciendas* and plantations eventually came to a halt, so that in many regions of Mexico a sort of hostile symbiosis, as Eric Wolf (1957) once wrote, between these capitalist enterprises and the labour-rich Indian communities emerged.

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[11] In 1894, Porfirio Díaz abrogated the restrictions governing land acquisition (2,500 ha maximum, and the condition that the land be used for agricultural purposes), and thus encouraged land speculation. *Compañías deslindadoras*, mostly foreign stock-holding companies, could declare 'uncultivated' land as *terrenos baldíos* and buy it from the state – although such land was often held by Indian *comunidades*.

[12] Attracting immigrants was also a major motivation for the Porfirian government participating at the world fairs of the late nineteenth century in Europe, where potential immigrants could be attracted and convinced of the advantages of Mexico as a country of settlement (Tenorio Trillo 1996, ch. 3).

Such economic upheaval had far-reaching consequences for the political life of Indian communities. With the end of communal autonomy, the *principales* lost their political prerogatives and were no longer capable of monopolising political positions in the Indian communities. Soon their standing was disputed by a new stratum of peasant entrepreneurs who had been able to secure landholdings in the course of the privatisation campaigns or had made their fortune in flourishing trade (cf. Wimmer 1995a, ch. 6).

In contrast with the ideology of the first generation of liberals, still sticking, as we have seen, to colonial ethno-racial categories, this political and economic dispossession was now legitimated in modern racist terms. The meaning of the term 'race' and the political projects attached to it varied widely (cf. Tenorio Trillo 1996: 88–95). In general, the 'Indian race' was held to be intellectually unfit to recognise the signs of the time and to promote progress for the good of the fatherland. According to the prevalent social-Darwinist ductus, this mission was entrusted to the 'fitter' Creole people who were therefore warranted in crowding out or assimilating and incorporating the less fit race of *indios*. The expropriation of the Indian communities and the political subjugation of their inhabitants were justified by asserting that this was the only way to clear the path towards liberating the fatherland from the grip of its colonial past, developing its economic potential as well as setting society in motion and releasing it from the colonial freeze (Powell 1968; Zea 1968: 294ff.).

These ideas were developed, among others, by the technocratic presidential counsellors (the so-called *científicos*), whose positivist faith in progress distinguished them from earlier generations. Their nationalism was fundamentally a negative one: in their eyes, 'the Mexican' was irrational, technically and scientifically backward, had a penchant for romantic utopianism and lacked self-control. Through education, the mentality of the people was to be trained in logic, and a nation was to be shaped that valued scientific rationality and economic efficiency, thus becoming of equal rank with its big northern neighbour. This civilising project was specifically directed at the Indian population and defended against the position that the Indian race was too degenerate to ever escape the stage of barbarism (Powell 1968: 23, 25). Objecting to the degenerationist position, prominent Porfirian writers and politicians maintained that 'the Indian race' was indeed suited for civilisation, provided that Indians were properly educated, nourished and trained in hygiene and modern agriculture. Concrete educational plans were, of course, more modest. For all that, Díaz enacted a law in 1888 that provided for compulsory primary education at the national level. The enforcement of this

law was left to the individual federal states, which discharged their task unevenly.[13]

It should be emphasised that even those most sympathetic to the indigenous populations had no doubts that Mexico's 'Indian race' had nothing to offer the country's future. It was a problem to be overcome, a race whose destiny was extinction. Parallel to this racist discourse, interest in the Aztec past was renewed and first attempts were made at scientifically studying its remnants, the contemporary Indian population of Mexico. This was part of a more general trend to provide the Mexican nation with a history of more depth and content than the short-lived republicanism of the reform era was able to do. The scientific search for roots and continuity was characteristic of the more ethnicised notion of the Mexican nation that was now developed and propagated by the Porfirian state.

Mexico's intellectuals thus joined a worldwide trend to find a deep, culturally specific character for each nation, often thought to be embodied in a specific race that would give the nation a biological foundation – an expression of the highly competitive relations between different projects of nation-state building in the pre-war era. Mexican developments paralleled the Young Turks' attempt to define the substance of the Ottoman empire as being its Turkishness and the Swiss liberal elite's search for a 'homo alpinus' that would provide the multi-ethnic republic with a cultural and biological substance comparable to ones of the surrounding nation-states. In all three cases, the development of an ethnicised nationalism went hand in hand with a drive to political and administrative centralisation. State-building now reached a stage where the central elites were in effective control over the national territory and were in need of a justification for the disempowerment of local and regional elites. The new nationalism was therefore forcefully promoted and promulgated by state institutions.

In Mexico, the historical indigenism of the early Creole patriots was now rediscovered, after half a century of almost complete neglect and rejection (the following draws on Florescano 1997: 437f., 445–53). This rediscovery left its stamps on different fields, on urban architecture among others. A good example is the *paseo de la reforma*, the grand boulevard constructed following the urbanist ideals of Baron Haussmann in Paris. During the reform era and the *Porfiriato*, the boulevard was decorated with

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[13] In each major Indian village in Guerrero, for example, at the end of the nineteenth century, the children were taught writing and counting in Spanish (Dehouve 1990: 237f.). Compare Friedlander (1975: 144ff.) for a village in central Mexico. Regarding the establishment of the education system in the Mixteca Alta in the 1850s, see Pastor (1987: 439); for the Huasteca, see Schryer (1990: 95ff.).

statues of national heroes. Symbolising the new valuation of the Aztec past and the supposed continuity between the sovereign Aztec nation and the Mexicans of the present, the statue of Colón at one end of the *paseo* faces the monument of Cuauhtemoc. The former general Vicente Riva Palacio, who authorised the final design of the boulevard, was also the author of a standard work on national history, the monumental *Mexico a través de los siglos* (1884–9). It was the first major historical work that integrated the pre-Hispanic and the colonial epochs in a *longue durée* perspective on national history, thus giving to the Mexicans a past equally glorious and profound as that of the great European nations (Florescano, forthcoming). The pre-Columbian cultures were now celebrated as a first step in the evolutionary success story leading to the modern Mexican nation and its achievements in the 'social, political, religious, military, artistic, scientific and literary' fields, as the subtitle of the five-volume work announced.

The new view on the Aztec past also found expression in a revalorisation of archaeological sites and objects. In 1885 a first institute for safeguarding the grand pre-Hispanic monuments was founded, the Inspección General de Monumentos Arqueológicos de la República. In a parallel development, Aztec mythology was rediscovered and interpreted in learned books, old codices were rediscovered and deciphered, journals dedicated to the study of the pre-Hispanic past were founded, and the first ethnographic and linguistic surveys of living remnants of that age were produced, for example the *Geografía de las lenguas y carta etnográfica de México* of Manuel Orozco y Berra published in 1864 (Florescano 1997: 448). The institutional centre of this new preoccupation with the Indian past and its ethnographic remnants was the Museo Mexicano under the leadership of the historian Francisco del Paso y Troncoso. It was endowed with a research library and later furnished with a teaching branch.

In the arts, the so-called Mexican School painted the grand battles of the nation, its founding heroes and the majestic landscapes of the fatherland – while contemporary artists such as Ferdinand Hodler depicted the grand Alpine scenery several thousand miles to the east in Switzerland. New cartographic and lithographic works displayed the vast extensions of the national territory, its rich fauna and flora, its dramatic landscapes and the regional variety in customs and habits in magnificent works such as the *Atlas pintoresco e histórico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* of Antonio García Cubas (1885) (ibid.: 452f.).

In most of these works of history, art and literature, the Mexican nation was portrayed as being of Creole origin. The reverence to the Indian past and the heroism of the Aztec nation did not lead Porfirian nationalists to include the contemporary Indian population in the national 'we'. They

remained the tolerated, exotic remnants of a glorious national past, not part of the sovereign body of citizens, and a race destined to disappear. Their otherness and insuperable backwardness was documented in the exhibitions, ethnographic texts and atlases of the time. The Indians had helped the nation to come into being, but were later superfluous in reaching the higher echelons of human evolution – they deserved the respect of patriotic Mexicans for their forefathers' contribution to national history, but were in no way seen as standing on an equal footing with Creoles when it came to define the people of the unified and pacified country. Thus, the archaeological and historiographic project of these days was to provide a 'real image of a dead people', as Luis Villoro Orozco y Berra had put it in his *Historia antigua y de la conquista de México* (1880).

Some of the most notable writers and political thinkers, however, such as Vicente Riva Palacio and Justo Sierra, went one step further in the revalorisation of the indigenous side of Mexico. They postulated that only the fusion of the different historical currents in a process of racial and cultural mixture would, eventually, create a unified nation and overcome the segregation into different ethno-racial groups that Mexico was still suffering from (cf. Powell 1968: 26f.). Contrary to the more common solution to the 'Indian problem', which consisted of racial 'upgrading' and cultural assimilation, their vision entailed the creation of a *new*, hybridised national culture. This early ideology of *mestizaje*, however, did not represent the dominant trend among the Porfirian intellectuals and state elite. It was a strand of thinking, however, that prepared the ground for a truly integrative national project, such as was developed after the Mexican revolution. Andrés Molina Enríquez's *Los grandes problemas nacionales*, published one year before the revolution, stands as the first elaborated ideology of mixture; it made a strong argument in favour of the virtues of the *mestizo*, the future people of the Mexican state.

To sum up: in the course of the first century of independence, political modernisation led to the implementation of some aspects of the nation-state model, notably to closure along national lines in the legal and military realms. The social hierarchy based on juridically fixed strata was abolished and the principle of equality of all citizens gradually enforced. This legal homogenisation and domestic integration went hand in hand with external closure along national lines: all non-Mexican political institutions, especially the church and the imperial administration and army, were pushed aside and Spanish-born residents denied citizenship and expelled from the country. The military was now based on universal conscription of all citizens and served the defence of 'national interests' against outside aggressors and not primarily the suppression of internal rebellions, as in colonial times.

In the political sphere, however, no closure along national lines developed. Ethnicity was quickly politicised and led to new forms of exclusion along ethno-national lines. The question 'who is the nation' did not find an integrative answer. Rather, the Creole elites that came to power after independence saw their own social group, defined as one of the hierarchical strata of colonial society, as the embodiment of the nation. They were not disposed to share power with the Indian majority of the population and they lacked a network of trans-ethnic civic organisations on the basis of which an encompassing cultural compromise could have been negotiated and which would have provided channels to power for the Indian population. Rather, the *criollo* elites appealed to notions of white superiority and Indian backwardness in order to legitimate their monopolisation of state power. The politicisation of ethnicity resulted in a series of conflicts and battles that were perceived, described and largely fought as 'caste wars' between Indians and non-Indians.

Legal and military closure along national lines went hand in hand with a pronounced republicanism, but no nationalism embracing the large majority of the citizenry evolved: nationalist closure had not yet reached the domains of political participation and social solidarity. The overwhelming majority of the population was excluded from effective participation in the national political sphere, despite the formal voting rights granted to all citizens. Political affairs were run as the family business of a small group of *criollo* clans, with the Indian population *de facto* being maintained in the status of a conquered people. These clans saw themselves less as representing the 'Mexican people' than as the civilising vanguard in a world of pervasive backwardness and racial degeneration.

The rise of *mestizo* nationalism

This changed with the revolution of 1910.[14] We shall see how nation-state formation was propelled by the revolutionary cataclysm. Both popular participation in politics and the idea of social solidarity organised by a national state were forcefully articulated. In a parallel movement, the definition of the people that embodied the national state was radically changed – no longer the Creole elite but the masses of the *mestizo* population (cf. Knight 1994: 400ff.). A fully fledged nationalist programme became the official state ideology, now that the state elite was called upon to represent the interests and views of the majority of the population and to implement a policy of redistribution 'for the benefit of the people'. This project succeeded to a certain extent with the land reform, during

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[14] My interpretation underlines the discontinuities between the Porfirian past and the post-revolutionary period. For the debate between continuity and rupture in Mexican historiography and a balanced view thereupon, see Knight (1994).

which most Indian communities were re-awarded collective land rights (so-called *ejidos*[15]) previously granted by the colony. This reorientation of state policy towards the 'interest of the people' made a new cultural compromise possible that came to encompass vast sectors of the Mexican population.[16]

Let us now look more closely at how the channels for political participation were widened and how a more inclusive nationalist ideology emerged. As long as the revolutionary central government was too weak to exercise direct control over the rural areas, the strongmen (or *caciques*) who had imposed themselves during the revolutionary struggles played the role of regional power props for the regime. Under presidents Calles and, especially, Cárdenas (1934–40) the channels of participation between the local population and the central state began to branch out, however. The new masters of the land came to dominate provincial politics through newly created institutions like the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI), the Secretaría de Reforma Agraria, local and regional offshoots of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) and the farmers' union CNC. In this manner, they knitted together a fine-meshed network of alliances that connected the most remote rural villages with the centres of power in the capital. With the multiplication of relations of participation and control tying every village to the state capital, the *caciques* lost their usefulness as political brokers.[17] Frequent criss-crossing in this network permitted the optimal use of the techniques of control, co-optation and selective repression, which have turned Mexico into the politically most stable of the larger countries of Latin America – until the reduction of state budgets in the aftermath of the debt crisis limited the space for clientelist integration and led to a crisis of the political regime.

[15] In its broadest sense, the term *ejido* refers to any type of land allocation to a collective owner in the course of the post-revolutionary land reform (this included the re-granting or confirmation of land rights of *comunidades indígenas* based on a colonial title). More strictly speaking, in a formal legal sense, the term refers to a land grant whose beneficiary is a group of landless peasants; the members of the *ejidos* then share out the usufructuary rights among the families according to certain rules. The plots can be neither sold (for the proprietary rights remain with the *ejido*) nor leased; but they can be passed on as an inheritance, albeit without partition of the estate. Production is usually organised at the family level, and co-operatives are the exception rather than the rule (see Gutelman 1974, ch. 5).

[16] Alan Knight (1994) analyses the fights between different cultural currents that went along with the gradual establishment of this compromise, giving special emphasis to the opposition between the clerical forces and the representatives of the new state ideology.

[17] This diversification of political communication between community and nation has been extensively documented in ethnographies: Ugalde (1973); Azoala and Krotz (1976, quoted in Fábregas Puig 1988); del Castillo (1979); de la Peña (1980: 307–15); Lomnitz Adler (1982). Schryer (1990) analyses a new episode in the diversification of political alliances as a result of radical peasant movements emerging in the 1970s. In some regions of Mexico, the *caciques* were able to maintain their position to this date (see examples from Oaxaca in Flanet 1977 and Iñigo 1978).

This system allowed a measure of political participation that would have been inconceivable in pre-revolutionary times – if in the context of clientelist networks subject to the control of a single party apparatus and its elite, appropriately named *la familia revolucionaria.* The different structures of trade unions, party organisations and para-state institutions offered a growing class of functionaries and bureaucrats hitherto unthinkable channels for upward mobility. The majority of this new state class was created from the vast urban population that maintained neither a Creole nor an Indian identity.

The birth of the mestizo nation

The expansion of the clientelist state apparatus was accompanied by the creation of a *mestizo* national identity. The different understandings of the process of *mestizaje* – racialised versions with the flair of the nineteenth century and culturalist variants inspired by Boasian anthropology – became slowly standardised into an official ideology. The various regional stories of the revolutionary events were wielded into a single master narrative of 'the Mexican revolution' (Alonso 1988), while the contributions of other, vanquished groups to this 'national' legacy were left aside. The Mexican revolution thus became the moment of birth of the *mestizo* 'nation', with the new elite taking on responsibility as guardian of this cultural legacy.

The new outlook on the social universe is best illustrated with an architectural example. In the middle of the central court of the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia rises a thin pillar topped by a wide concrete roof, symbol of the Mexican people (the roof) and its historical roots (the pillar): the pillar depicts on the one side Montezuma, the last Aztec ruler, and on the other, Cortés in full military array. The fusion of the Indian and the Spanish cultural heritages produces something new, the *pueblo mexicano*.

By comparison with colonial ideology and law, the idea of mestizohood is considerably expanded. Not only children of a Spanish father and an Indian mother (that is, those with 'mixed blood'), but all those who consider themselves as the products of the process of cultural fusion, such as symbolised by the architecture of the museum,[18] are considered to be *mestizos* and hence true Mexicans. Formerly a stigma of impurity, mestizohood is transformed into the hallmark of a chosen people combining the best of all civilisations. The main ideologue of *mestizaje* was

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[18] For the significance of museum representations for the construction of national identity, see the contributions in Stocking (1985).

the philosopher and politician José Vasconcelos. He praised mestizohood as the 'cosmic race', integrating the virtues of the black, yellow, red and white races who all had contributed to the rise of human civilisation in the past. The future, however, belonged to the *mestizos*. The cosmic race would be superior to the white race of the United States that exterminated its Indians and depreciates the blacks and thus is condemned to inbreeding and decay.

Revolution and *mestizaje* are thus the central elements of the new cultural compromise. They are not only ever-present in presidential addresses, newspaper articles and the like but also pivotal in everyday popular discourse (cf. Pérez 1994). *La revolución* is considered the climax of national history, when the oligarchic social structure inherited from the past was transcended and national autonomy with regard to the United States was regained. Both the government and the people of Mexico strive for the consolidation and ultimate realisation of the 'institutionalised' revolution. Mestizohood is identified with the people. Its national character (*mexicanidad*) is expressed in *mestizo* popular culture, in specific musical styles as well as in artistic traditions such as the famous murals of Rivera or Siqueiros.

Mexican nationalism[19] thus no longer relates to the Creoles as the embodiment of the people – as is still the case in Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru[20] – but embraces the vast majority of the population. Political closure along national lines and integration through state-organised social solidarity showed their effects. The clientelist structures of political participation and the policy of land reform created the conditions for a new, more inclusive cultural compromise. To speak on behalf of 'the people' or to engage in a public discourse on the political affairs of the country, one must now refer to this compromise and accept the apparently legitimate identification between the state and the *mestizo* nation.

Again, this new thrust of political and social inclusion led to new forms of exclusion along national lines. The process of identity formation and national closure now turned Indians into 'ethnic minorities' and again excluded them from the enlarged realms of the national 'we'. For they did

[19] On Mexican nationalism, see Lafaye (1977) and Brading (1985) for the colonial period and the bibliography in Bartra (1987) for the post-revolutionary period. Stutzman (1981) analyses the ideology of *mestizaje* in the Ecuadorian context; much of his argument also applies to Mexico.

[20] It should be noted that even the early patriotism of the Creole intellectuals was more encompassing than in comparable South American countries. And we have mentioned that *mestizos*, Creoles and Indians fought side by side during the first independence war. Conversely, the peasant rebellions in late colonial Peru and Bolivia emerged as Indianist, anti-Spanish and anti-western Messianic movements led by Indian nobles (Knight 1992; Mallon 1992).

not take part in the historical process of fusion and *mestizaje*, so that they again appear as remnants of the past – as is borne out by the ethnographic collections of the Museo Nacional de Antropologia y Historia (Shelton 1995: 93f.) or in official school-books up until the 1970s (Gutierrez Chong 1999, ch. 5). The distinction between majority and minority also becomes manifest in the national census which, for the first time since the colonial era, provides special categories for the ethnically 'other'. Their minority status thus becomes obvious and the state can closely monitor processes of assimilation and demographic development.

Realising the vision: the politics of cultural assimilation

In colonial times Indians were regarded as part of the state body, to the orderly functioning of which they contributed like all other parts. This hierarchical inclusion was to be replaced by horizontal exclusion with the onset of political modernisation. During the first phase of nation-state formation, Indians personified, as representatives of a lower race less apt to progress, all aspects of Mexican reality that needed to be overcome by a modern bourgeois society. In the post-revolutionary period of inclusive nationalism, they became 'minorities' that had so far refused to join the nation. However, it was no longer racial inferiority and lack of civilisational drive that was responsible for the 'Indian problem': rather, the Indian peasantry still suffered from quasi-colonial domination by the Creole towns that blocked the natural assimilation processes that would otherwise unfold. Revolution and *mestizaje* still had not reached these backwater areas of the national territory.

The Indian population was thus a constant reminder that the nationalist project still had not achieved a complete melding of citizenry, sovereign and nationhood. The solution to this new 'Indian problem' no longer seemed to reside in racial upgrading or advancement through education, but rather, in a benevolent politics of development and assimilation that would overcome the colonial blockades to national integration.[21] Only then would the *mestizo* symbolic claim to all encompassing nationhood come true and the fusion of state and people, as dreamed up by all nationalisms, would finally be accomplished.

Among the foremost measures employed to reach this goal was language and education policy. In 1930, the illiteracy rate of federal states with an Indian majority such as Oaxaca or Chiapas was still over 70 per cent (Hymens, quoted in Heath 1972: 9). At that time, more

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[21] For the history of Mexican *indigenismo*, see Villoro (1979); Knight (1990).

than half of Mexico's Indian population did not speak Spanish (Valdés González 1988: 40). The post-revolutionary governments started various Spanish programmes to overcome the legacy of colonialism. At the outset, these attempts were still inspired by nineteenth-century positivist thinking. The *escuelas rurales* for instance, founded in the 1920s under the leadership of Vasconcelos, were to be open to adults also; apart from Spanish, as well as reading and counting skills, they also taught programmes to improve production techniques, hygiene etc.[22]

With the presidency of Cárdenas, a new start was made towards prying the Indian hinterland from the 'colonial freeze' and integrating it into the Mexican nation, not only through isolated pedagogic measures but through integrated development programmes. Government institutions specifically designed to look after the Indian population were created, most importantly the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI). After positive results with bilingual curricula scheduling the teaching of literacy first in the indigenous mother-tongue and subsequently in Spanish, the INI[23] established in the 1950s a series of bilingual schools using specially trained teachers called *promotores culturales* and *maestros bilingues* who hailed from Indian villages. After initial successes, bilingual education was declared compulsory for all Indian regions in 1970. Within the Ministry of Education, a Dirección de Educación Indígena was formed. Although in 1978 still only a quarter of all Indian children were taught by bilingual teachers (Nahmad 1978: 235), the bilingual method seems to have been relatively successful. The percentage of those who did not know Spanish among the Indian population decreased continuously from 53 per cent in 1930 to 23 per cent in 1980 (Valdés González 1988: 40). Nevertheless, the schooling rate often remained relatively low in rural and predominantly Indian areas.[24]

Political subordination

This policy of cultural assimilation was only one of the consequences that the push for nation-state formation entailed for the Indian population.

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[22] Compare the local study by Friedlander (1975, ch. 6).

[23] For the strategy of INI see Aguirre Beltrán (1967; 1982), the former long-time director of the institute. For a critique of the anthropological and development theories underpinning INI policies, see Warman *et al.* (1970) and the contributions in García Mora and Medina (1986).

[24] In the Indian village of Chamula in southern Mexico, for example, only half of the children of school age went to school. In the rural areas of highland Chiapas, only 1.5 per cent of first-graders completed the six years of compulsory primary education (Modiano 1973: 91ff.).

Another consequence was their political subordination in the newly created clientelist state apparatus. Since the process of political integration went hand in hand with the spread of a *mestizo* nationalism, it also implied – albeit in a manner different from nineteenth-century liberalism – the political exclusion of the population classified as 'Indian'. All political functions situated above the municipal level, as well as all high posts in the bureaucratic, military and party structures were held by *mestizos*.[25] The few Indian political careerists who reached the anteroom of power, were compelled to negate their Indian ancestry and to adopt the *mestizo* habitus of language and etiquette.[26]

For the Indians, the 'mestizoisation' of the state apparatus and the political institutions meant that they could only participate indirectly, via political brokers, in national policy-making. Direct access to the network of administrative and political power was impossible for those whose cultural codes and language diverged from the dominant model embodied by the members of the state apparatus, who regarded themselves as the legitimate representatives and agents of 'the people'.

Political closure and exclusion along ethno-national lines also had repercussions in everyday life. This clearly appears from a study by Arizpe (1978) who compared a *mestizo* village and a Mazahua community. Under the land reform launched by President Cárdenas, both were given an equal amount of land, and both had the same number of inhabitants. Forty years later, the *mestizo* community was much better off, for it was easier for them, being members of the 'nation', to establish links with state representatives. Sharing the culture and language of the state education system, some sons and daughters of *mestizo* peasants successfully finished their schooling and managed to establish themselves in the outside world. They found work as civil servants, semi-qualified industrial workers or small merchants and could thus reduce pressure on communal landholdings. The Indians only participated in regional politics through the intercession of *caciques*. Their schools did not provide them with a comparable

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[25] For Totonicapán in western Guatemala, compare Ganther (1993, sect. 4.1.2). As late as the late 1980s, crucial salaried positions (in departmental and municipal administrations, radio, postal services and police as well as in education) were mainly held by *mestizos*, despite the growing number of Indian academics who have often been compelled to seek employment in the crafts sector of their home villages. The *indígenas* of the *municipio* in question (which also happens to be the county town) were able to elect as *alcalde municipal* one of their own, but this is the exception rather than the rule in Guatemala (ibid., sect. 4.2.1.2). A similar situation reigns in many regions of Mexico, as is evidenced by numerous studies on the phenomenon of 'internal colonialism' (see the overview in Wimmer 1995d, ch. 3 and 5).

[26] This is illustrated by the life history of a man referred to in W. Smith (1981: 140ff.), who attended university in Guatemala in the 1970s. Conditions in Mexico are similar.

educational background because of language problems. Lacking alternative sources of income, landholdings were further fragmented, and the villagers were obliged to seek work as low-paid day labourers on the plantations. The poorer peasants supported the Indian *caciques* and identified with them, for they offered a minimum of protection against a hostile *mestizo* environment.

The Indian response: entry, exit and voice

Thus, the project of national integration and assimilation pursued by the post-revolutionary state resulted not only in the classificatory exclusion of 'ethnic minorities', but also in new forms of political subordination. In the following, I shall turn to the manner in which the Indian population reacted to these developments. Three different strategies can be distinguished. The first consisted in accepting the offer of integration and joining the national family as newly assimilated *mestizos*. As we shall see, this was only possible where integration and amalgamation represented a valid option in the eyes of the local *mestizos* as well. The second strategy was diametrically opposed to entering the national society and represented an exit strategy – turning one's back to the nationally framed society and invoking the solidarity of the local community as a moral counter-project. The third strategy, and the most relevant in the context of this book, was voice: transforming the meaning of the ethno-national divide and opposing the dominant equating of mestizohood and nation with an Indian ethno-nationalism.

Entry: assimilation and passing

Assimilation meant making oneself invisible as an *indígena* and integrating into the majority, so that one could no longer be identified as different and excluded from access to the modern state and its promises: political participation, equality before the law, protection from arbitrary violence. In a sense, it meant accepting the cultural compromise governing the national field and thereby helping to realise the dream of fusing citizenry and sovereign with the *mestizo* nation.

Indeed, aggregate census data show that the percentage of persons self-identifying as Indians decreased continuously until 1970 – an evolution that can hardly be explained by the different rates of population growth among *indios* and the rest of the population.

Exactly how and where this change of group membership occurred is not self-evident, because at the local level the ethnic boundary in the

Table 1. *The Indian population in Mexico, 1825–1995*

Year	Percentage of Indians in the population (in parentheses: annual growth rate)	Total population (millions) (in parentheses: annual growth rate)
1825	54.4	6.8
1930	16	16.5
		(1.1%)
1940	14.8	19.6
	(1.23%)	
1950	11.2	25.8
	(−0.01%)	(2.7%)
1960	10.4	34.9
	(2.16%)	(3.3%)
1970	7.8	48.2
	(0.27%)	(3.3%)
1980	9.0[a]	70
	(4.1%)	(2.9%)
1990	10.7	81.2
		(2.1%)
1995	11.1	90.6
		(1.8%)

Note: [a] The increased proportion of Mexicans speaking indigenous languages between 1970 and 1980 is due to political factors, namely the emergence of ethnic movements that brought new meaning to Indian identity and culture, and the redefinition of census methods. Over this period, the number of those who spoke only an indigenous language increased by 3.2 per cent, while the number of bilingual individuals increased by 5.1 per cent; these figures clearly exceed the possibilities of physical reproduction (Valdés González 1988: 41).
Source: For 1825: Adams (1967: 471 and 476); for 1930 to 1980: Valdés González (1988: 38); for 1990 and 1995: from the official census.

Indian heartlands – such as highland Guatemala or Chiapas – seems to be as rigid as it used to be in colonial times; it is therefore nearly impossible to change group allegiance.[27] Mestizoisation apparently occurred mainly in the urban centres and on the plantations and farms of the lowlands. Colby and van den Berghe (1969, ch. 6) present the most detailed analysis

[27] In this regard, however, some differences between Mexico and Guatemala must be noted. In San Cristóbal in southern Mexico for example, inter-marriage between Indian domestics and *mestizos* of modest standing is frequent, and some knowledge of Spanish and sartorial adaptation make 'passing' relatively easy. In Guatemala, however, one can only become part of the *ladino* category by changing one's residence and dissimulating one's Indian origin, and inter-marriage is a rare occurrence both in the rural areas and in towns like Quetzaltenango (Colby and van den Berghe 1961: 786ff.).

of such 'passing' into the *mestizo* group in Guatemala.[28] On the lowland plantations, language barriers prevented the newly arrived migrants from joining the more numerous Indian ethnic group of migrant labourers. As a result, they were classified as *ladinos* (a Guatemaltecan term similar to *mestizos)* by the local population. Over time, they abandoned all signs of their Indian origin and sought to adopt the *ladinos'* deportment, language and other distinctive traits.

'Passing' into the group of *mestizos* was therefore only possible through individual migration, not through the acculturation of entire groups. It is noteworthy that in the highlands of Chiapas and Guatemala the ethnic boundary persisted and remained relatively impermeable despite considerable Indian adaptation to *mestizo* culture. Tax and Hinshaw (1970), for example, showed in a study addressing social and cultural change in the Guatemaltecan village of Panajachel between 1934 and 1966, that the ethnic boundary remained stable although many Indians had assimilated nearly entirely in dress, occupation, religious practices etc. to the *mestizos*. Other authors have corroborated this finding.[29]

Despite the constant flow of individuals across the ethnic boundary and the gradual disappearance of 'objective' cultural differences, the ethnic differentiation in the Indian heartlands persisted, thus impeding the realisation of the nationalist utopia of an integrated *mestizo* nation. Interestingly enough, until the 1970s those responsible for this situation seem to be the local *mestizos*. Defending the symbolic and political advantages of distinguishing '*indios*' from '*mestizos*' made sense if their privileges had to be maintained through political domination. In that case, they depended on their good connections with the state apparatus, which they enjoyed as members of the nation. Thus, the new cultural compromise implying that 'assimilated Indians' could become part of the nation made little sense from their point of view. Consequently, they sought to preserve the hierarchical ordering and separation of *indios* and *mestizos* inherited from the colonial era and the nineteenth century.

To illustrate this thesis, I should like to compare some cases from the anthropological literature, including some from Guatemala. In the western highlands of Guatemala the ethnic boundary is much more sharply drawn than in the northern lowlands. In the Petén, for instance, Schwartz (1990) noted an ethnic differentiation between *ladinos* and *indios*, but by comparison with the western highlands, practices of ethnic ascription

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[28] The authors use official census data which indicate a decrease of more than 10 per cent in the Indian population between 1950 and 1960 – erroneously so, as the calculations of Early (1975; 1986) have shown. A realistic estimate would be a decrease of 6 per cent for the same period.

[29] Colby and van den Berghe (1969: 173); W. Smith (1975: 228).

were much less rigid, and the ethnic boundary was easily crossed; also, group relations showed relatively little hostility and hierarchy.

This is because social closure along ethnic lines did not yield any advantage in rubber production, the region's main economic activity until the 1970s. Indeed, most *ladino* buyers had to compete freely for the produce of the individuals engaged in rubber tapping, independently of their ethnic status. Moreover, it was difficult to monopolise land politically in this frontier region, and anyone desirous of shaking off the yoke of repression could escape to the bushes. Political control over resource flows was therefore hardly possible. Social closure and the playing out of their privileged relations with the nationalised state apparatus were hardly attractive options for the local *ladinos*.

The same applies to the primary forests in the northern lowlands of Chiapas, that were settled by impoverished smallholders from Indian highland communities and *mestizos* who used to be plantation workers. The categories of *ladino* and *indio* no longer bear much meaning. By now one distinguishes between 'us and other peasants', and '*patrones*' (such as agents of the lumber companies active in the Lacandonian jungle) and 'government people'. At the core of the new collective identity lies the shared experience in the struggle for the legalisation of the colony (Deverre 1980: 159–204).

Conversely, in the highlands of Guatemala and Chiapas, the outcome of conflicts over land is mainly determined by political ties with the regional and national power centres. In this traditionally densely populated area, land disputes take the form of zero-sum games, and *mestizos* can only acquire land if their political predominance allows them to snatch it from the Indian communities (for Chiapas, compare Wimmer 1995c). Similarly, obtaining one of the few political appointments, being successful as a recruiter of Indian workers for lowland plantations, acquiring a concession for a transport company etc. largely depended on political ties with the state administration. It was therefore to the advantage of the *mestizos* to close ranks, to represent themselves as outposts of the nation in an alien context dominated by Indians, and to offer their services to the central state as the agents of national interests in the hinterland.

When Indians try to escape the stigma of Indian group membership by adopting *mestizo* modes of life, dress, language, religion etc.,[30] their behaviour – the *manner* in which these elements of distinction are enacted, in which Spanish is spoken, in which they interact and deal with

[30] Compare the attempt made by a group of young orthodox Catholics in a Guatemalan community analysed by Warren (1989).

outsiders – is nevertheless strongly marked by the habitual dispositions of subordination that has characterised the Indian situation for the past centuries. It is therefore not too difficult for the *mestizos* to identify an 'Indio in disguise',[31] or *indio revestido*,[32] and to maintain a symbolic boundary, even though few genuine cultural differences may persist between the two groups.[33] Inventing new symbols of distinction, most recently by the acquisition of middle-class consumption goods from North America, may help to secure the advantages of an ethnic hierarchy.

Viewed from this angle, the acculturation processes described by American anthropologists since the 1930s (e.g. Beals 1967) resemble a constant chase to catch up for those who try to adopt certain consumption patterns to escape from the discriminating category of *indio*. Owing to their privileged position in the social space, the *mestizos* constantly manage to acquire new distinctive goods that Indian peasants still lack, while marking as 'Indian' the newly acquired everyday practices of the peasants, thus re-establishing the difference. Ironically, the habits abandoned by the *mestizos* because of their 'Indianness' in this continuing cultural race of distinction are therefore often of Spanish colonial origin.[34]

Exit: the reinforcement of Indian communities

However, assimilation represents the preferred strategy of only a minority of Indians. It may make sense for migrants who leave the sheltered universe of the Indian community and seek to guard against the contempt they risk as *indios* in the urban or agro-industrial centres. It is also pursued by villages which profited from land reallocation during the revolution, and that could therefore adhere to the cultural compromise of a reformulated Mexican nationalism – like the inhabitants of the settlement colonies in northern Chiapas mentioned above (for details see Wimmer 1995a, sect. 6.3).

The majority of the Indian population does not concur with the classification into *indios* and *mestizos* and the hierarchy that it implies. Most Indian peasants continue to feel they belong primarily to their local

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[31] Similarly in India, as shown by Sebring (1969), members of high castes recognise caste-less individuals from other regions by their body posture, gestures, demeanour and grammatical peculiarities. In Northern Ireland, according to Easthope (1976, quoted in Banton 1983: 180), nuances in the manner of speaking, behaviour and appearance reveal religious membership.

[32] On the subject of *revestido* or – in the Andean highlands – *cholo*, see Aguirre Beltrán (1967: 301–11).

[33] Compare the case study in Friedlander (1975).

[34] See the example given by Pitt-Rivers (1989: 12).

communities.[35] As we saw earlier, these communities were the product of the colonial era. The cultural compromise that emerged within these social fields depicts the community as an island of solidarity in a hostile environment. This allows the local elite to keep competitors for economic and political power at bay, because as outsiders they do not have the right to establish themselves there. Community members in turn owe political loyalty to the village elite. In exchange for this loyalty, the elite has to defend the common good of the village, for example in land disputes, and practise solidarity in times of economic hardship (for a detailed analysis see Wimmer 1995a, ch. 4).

This compromise is accompanied by a marked social closure along communal lines, resulting mainly from the collective land allocation during the colonial era, and again during the land reform of the revolutionary period, and by competitive relations between individual Indian communities. By comparison with neighbouring villages, one's own is generally regarded as 'more civilised' and 'more peaceful';[36] one's own patron saints have higher spiritual standing; one's *fiesta* for the patron saint is more colourful and cheerful; in land disputes with neighbouring communities, the latter employ dubious means and forge documents; one's own village band plays the 'right' music; the pattern of one's own traditional dress is more beautiful; one's own cosmogonic myth that recounts the founding of the village by the ancestors,[37] is free from the lies with which the elders of other villages hoodwink their listeners.

However, even from such a decidedly localist perspective not all people beyond the village horizon are to be classified without distinction as foreigners. There are also broader categories to organise the social world, such as groups classified on the basis of language. In the pre-revolutionary uprisings and rebellions[38] and again since the emergence of ethnic movements in the 1970s, they have been of considerable political importance. The distinction between *indios* and *mestizos*, by contrast, makes little sense for Indian peasants, be it alone for the pejorative connotation of the term *indio*. Recognising the distinction would mean accepting the closure practised by the *mestizo* groups and the distinction between nation and minority. Indians therefore use other forms of classification that make the *mestizos* appear as just one group among many, thus

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[35] Often these are rather large villages (up to 30,000 inhabitants) divided in turn into several local groups (hamlets or nuclear villages) that may maintain their own subsidiary identity (see the overview by Hunt and Nash 1967).

[36] Compare Leslie (1960) and Nader (1990).

[37] See Wimmer (1987) for one of many examples.

[38] Reina (1988) assembled a bibliography of the relevant literature.

denying them an exclusive relationship to the state. Dividing the social world into language groups produces exactly this effect. In this manner, Ixiles, Quichés, Mixes, Nahuas and Spanish-speakers are situated at the same level of categorical differentiation – a world full of particularities and no clear ranking in terms of political prestige and value.[39]

Voice: the formation of Indian movements

Entry and exit are the age-old strategies that have been deployed by the Indian population since the conquest. During the last three decades, a third way of coping with exclusion and subordination has appeared. It consists in taking up the distinction between *mestizos* and *indios* and giving it a new meaning, by turning the symbolic hierarchy upside down – a familiar starting point for many social movements. The project of a homogeneous nation-state is contrasted with the utopia of a multicultural Mexico. *Mestizo* nationalism is answered with an Indian ethnonationalism, voiced by a newly risen educated elite that presents itself as the vanguard of the 'Indian people'. Since these movements have successfully entered Mexican public space, a new wave in the politicisation of ethnicity has swept over the country.

Post-revolutionary Mexico thus exemplifies one of the two ways of politicising ethnicity discussed in the previous chapter. In nation-states with a dominant majority, the politics of cultural uniformisation and assimilation may eventually lead to the formation of an educated middle class among the ethnic minorities. These may start to question the nationalisation of the state and use the discourse of national self-determination to denounce the lack of representativity of the state. In the following, the emergence and political mobilisation of Mexico's Indian middle class will be considered more closely.

In the early 1970s, the Mexican economic and political crisis also started to affect the rural population. The deterioration of the standard of living in the countryside, the dwindling of agricultural production and the slackening of clientelist integration tested the legitimacy of the Mexican government to a degree unheard of since the 1930s. President Echeverría reacted, like his predecessor Cárdenas at the time of the 1930s land reforms, by readjusting the national policy to help cover the needs of the poorest. At the same time, the Indian masses were to provide a new basis for the destabilised regime. In 1976, under his so-called policy of democratic opening, Echeverría created the Consejo Nacional de Pueblos

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[39] Compare the ethnographic examples provided by Colby and van den Berghe (1969: 179ff.); Iwanska (1971: 99ff.); Friedlander (1975) etc.

Indígenas.[40] CNPI was made part of the peasants' union, and included representatives of all of Mexico's fifty-six indigenous language groups. These efforts received an unexpectedly positive response. However, the political demands voiced by the Indian representatives became radicalised with time, in a way not foreseen by the architects of the populist integration policy.

Next to the state-promoted Indian council, independent, often regionally based Indian organisations emerged, which pursued a wide variety of political goals.[41] They claimed the right to political self-determination, control over their own resources (especially land), participation in all government programmes likely to affect them, self-government according to 'Indian' political traditions, respect for their customs in the courts, and the recognition of the major Indian languages as official languages; in short, a treatment that might conform to the desired status of autonomous nationalities.

Who were the followers of these movements, and how exactly did they mobilise? The first activists came from the educated middle classes that emerged under the impact of postwar integration policies. They included professionals like male nurses, veterinary and agricultural technicians and, above all, the approximately 22,000 bilingual teachers. Paradoxically, most had been trained by the Indian Institute as 'agents of change', called upon to promote assimilation. This milieu of Indian professionals and teachers presented a fertile ground for social movements because the aspirations raised by their ascent into the middle classes were curtailed.[42] Their possibilities of filling regionally or nationally relevant positions remained rather limited because of their origin and lack of friends in high places. A habitus of hostile subservience, adapted to a position of subordination and symbolic exclusion, did not augur well for a career in the *mestizo* social environment where everyday life required a delicate balancing act between the aloofness of ornate Castilian etiquette and the intimacy of hobnobbing within 'old boys' networks'. Those who did not master the rules of this game stood out, easily identifiable as *indios*.

[40] This idea was voiced for the first time in 1971 by the leaders of the national peasant unions. Already under Cárdenas Indian congresses had been organised. The first took place in 1935 and was influenced by intellectuals and politicians flirting with communist ideas. They regarded the Indian population as 'nationalities' in the sense of Lenin and Stalin. This first wave of mobilisation endeavours came to nothing, however.

[41] Many important documents of the independent Indianist movements can be found in the series *Civilización* published by the Centro Antropológico de Documentación de América Latina in the city of Mexico, as well as in the collections of Bonfil (1981) and Garduño (1983).

[42] See Bonfil (1982); Barre (1983: 122–36); Medina (1983); Mejía Piñeros and Sarmiento (1987); Kearney and Nagenast (1990); also Argueta and Warman (1993). A study of bilingual Tarascan teachers was undertaken by María Eugenia Vargas (1994).

A probably even more important aspect was that the Indian professionals and teachers set out to make their aspirations come true at a time of economic crisis and dwindling state resources, of limitations imposed upon the clientelist mode of integration and the corresponding narrowing of the channels for upward mobility. The already established professional colleagues showed themselves less and less willing to make room for newcomers. In this manner, two forms of discrimination became closely intertwined in the everyday experiences of Indian teachers and professionals: rejection because of their 'Indianness' and exclusion from the government apparatus despite a good education. For the Indian elite, the category of *indios* therefore took on new meaning. Providing it with the status and charisma of a nationality of its own, it became a crucial ideological tool in claiming a more prominent role on the political stage of the country.[43] The Indian elite took over the dominant discourse of nationalism and applied it to 'our own people'.

Let us look more closely at how this transformation was achieved. I will restrict myself to analysing the main features of the Indianist discourse without dwelling on its intellectual sources[44] and without commenting

[43] It would be worthwhile investigating how and to what extent these leaders managed to mobilise their following. For instance, the various *consejos supremos* of CNPI have different ways of becoming active across the local and regional political landscape. In some areas, such as San Juan Guichicovi in south-eastern Oaxaca, council representatives lack local support, and the council only exists at the congresses. Among the Mazahuas, on the other hand, the delegates seem to entertain good relations with the village communities whose demands and strategies they largely reflect. In trying to explain these differences, one is confronted, however, with an entirely new set of circumstances (e.g. the dynamics of village and regional politics with its factionalism, complex clientelist systems and so forth); this requires a different type of analysis than pursued so far (see Wimmer 1995a, chs. 5 and 6).

[44] The Indian intellectuals borrow many of their central concepts from anthropologists like Guzman-Böckler (in Guatemala), Stavenhagen, Bonfil Batalla, Varese, Bartolomé and Barabas (in Mexico). Political reorientation in anthropology came about after the complicity of some of its major exponents with the Vietnam war, among others, came to be known publicly. The Latin American debate on the mission of an anti-imperialist anthropology eventually led to the Declaration of Barbados of 1971 which was signed primarily by Latin American anthropologists. According to the Declaration, the newly 'decolonised anthropology' was meant to transmit to 'the colonised peoples all anthropological knowledge, both regarding itself and the society governing it, to contribute to their liberation'. Moreover, anthropology was called upon to rectify the 'false representation of Indian peoples that predominates in the national society by unveiling its ideological purpose of justifying colonialism' (Declaration of Barbados, reproduced in IWGIA 1971). Through the analysis of 'internal colonialism', so-called critical anthropology thought to foster the decolonisation of inter-ethnic relations and the 'liberation' of the Indian population (for details, see Wimmer 1995d, ch. 6). In the mid-1970s, many ideas shifted from the academic community to the Indianist movements. The concept of 'ethnic project' and the nationalist representation of history, for which the anthropologists' ethno-historical studies provided a scientific basis, also became the guiding ideas for the intellectual leaders of these movements, even though some were seeking to

on the accuracy of certain historical views. Two concepts play a crucial role in this political discourse, namely 'Indian culture' understood as a culture of resistance, and the 'ethnic project' as the historical mission of Indian peoples.[45]

The fragmentation of indigenous ethnic groups into *comunidades* is seen as the consequence of the Machiavellian policy of the colonial rulers. Under the surface of localism, however, an encompassing ethnic consciousness, even an identification with the Indian nation as a whole, has survived. Despite the modern state's attempts to destroy them, Indian identity and culture are alive. The western elements of today's Indian cultures do not affect their integrity and originality. Acquisitions such as modern technology belong to the common cultural heritage of humanity and should not be attributed to the West. The major accomplishments of Indian cultures, for example in medicine and astronomy, should be rediscovered and given their proper place in the history of humankind. Some cultural elements that are usually attributed to Spanish influence, such as the so-called cargo-system, are in reality indigenous.

On account of its resistance character, Indian culture cannot always be observed directly, let alone by outsiders. But the fact that, for example, indigenous languages have survived testifies to the vitality of an ethnic culture capable of resisting overwhelming assimilationist pressures. It is this ethnic culture that must be revitalised and strengthened, by stripping it of its colonial varnish and immunising it against the seductions of acculturation. This goal could be reached, for example, by readjusting educational curricula according to the values of Indian culture.

From a long-term historical view that includes the golden age of the pre-Colombian centuries, one can see the 'ethnic project' of a specific group, which consists in defending its culture and slowly working towards a re-conquest of political autonomy. The 'ethnic projects' of the 'Indian peoples' were certainly interrupted by the conquest, but they have by no means been given up. The appropriation of the continent by Spain was no conquest but an invasion that it is high time to repel. Accordingly, Mexico's history is described as a struggle for the realisation of this ethnic project. The true political aims of Mexico's Indian peoples were hidden from Western oppressors under the cover of subordination and

distance themselves from the 'white Indians' (see e.g. the founding document of Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios).

[45] A description and short analysis of the Indianist discourse can be found in Bonfil (1981: 35–49) and Díaz-Polanco (1989). The most extended and sophisticated study of Indian intellectuals is provided by Gutierrez (1999). My interpretation is based on the publications of the following Indian organisations: Consejo Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas, Frente Independiente de Pueblos Indios, Alianza Nacional de Profesionales Indígenas Bilingües and Assamblea de Autoridades Mixes.

assimilation. They became manifest only during the rebellions against the Spaniards and their descendants. These rebellions must therefore be viewed as signposts for rediscovering and re-appropriating the Indian past from the distortions of colonial and post-colonial historiography. They are not to be interpreted simply as reactions against deeds of the rulers, for instance rising demands for tribute, but rather as manifestations of ethnic consciousness.

For the leaders of the Indian movements, ethnicity thus represents the naturally given and eternal foundation of history. History, in turn, can only be written as one of ethnic groups and their oppression by ethnic others. From such a perspective, the *ethnie* is regarded as a homogeneous totality not divided by any fundamental conflict of interests. It is characterised by a shared culture and exhibits clear territorial boundaries according to which political entities should be organised.[46] We have here some of the classic topoi of nationalist thinking analysed in chapter 3 – the same set of political principles on which the *mestizo* nationalism draws.

Nationalism and counter-nationalism

There is thus a hidden commonality between the political project of the Indian *intelligenzija* and the state ideology against which it is directed: both rely on the nationalist principles that have developed as a new cultural compromise in post-revolutionary Mexico. Indian intellectuals choose those aspects of this compromise that allow them to elaborate a discourse of injustice corresponding to their specific interests. Obviously, they also speak for themselves when they demand political and cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities, for such autonomy would yield employment possibilities and would open up new positions of power, for example in the proposed institutes for Indian culture, in development programmes or in parliaments and executive bodies reserved for Indians.

The rise of *mestizo* nationalism and of indigenous movements thus represents two interrelated aspects of the same process: of political closure along national lines and the development of state-organised mechanisms of social solidarity, the last steps towards the fully developed nation-state.[47] Once the state apparatus acts on behalf of the 'national majority'

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[46] One demand of the Indian movements therefore consists in redrawing the borders of the federal states according to the ethnic composition of the population and to base the jurisdiction of these new political entities on indigenous customary law.

[47] My analysis strongly emphasises the internal dynamics leading to the emergence of ethno-nationalist movements, as opposed to the influence of the forces of globalisation that stand at the centre of much of the specialist literature of these days. Undoubtedly, North American Indian movements also played a role as models, while the writings of 'critical anthropologists' served as a source of ideas. But it would be erroneous to regard

and is being controlled by their representatives, all those who are classified as ethnic others are being excluded because they are not qualified to act and speak on behalf of 'the people'. Yet, the efforts undertaken at political integration and cultural assimilation – at realising the nationalist dream of fusing the nation, the citizenry and the sovereign – provoke the emergence of a counter-movement led by the educated elite of ethnic minorities.

The rejection and exclusion of these minority elites from the national-ised power apparatus is fertile ground for Indian ethno-nationalism. We can only speculate what would have happened if the channels of upward mobility had remained open to them. Perhaps the dominant cultural com-promise would have made sense to them and they would have assimilated into the national majority, thus leading, over time, to a fully nationalised state such as described in chapter 3. However, the Indian elite exclu-ded from the national 'we' started to elaborate their own discourse of national grandeur, based on the flaunting of the achievements of Indian culture and of their status as victims of colonialism. By revalorising and re-inventing history, the stigma of an 'ethnic' minority was being reinter-preted as the sign of a chosen people. Only the new Indian intellectuals could achieve such an ideological work, for only they were capable of moving in the public sphere of modern Mexico, having gone through the national school system – unlike the earlier Indian elite of *principales*, landowners and merchants.

Mexico's history thus illustrates one of the more paradoxical sides of political modernisation. While promoting the fusion of the sovereign, the nation and the citizenry, nation-state building may bring forth its own counter-movement and the fragmentation of the national idea into vari-ous ethnic projects. Although referring to the same nationalist principles, these nevertheless turn them against the hegemonic model and thus or-chestrate its demise.

Meanwhile, under the pressure of these political forces, the official self-image of the Mexican state has been transformed. In conformity with the changing global mood, it now salutes the 'multi-ethnic and multicultural' character of the Mexican people.[48] Thus, nation-state formation did not

the Indian movements in Mexico simply as echoes of global trends. By the same token, changes at the international level, especially the elaboration of international standards with regard to the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples should not be viewed as determining such mobilisation. For in the early 1970s the international debate was still in its early stages, and North American developments were little known in Mexico. More-over, in Guatemala, for instance, an ethno-nationalist revalorisation of Indian identity and history was launched relatively early, notably through the creation, in 1961, of the Academia de la Lengua Maya Kí-chè.

[48] See the manuscript 'Síntesis de las propuestas y comentarios escritos sobre el re-conocimiento jurídico-constitucional que se pretende para los pueblos indígenas de

lead to the generalisation of the *ethnie* of a central elite, as in France and other completely nationalised states, but fostered the politicisation of ethnic differences, reinforcing the dividing lines that the nationalist programme was meant to overcome. The politicisation of ethnicity has by now become so pervasive, that a leftist peasant guerrilla group, as soon as it leaves the closed ideological circles of jungle camps and enters the public space of contemporary Mexico, is transformed into an ethnic liberation movement. Far from announcing the end of the nation-state and the demise of nationalist principles, they show how these still structure the political discourse and practice of our times, albeit in new and unexpected ways. The shadows of modernity are still growing.

México', which has been circulating since 1989 and was elaborated by the Secretaría Técnica de la Comisión Nacional de Justicia para los Pueblos Indígenas de México, a national organisation co-ordinated by INI. In 1992, some of these demands were incorporated into the Mexican constitution, which now states in Article 4 that the Mexican nation is of a pluricultural character (the article reads: 'La Nación mexicana tiene una composición pluricultural sustentada originalmente en sus pueblos indígenas. La ley protegerá y promoverá el desarrollo de sus lenguas, culturas, usos, costumbres, recursos y formas específicas de organización social, y garantizará a sus integrantes el efectivo acceso a la jurisdicción del Estado. En los juicios y procedimientos agrarios en que aquellos sean parte, se tomarán en cuenta sus prácticas y costumbres jurídicas en los términos que establezca la ley.').

However, the nature and extent of indigenous rights is still a matter of fierce debate between, among others, the government and the Zapatist movement of Chiapas. The latest proposal of the federal government takes up many of the demands of the Indian movements and in particular of the Zapatist Liberation Army, but restricts the notion of 'self-determination' to the municipal level. See the 'Initiativa de reformas constitucionales en materia de derechos y cultura indígena que presenta el Ejecutivo Federal al Congreso Mexicano' of 15 March 1998 (this and other proposals can be found on the website of the Secretaría de Gobernación of the federal government).