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## Who Gets a State of Their Own?

**A NATION IN THE MODERN ERA** is a population that purportedly has a right to a state of its own.<sup>1</sup> Over the two centuries that we call the age of nationalism, philosophers, politicians, and polemicists have imagined hundreds, if not thousands, of nation-states. Indeed, a piece of folk wisdom often repeated in academic and policy communities holds that around the world today there may be as many as six to eight hundred active nation-state projects and another seven to eight thousand potential projects.<sup>2</sup> Yet today, only a little more than 190 nation-states have achieved the status of sovereign, independent members of the world community.<sup>3</sup> This begs a question: Why do some nation-state projects succeed in achieving sovereign independence while most fail?

The current configuration of borders in the world that privileges these 190 or so nation-state projects over the alternatives is something of a puzzle. Few would defend the present configuration as politically, economically, or culturally optimal. Indeed, on all continents there are competing projects to unite some states into larger states, such as a European Union or regional unions of African states; to make others smaller by granting independence to such substate entities as the Basque Country or Somaliland; or simply to decertify some nation-states and redraw borders in a more rational or efficient manner. Their proponents have made compelling cases that these new states would be superior to the current nation-states.

The question of which nations get states of their own is obviously a question of why some nation-state projects have triumphed over the empires, multinational states, and nation-states they replaced. Yet it is more complex than that. During the crises that led to new nation-states, typically there were multiple, competing nation-state projects on the table. For example, during the process that led to the fragmentation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or Soviet Union) into fifteen successor

<sup>1</sup> This definition of the term “nation” derives from Max Weber’s definition in “Diskussionsreden auf dem zweiten Deutschen Soziologentag in Berlin 1912”: “a nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own.” See Gerth and Mills 1958, 176.

<sup>2</sup> Gellner 1983, 45.

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations in mid-2006 included 192 nation-states and recognized one other sovereign state as an observer, the Vatican City State. In addition, the Republic of China (Taiwan) constituted a potential nation-state.

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states, there were proposals for dozens of alternative nation-states that would have united or divided these fifteen states in diverse ways, such as a revived Soviet Union, a Slavic union, a Turkestan to unite the so-called “stans” of Central Asia, or a Republic of Mountain Peoples that would unite communities on both sides of the Caucasus. Thus, the question of which nations get states is also a question of why some projects have triumphed over the many alternatives for unification and division that have been contending for sovereign independence.

Humanists and social scientists have devoted considerable attention to the various phenomena associated with the process of creating new nation-states, including nationalism, secessions, and state failures. The attention is warranted. The attempt to create new nation-states has been the inspiration for some of the most glorious and tragic moments of modern politics. The success of some projects to create new nation-states, such as Ireland, Israel, or Lithuania, represents the fulfillment of aspirations for self-governance that define the era of nationalism. Yet the success of nation-state projects has often been associated with violent destruction, as the breakup of Yugoslavia illustrates. The frustration of nation-state projects has often been equally costly, as the conflicts in Chechnya and Palestine attest.

The attention is also warranted because nation-states are among the most important institutions of political life; they establish fundamental parameters of both global and domestic politics. For example, in the past century changes in the configuration of nation-states have given strength to new global forces, such as the rise of the Third World following the breakup of European empires, and have changed the polarity of the international system, such as the end of bipolarity following the breakup of the Soviet Union. The changing configuration of nation-states provides the building blocks with which diplomats must seek to build peace and security even in the face of transnational forces such as terrorism. The boundaries created by nation-states define the outlines of domestic politics as well. The boundaries constrain the likelihood that democracy can succeed in a polity, demarcate the actors and preferences that must be balanced in domestic politics, and thus shape the direction policy will take.<sup>4</sup> For example, little imagination is needed to identify the ways in which North American politics inside and among sovereign states would have been profoundly different had the project for a Confederate States of America led to sovereign statehood in the nineteenth century.

The explanation for which nations are likely to get states of their own also has practical implications as we look ahead to the policy problems that may engage governments and the global community in the future. For policy-makers who must anticipate crises, the explanation helps to identify

<sup>4</sup> Roeder 1999, 2004; Alesina, Baqir, and Easterly 1999; Lustick 1990.

potential instabilities in existing nation-states. It identifies nation-state projects seeking sovereign independence that may be most threatening to the peace. Such nation-state crises have been extraordinarily destabilizing. For example, in recent decades projects to create new nation-states have been the single most common agenda of terrorists. Robert Pape recorded 188 suicide bomb attacks between 1980 and 2001. Fully 82 percent of these attacks were associated with the campaigns to achieve independence for a Palestinian state, a Kurdish state, a Tamil state, or a Chechen state, or to separate Kashmir from India. (Most of the other attacks were associated with nationalist attempts to end a foreign occupation of an existing nation-state.) As Pape summarizes, “the strategic logic of suicide terrorism is specifically designed to coerce modern democracies to make significant concessions to national self-determination.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly, nation-state crises have been the single most common cause of internal wars over the last half-century. Nils Petter Gleditsch recorded 184 wars within the jurisdictions of sovereign states between 1946 and 2001, including 21 within their external dependencies and 163 within the metropolises. More than half of these wars, 51.6 percent, were associated with nation-state crises in which parties challenged the existing state and demanded either statehood for themselves or unification with another state.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, for the designers of transitions to peace after civil war, democracy after autocracy, or independence after subjection, answers to the question of where nation-states come from can provide guidance for the design of stable political orders in culturally diverse societies. Indeed, I argue in this book that the source of new nation-states has been a crisis of “stateness”—a crisis in which residents contest the human and geographic borders of existing states and some residents even seek to create new independent states—and that this crisis typically results from the design of their institutions. An implication of this finding is that by prudent action, governments and the global community could avoid such crises in the future, but probably will not.<sup>7</sup>

### **Patterns of Nation-State Creation, 1816–2000**

The American Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen ushered in an age of nationalism that led to the conscious creation of nation-states. In the 185 years that followed

<sup>5</sup> Pape 2003, 344.

<sup>6</sup> Based on data posted by Gleditsch at [www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict](http://www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict). These figures include all cases except those listed as interstate conflicts. Also see N. Gleditsch, Wallenstein, Eriksson, Sollenberg, and Strand 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Roeder and Rothchild 2005.

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the final defeat of the French in 1815, most existing states sought to redefine themselves by the new logic of nation-statehood, namely, that their statehood was the expression of the sovereign will of a people. More dramatically, a total of 191 new or reconstituted states joined or rejoined the international system, most with the claim that this represented the sovereign prerogative of a people to be self-governing.<sup>8</sup>

Although the creation and reconstitution of states around the world continued throughout the years from 1816 to 2000, as figure 1.1 shows, this process accelerated during the latter half of the twentieth century. The creation of new nation-states in the past two centuries has occurred in a few episodic bursts. Specifically, since 1815 there have been four bursts in the creation of new nation-states: the classic period, from the Congress of Vienna to the Congress of Berlin; the first quarter of the twentieth century; the three decades that followed World War II; and the decade that straddled the end of the cold war. It would be imprudent to make bold claims about trends, especially a claim that this is a declining trend. Compared with earlier decades, the decade of the 1990s was the second most intense period of transformation in the existing state system and creation of new nation-states, after the 1960s.

Decolonization represents the single most common source of new nation-states—62 percent of the total number created since 1815 (table 1.1). These 118 new states had not previously been incorporated into the metropolitan core of the governing states but remained juridically separate as colonies or protectorates. In the first and third phases of nation-state creation, 1816–1900 and 1941–1985, decolonization was the primary process by which new states were created. The second most common source of

<sup>8</sup> In compiling the list of new and reconstituted states I began with Kristian S. Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward's (1999) list of all independent polities that have relative autonomy over some territory, are recognized as such by local states or by the state on which they depend, and reached a population greater than 250,000 at some point prior to 2000. I have added the polities with population below 250,000. I am not, however, seeking to catalogue the list of states in the international system but the creation of new nation-states, so a few adjustments must be made. New states that result from decolonization of territory, such as Bechuanaland, not previously incorporated into the metropolitan core do not change the national character of the metropolitan core, such as the United Kingdom. I add only the new state to the list. Alternatively, secessions from a metropolitan core can change the national character of the rump state—for example, the Russian Federation is a different state from the Soviet Union. In counting rump states as new nation-states, only those rumps that constituted less than three-quarters of the population of the previous state are counted as reconstituted. With the loss of a quarter or more of its population—usually the loss of a distinctive ethnic population—the basis for the rump nation-state typically must be reconsidered. Similarly, addition of independent states to an existing state may transform the national character of the unified state. The unified state is counted as a new nation-state unless the population of one of the constituent parts that were previously independent exceeded 75 percent of the newly unified state.

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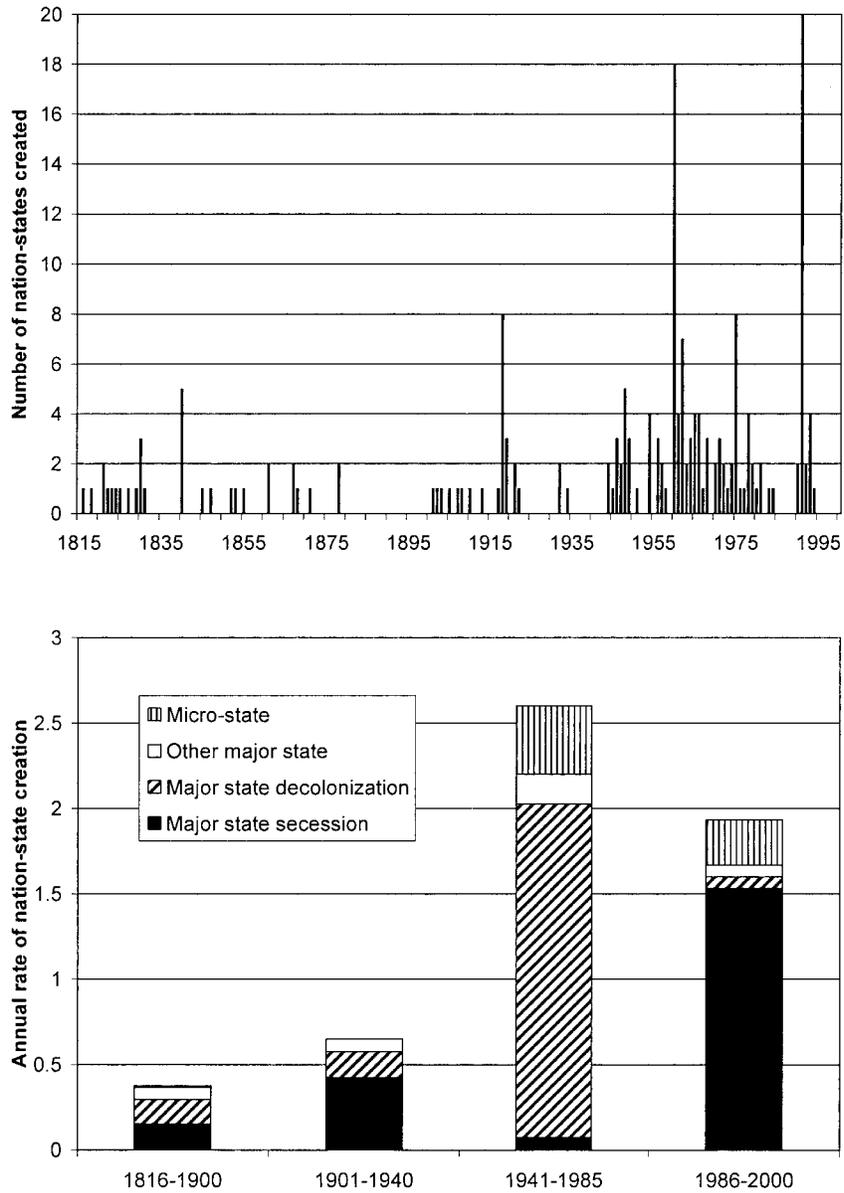


Figure 1.1 Creation of nation-states by year, 1816–2000. *Source:* Based on data in Gleditsch and Ward 1999. Also see footnote 8 in this chapter.

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**TABLE 1.1**  
Numbers of new and reconstituted states worldwide, 1816–2000

<i>Origin of state</i>	<i>Examples<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Major states</i>	<i>Micro states</i>	<i>Total</i>
Division of states				
Postcolonial states	Argentina 1816, Zaire 1960	97	21	118
Postsecession states	Estonia 1918, 1991, Romania 1878	50	—	50
Rump states	Austria 1918, Russia 1991	6	—	6
Postoccupation states	North Korea 1948, South Korea 1948	6	—	6
Unification of existing states	Germany 1871, 1990, Vietnam 1975	5	—	5
Newly incorporated territories	Liberia 1847, Transvaal 1852	6	—	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>170</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>191</b>

*Source:* See footnote 8.

<sup>a</sup>Examples indicate the year the state joined or rejoined the international system as a sovereign state.

new nation-states has been division of (or secession from) the metropolitan cores of states, which accounts for about 32 percent of the total. The division of the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, the USSR, and Yugoslavia in particular stand as major sources of new states. The sixty-two states created by division of metropolitan cores include secessionist territories (e.g., Estonia in 1918 and 1991), reconstituted rump nation-states left behind (e.g., the Russian Federation in 1991 or the Czech Republic in 1993), and regimes imposed by occupying authorities (e.g., the Peoples' Democratic Republic of Korea in 1948). In the second and fourth phases of nation-state creation, 1901–1940 and 1986–2000, division or secession was the primary source of new nation-states. The remaining eleven new nation-states include five that resulted from the unification of existing states (e.g., Germany in 1990, Vietnam in 1975). Another six resulted from incorporation of peripheral regions into the international system through settlement (e.g., Liberia in 1847, Orange Free State in 1853) or recognition of indigenous sovereignties (e.g., Afghanistan in 1919, Saudi Arabia in 1932) in areas previously not recognized as falling under any sovereign authority.

These changes in state boundaries through decolonization, secession, and unification have in fact moved the world closer to the ideal proclaimed

by such nationalists as Giuseppe Mazzini—a universal system of nation-states. Almost all new states have claimed to represent the sovereign will of their people to have a state of their own. For example, the acts adopted by new states to declare their independence typically predicate this act on the right of a specified people to constitute a state of its own.<sup>9</sup> Today, the constitutions of most states are predicated on the claim that the people, such as “the Burundian Nation” or “the Chadian people,” have a right to govern themselves and to choose the form of their own government. For example, 72 percent of the 143 constitutions of major states in force in 2000 began with just such a claim.<sup>10</sup>

This pattern of nation-state creation sets the question I address in this book: Why did these nation-state projects achieve sovereign independence while hundreds of other projects have not?

### **The Segmental Institutions Thesis**

The usual explanations for the success of nation-state projects begin with identities, grievances, and mobilization. A common nationalist narrative about the origins of individual nation-states celebrates the politicization of an ethnic identity and the awakening or reawakening of national identity. The narrative immortalizes bold proclamations against the oppression of overlords and the heroic mobilization of nationalist resistance on the path to independence. In the academy, these narratives have become the basis of a significant body of sociological theory that imputes prime causality to identity, grievances, and mobilization. More recently, these traditional explanations have been challenged by theories in the fields of economics and international relations that claim that economic greed, not cultural grievance, motivates nationalist resistance and that the selection mechanism of international recognition actually determines which nation-states become sovereign members of the world community.

In this book I argue that all of these elements—identity, grievance, greed, mobilization, and international recognition—must be present for a successful nation-state project. For the proponents of a nation-state project to advance to sovereign independence, all of these elements must align so that they are mutually reinforcing. Misalignment of any one element can create an insurmountable obstacle to success. Misalignment is a reason why so few projects succeed. The argument in this book turns our attention to the question, what could possibly lead all of these elements to align favor-

<sup>9</sup> Based on the author’s coding of documents in Blaustein, Sigler, and Beede 1977.

<sup>10</sup> Based on the author’s coding of documents in Blaustein and Flanz 2006.

ably? Perhaps this alignment can result from simple luck or coincidence, but that is unlikely. Rather, I argue that there is a common overarching constraint that has increased the likelihood of such an alignment: almost every successful nation-state project has been associated with an existing institution that I refer to as a “segment-state.” Independence represented the administrative upgrade of this existing jurisdiction. For example, after the demise of the USSR, the successful nation-state projects were the projects associated with the first-order jurisdictions called union republics, such as Kazakhstan and Ukraine. The nation-state projects not associated with these segment-states, such as the projects for Turkestan, Idel-Ural, the Mountain Republic, or Novorossia, failed in the 1990s. I will call this argument *the segmental institutions thesis*.<sup>11</sup>

This pattern, which privileges nation-state projects associated with segment-states, holds around the world and throughout the twentieth century. From 1901 to 2000, 177 new nation-states were created, and 153 of these new nation-states had been segment-states immediately prior to independence (see table 10.5).<sup>12</sup> That is, 86 percent of all new nation-states in the twentieth century had prehistories that looked much like the creation of independent successor states of the USSR.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, for the past century it would have been safe to bet a considerable sum with the rule of thumb, “no segment-state, no nation-state.” No other simple rules would have yielded such a high return. For example, it would have been hard to win as much by betting on the elevation of ethnic groups to national consciousness and then statehood; fewer than a dozen ethnic groups without segment-states achieved sovereign independence in the twentieth century. Nor would it have been as lucrative to bet on the constituents of federations, since only one of those that were not segment-states became a nation-state. (These anomalies are discussed in chapter 10.) Rather than groups or territories alone, it is the unique conjunction of popular and territorial jurisdictions in a segment-state that has paved the way to independence. Thus, this simple thesis explains why, since 1815, most nation-state projects that have sought sovereign statehood have failed. The authors of most imagined nation-states, such as Kurdistan, Turkestan, Tamil Eelam, or Atzlán, have been unable to draw on the resources of segment-states.

The findings presented in this book also underscore the observation that without segment-states, nation-state projects are far less likely to produce crises in the first place. That is, the segmental institutions thesis not only

<sup>11</sup> Compare Beissinger and Young 2002, 30–35.

<sup>12</sup> The operational counting rules that establish cutoff points for gains or losses in territory or population that constitute new nation-states are described in footnote 8.

<sup>13</sup> See also Mann 1995, 49.

explains which nation-state projects are likely to succeed in achieving sovereign independence, it also explains which projects are likely to become an issue in a nation-state crisis in which the issue of sovereign independence is on the bargaining table. For example, among Africanists there have been many who see a puzzle that Pierre Englebert has called Africa's "secession deficit": even though Africa is plagued by weak governments, many ethnic groups, and a high propensity to political violence, it has had fewer secessionist attempts than other continents.<sup>14</sup> From the perspective of the segmental institutions thesis, however, there is little puzzle: independent Africa has had far fewer segment-states than other continents. In the twentieth century, the independent states of Asia and Europe each had about three times as many internal segment-states. While African states maintained twenty internal segment-states at various times (and ten of these were South Africa's Bantustans), Asia maintained fifty-six and Europe maintained sixty-seven internal segment-states. For this reason Africa has suffered few attempts at secession. (The only successful secession attempt, that of Eritrea in 1993, was initiated by one of the few segment-states on the continent.) The segmental institutions thesis predicts that weak common-states without segment-states should not face many significant secessionist threats. In Africa, the absence of segment-states explains why alternative nation-state projects have failed to gather adherents beyond small circles and why nationalist attachments to existing independent states have tended to be nearly monopolistic and unchallenged.

The segmental institutions thesis also implies the counterfactual claim that if the territorial and human boundaries defined by segment-states had been drawn differently, a different set of national claims—or even none at all—would have assaulted the common-states. For example, if the USSR had preserved the Bukhara, Khiva, and Turkestan republics rather than dividing these among five union republics, we would today be celebrating the independence of Bukhara, Khiva, and Turkestan rather than Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Moreover, if the USSR had created economic regions (oblasts) based on economic efficiency rather than union republics based on purported nations, as the early economic planners advised, few if any nation-state projects would have been able to challenge the USSR.

In short, new nation-states have mostly come from administrative upgrade of segment-states. In explaining the origins of nation-states, the segmental institutions thesis shifts primary focus from national identity formation, material greed and grievance, nationalist mobilization, or international selection mechanisms to political institutions. The independence of a new nation-state is the consequence of the failure of one set of state

<sup>14</sup> Englebert 2003; compare Beissinger and Young 2002.

institutions to keep people and territory within their jurisdiction. Creating new nation-states is an act of institutional change. That is, to explain which nation-state projects have succeeded in achieving sovereign independence, it is necessary to look to the institutions of the states that gave birth to them. In particular, it is necessary to examine what I call the segmented state and its constituent segment-states. The segmental institutions thesis explains why almost all nation-states created in the past two centuries have emerged from a crisis of stateness that has developed within this specific institutional framework. The creation of new nation-states is institutional change that responds to the failure of segmental institutions.

### *Some Terminology*

This brief overview of the segmental institutions thesis has already introduced some terms that need more precise definitions before continuing. A *nation-state project* is a claim that a specific population (purportedly a nation) should be self-governing within a sovereign state of its own—one that may not yet exist.<sup>15</sup> Challengers to the status quo who press nation-state projects belong to the category of constitutional claimants demanding a greater share of an existing state's powers or decision rights. Unlike other constitutional claimants, who may be democratic reformers, civil libertarians, or corporatist groups, claimants pressing nation-state projects ultimately seek not simply to change the government or the regime within an existing state but to change the very human and geographic boundaries of the state itself. Unlike other autonomy claims, which much scholarship argues are *either* territorial *or* communal claims, nation-state projects are simultaneously territorial *and* communal.<sup>16</sup> Nation-state projects assert that a community of people has a right to a state of its own within a specific territorial domain that allegedly belongs to that people as its homeland.

The nation-state simultaneously defines a territorial jurisdiction (the state) and a political community (the nation). A *segmented state* (which may itself claim to be a nation-state) divides its territory and population further among separate jurisdictions and gives the population that purportedly is indigenous to each jurisdiction a distinct political status. In the terminology I develop in chapter 2, these institutions create a *common-state* that is common to the whole territory and population and separate *segment-states* for the separate territories and populations. Segment-states are not simply territorial jurisdictions within a federal state; they also contain juridically separate communities of peoples who purportedly have special claim to that

<sup>15</sup> Compare Breuilly 1994, 1, 9; Hechter and Levi 1979, 262. For alternative definitions, see Connor 1994; Haas 1986; Hutchinson 1987.

<sup>16</sup> A. Smith 1979, 21–22; O'Leary 2001.

jurisdiction as a homeland. For example, the USSR as a common-state was purportedly the sovereign expression of the right of the Soviet people to self-governance—that is, a nation-state. Yet the fifteen union republics, such as the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), which were segment-states, also purportedly expressed the sovereign right of their respective nations to statehood and self-governance.

In an age in which almost all states are based on claims of popular sovereignty, the segmented state has been an attempt to compromise with the simple logic of the nation-state: one people, one state. The segmented state began as modern democracies extended the franchise to inhabitants of the metropolitan core, like the United Kingdom, but refused to extend it to subjects of similar strata in colonies or protectorates. Hence, a complex formula began to emerge: one nation (Britons) and many subjects outside the nation, but under one common-state (the United Kingdom), which constituted the nation-state of only some (the British). Then many of the subjects received states of their own as colonies and protectorates were permitted to develop their own governing institutions, so the formula became even more complex: many nations (British, Nigerians, and others), many segment-states (Nigeria and others), but submission to one common-state (the United Kingdom), which remained the nation-state of only some (the British). The varieties of segmented states expanded further as governments began to treat parts of the population within the metropolitan core as separate nations. Then the formula became still more complex: many nations (Northern Irish, Scots, Welsh, and perhaps English), many segment-states (Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales), but subsumed within one common-nation (Britons) and one common-state (the United Kingdom). All of this institutional gerrymandering defies the simple logic of popular sovereignty and in many parts of the world has led to institutions that have proved less durable than the simple nation-state.

The segmental institutions thesis leads to the view that typically only states have given birth to new nation-states. There is no spontaneous generation. As states began to turn their populations into citizens, parts of the common-state were left out, particularly parts that were inhabited by culturally distinct populations. In the age of nationalism, these territories and populations often became the bases of segment-states. When the common-state was no longer willing to accept the losses associated with maintaining these separate jurisdictions, the common-state began either to incorporate its segment-states as parts of the metropolitan core or to shed them as new nation-states. This institutionalist perspective shifts our focus so that new nation-states are not in the first instance the expression of society but an adaptation of existing state institutions to political circumstances that those institutions helped create.

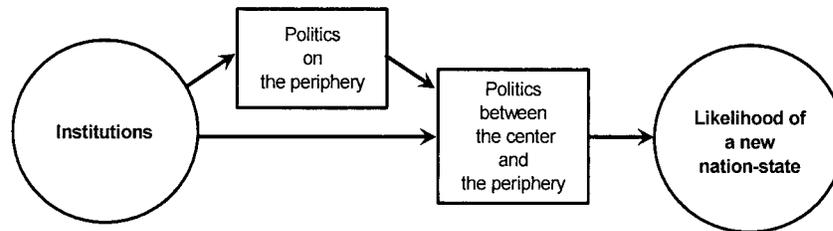


Figure 1.2 The segmental institutions thesis.

### *Consequences of Segmental Institutions*

Segmental institutions shape politics in unique ways (figure 1.2). First, they shape the politics on the periphery in which proponents of competing nation-state projects contend to establish political-identity hegemony within a target population and within a target homeland. Second, segmental institutions shape politics between the periphery and the center in which these proponents of alternative nation-state projects seek to induce the leaders of the common-state to shower their projects with favors, including independence. In both these arenas, proponents of nation-state projects empowered with segment-states are privileged in ways that other proponents of nation-state projects can only envy.

Not all segment-states become nation-states, however, so we also need to examine the ways in which segment-states differ from one another in order to identify the characteristics that lead to independence. The segmental institutions thesis argues that variations in the institutional design of different segmented states are most important in determining whether the outcome will be a nation-state crisis and the creation of new nation-states. Specifically, the likelihood of the breakup of segmented states depends to a large extent on the combined effect of (1) the balance of leverage between segment-state and common-state leaders (that is, the coercion that each group of leaders can use against the other) and (2) the differential empowerment of the population of the segment-state in segment-state politics and common-state politics (that is, whether the population of the segment-state governs itself and participates in the governance of the common-state). An extremely volatile situation—a situation in which the failure of the segmented state and the creation of new nation-states are more likely—arises when segmental institutions create the following conditions: (1) the segment-state leaders consolidate control over politics and the expression of national identity within their segment-states; (2) the segment-state leaders are autonomous from the common-state leaders, control a greater share of decision rights and revenue streams, and dominate cultural institutions within their segment-states; (3) common-state decision making excludes

segment-state publics; and (4) the common-state leadership divides or weakens. This is a mouthful and requires further explanation in later chapters, but the core insight is that the presence of more of these four conditions as a result of the design of segmental institutions moves a segmented state closer to failure and segment-states closer to independence.

The segmental institutions thesis is an extension of the institutionalists' most fundamental claim, that political institutions structure political life. Admittedly, the institutions discussed here are not the usual institutions discussed by students of legislatures, electoral systems, or bureaucracies.<sup>17</sup> Yet the sign of a vibrant analytic approach such as the institutionalist approach is that analysis using such an approach can be extended beyond the easy issues to those that are on the research frontier. This book presents the claim that the nation-state is one of the most important political institutions of modern life, setting the foundation for both domestic and international politics, defining the major players in both arenas, and therefore shaping the agenda in domestic and global decision making. It deserves close attention from institutionalists.

Institutionalists make a number of claims that have direct bearing on the origins of nation-states. First, political institutions influence whether the dominant claimants in the political life of an existing state are politicians speaking on behalf of national groups and not spokespersons for some other "imagined" social group such as a class. In all political systems, some politicians demand changes in the allocation of decision-making rights, but only under specific institutional constraints are the most prominent claimants likely to be those making claims on behalf of populations purportedly having a right to states of their own. Second, in polities where nationalist claims are on the table, institutions privilege some nation-state projects over others. Joseph Rothschild emphasizes that "politicized ethnicity surfaces and hardens along the most accessible and yielding fault-line of potential cleavage available" and that political institutions are powerful "in affecting the configuration of ethnic groups, the cutting edge of ethnic conflict, and the very content of ethnicity per se."<sup>18</sup> Third, state institutions favor specific organizational strategies in pressing a nation-state project. For example, an electoral system may favor the formation of an interest group rather than a political party to press a project. The presence of segmental institutions favors segment-state governments over either parties or interest groups as the most efficient means for pressing such claims.<sup>19</sup> Fourth, by handing decision-making rights to some individuals

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Shepsle 1989; Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Cox 1997; P. Hall and Taylor 1996.

<sup>18</sup> Rothschild 1981, 96, 99.

<sup>19</sup> Compare institutional arrangements that favor different organizational strategies in Rokkan and Urwin 1983, 140; Banfield and Moynihan 1975.

rather than others, political institutions influence the internal structure of the groups on behalf of which the nation-state projects are advanced. Political institutions affect the probability that different types of politicians will emerge as the dominant spokespersons for a nation-state project. For example, nonterritorial ethnocorporatism in the Ottoman Empire's *millet* system, which gave communal autonomy to confessional groups under their religious leaders, led to a different type of national leader in the empire than did the territorially based ethnofederalism governed by Communist Party secretaries within the USSR. And fifth, political institutions shape the issues on the bargaining table by affecting the expected net payoff to different demands. For example, segment-states lower the costs of secession by providing secessionists with a ready-made governing structure. Without segment-states, many potential nationalists are deterred from pressing a nation-state project by the overwhelming costs of creating a state de novo and so press alternative demands, such as civil liberties, within an existing state.

In short, political institutions determine who plays; distribute opportunities to act; favor some types of political coalitions, organizational forms, and strategies over others; and shape the political agenda.<sup>20</sup> On the *tabula rasa* of an institution-free world, politics might directly express the “objective” attributes of the population and the patterning of preferences in the public. In nationalist politics the major claimant groups might form on the basis of a so-called primordial affinity among its members. Once political institutions enter the picture, however, they help determine whether pressing a particular nation-state project is likely to be efficacious. In the competition among nation-state projects to press their claims on states, political institutions select the nation-state projects that are most likely to challenge existing states and most likely to succeed.

### *Politics on the Periphery*

In the politics on the periphery, segment-states make it possible for the proponents of one nation-state project to establish *political-identity hegemony*. This term refers both to the relative predominance of a national identity within “the people” and to the relative empowerment of a cohort of politicians associated with that project within “the homeland.” Under political-identity hegemony, intellectuals and the public at large are not torn among competing national identities. Within the borders of the homeland, the cohort of politicians associated with the project of the seg-

<sup>20</sup> Ostrom 1992, 24; Lalman, Oppenheimer, and Swistak 1993, 81; Shepsle 1989, 135–36; Tarrow 1988, 429–30; Eisinger 1973; Kitschelt 1986.

ment-state determines when and whether alternative national identities will be expressed in politics.

In the absence of segment-states, political-identity hegemony is unlikely. Intellectuals on the periphery tend to multiply the number of alternative nation-state projects. Publics have little reason to make costly commitments to one or another of these projects. For example, in the late Russian Empire in Central Asia, intellectuals propagated projects for a pan-Islamic state, a pan-Turkic state, a Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva, Sarts versus nomads, Greater Uzbekistan and Greater Kirgizia, separate Tajik and Kazakh states, still smaller states, such as a separate state for the Kazakh Greater Horde, and various leagues of independent tribes and cities, as well as projects for a reformed but united Russia. In the absence of segment-states that propagated their own nation-state projects, alternative projects proliferated in Central Asia, intellectual fads followed one after another, and the public at large remained ignorant of most of these. Thus, most proponents of nation-state projects create no more than parlor nations—or perhaps campus nations, in recent decades. These projects, examples of which include the nation-state projects for Turkestan, Novorossia, or Idel-Ural in the 1990s, remain the prized possessions of small circles of intellectuals who fail to fire many imaginations outside their salons or classrooms.

In the presence of segment-states, it becomes significantly more likely that a cohort of politicians associated with a particular nation-state project will establish political-identity hegemony. The leaders of the segment-state are uniquely empowered to propagate a nation-state project that can challenge the common-state. Segment-state leaders can offer special inducements for intellectuals to abandon their own favored nation-state projects and accept a second-best made real in the segment-state. Segment-state leaders can induce the public at large to make costly commitments to the nation-state project. The leaders of segment-states can make it very difficult for proponents of alternative nation-state projects to garner support. Thus, those nation-state projects whose leaders control segment-states have had greater success at expanding the membership of their imagined communities beyond a few parlors or classrooms. In the competition among the proponents of alternative nation-state projects, the leaders of segment-states have been uniquely positioned to expand their membership and press the common-state for concessions of sovereign rights.

The dramatic way in which the introduction of segmental institutions can transform politics on the periphery is illustrated by a simple comparison of Bulgarian nationalism before and after 1878. In that year, the Treaty of San Stefano granted Bulgaria political autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. From that moment forward, until the achievement of independence on October 5, 1908, Bulgarian nationalism was transformed. Prior to statehood, the Bulgarian national movement was disunited, and during

the 1860s and 1870s its leaders lived for the most part in Serbia and Romania. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church leaders empowered within the Ottoman *millet* system successfully championed the cause of elevating their religious status by creating an autonomous Bulgarian Exarchate (1872), but had far less interest in a separate Bulgarian state. The creation of a Bulgarian segment-state came when the Russian Empire forced the Ottoman Empire to concede territorial autonomy in the peace treaty of 1878. Once the autonomous Kingdom of Bulgaria was established, however, Bulgarian nationalism came into its own within Bulgaria. Russia had “expected gratitude in return for its role in securing independence, helping build the new state, and strengthening it by the continued presence of the Russian army. But the Bulgars turned out to be nationalists above all else.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, through concerted efforts of the kingdom, the Bulgarians within seven years (1885) had forced the Ottoman Empire and the European powers to accept Bulgaria’s annexation of Eastern Rumelia, and within thirty years they had won their independence.

### *Politics between Periphery and Center*

In addition to shaping politics on the periphery, segmental institutions shape the politics between center and periphery.<sup>22</sup> Segmented states tend to be unstable, to suffer recurring nation-state crises, and eventually to abandon segmental institutions in either centralization or dissolution of the common-state. For example, centralization was the outcome of the early Soviet nation-state crisis that followed the creation of the USSR in 1922; this ended in the concentration of union republic powers in the hands of Joseph Stalin. In the post-Soviet experience, centralization was also the outcome of the Russian nation-state crisis; centralization began in 1993 and the pace accelerated after 1999. Yet segmented states are also likely to fail by falling apart and generating new nation-states. The dissolution of the Russian Empire in 1917 led to the independence of Finland. The dissolution of the USSR following the Soviet nation-state crisis of the *perestroika* period, from 1988 to 1991, produced fifteen successor states.

Segmental institutions create this instability because of the manner in which they distribute capabilities and shape the incentives of those empowered with these capabilities. Six consequences of segmental institutions increase the odds of dissolution and the independence of new nation-states. First, under segmental institutions, center versus periphery politics come to be dominated by bargaining between leaders of the common-state and

<sup>21</sup> Shaw and Shaw 1977, 2:196–97. Also see 160–62, 187–89, and 196–99. Also see Jelavich and Jelavich 1977, 128–40; Mann 1995, 49.

<sup>22</sup> The seminal work is Rothchild 1970.

leaders of segment-states. Segmental institutions shape center-periphery politics by permitting the leaders of segment-states to muscle their way to the head of the queue and to elbow aside other interests and other nation-state projects seeking attention and favors from common-state leaders. Cross-cutting interests that might hold the common-state together find it hard to get a seat at the bargaining table in the segmented state. This was evident in the narrowing of the circle of participants in negotiations over policy and reform in the last two years of the USSR: by mid-1991, direct negotiations among leaders of union republics (such as Boris Yeltsin for Russia) and the leader of the USSR (Mikhail Gorbachev) came to exclude the leaders of almost every other interest.

Second, under segmental institutions, the agenda of center-periphery politics increasingly comes to focus on a zero-sum conflict over allocating decision rights between common-state and segment-state governments. In this context it becomes harder to find compromises, because every gain for one side comes to be seen as a loss for the other. In the last eighteen months of the USSR more issues, such as environmental protection and economic reform, and eventually almost all issues were subsumed by the overarching negotiations over allocation of decision rights between the USSR government and the individual union republic governments.

Third, segmental institutions encourage leaders of segment-states to make more radical demands on behalf of their nation-state projects—that is, to demand a larger share of the decision rights of the common-state and ultimately to play the sovereignty card. Radicalization of segment-state leadership (at least on the nation-state issue) results from a change of leadership in some segment-states; leaders who are cross-pressured by the competing demands of the common-state and a segment-state often retreat to the sidelines of politics. Politicians with stronger objections to remaining within the common-state are likely to come to dominate political life. Yet even moderate leaders who remain in politics may press more radical nationalist demands, because in doing so they can externalize the costs of making everyone within the segment-state better off—at the expense of the common-state. Further radicalization of segment-state demands results from competition *among* segment-states. Once one segment-state has grabbed a greater share of the common-state powers, other segment-state leaders must also make power grabs. No leader wants to be the sucker left behind feeding the common-state that every other segment-state is milking dry. The ultimate radicalization of segment-state demands often takes place when segment-state leaders, frustrated by the multiplication of claims on the bargaining table, seek the unique advantages that come from playing the sovereignty card. Against a cacophony of competing demands, this is a nearly certain way to get heard: nothing momentarily silences the bargaining room and privileges the claims of a segment-state

more than the assertion that these claims represent the sovereign prerogative of its people.

Fourth, segmental institutions increase the likelihood of dissolution because they foster divergent development among segment-states. Development along divergent trajectories makes it harder to find common policies and common institutions that can address the needs of all segment-states. In the late USSR, as the union republics developed in different directions, it became harder to identify a set of common-state institutions that could hold together a democratic Estonia and autocratic Turkmenistan and all the other republics in between. Moreover, the type of common-state that would reassure the Communist leadership of Belarus would be seen as threatening by a democratizing republic like Armenia, and vice versa. Previously acceptable compromises that at one time would have kept the common-state whole simply disappeared from the bargaining range as the union republics developed along diverging paths.

Fifth, segmental institutions increase the likelihood of dissolution because they empower the leaders of segment-states with means to make it too costly for the leaders of the common-state to try to hold on to the segment-state. The decision rights of segment-states become institutional weapons that give the leaders of segment-states leverage over the common-state leadership. In the late USSR, withholding funds from the all-union budget, imposing embargoes on the export of foodstuffs to other parts of the common-state, and mobilizing volunteer armed forces became means to increase the costs to Gorbachev, in hopes of inducing him to concede independence.

Sixth, in the extreme, segmental institutions can lead to weakening of the common-state government itself. Where segment-state governments are empowered within the common-state government, they can use this power to force deadlock in common-state deliberations and paralyze the common-state government. Where segment-state leaders induce the common-state leadership to devolve more powers onto the segment-state governments, the central government ceases to be a presence in the segment-states, or, as in the USSR, the central government may simply wither away.

### **Implications for Some Common Answers**

As the previous section indicates, the segmental institutions thesis treats the most common explanations for the success of nation-state projects as intervening or endogenous factors affected by the presence and shape of segmental institutions. Studies of social movements, collective action, and violence—and the nationalist variants of each of these—have stressed the importance of identities, grievances and greed, mobilization of resources,

political opportunities, and international recognition.<sup>23</sup> The segmental institutions thesis does not dismiss these factors but argues that normally they are conducive to the success of a nation-state project only in the presence of segmental institutions. That is, segmental institutions, such as the governments of autonomous homelands or self-governing colonies, come first in the causal chain of the thesis and align these other factors. In the creation of new nation-states, all these other factors are necessary in the sense that the misalignment of even one can pose an insurmountable obstacle to the success of a nation-state project; none alone is sufficient.<sup>24</sup> In the modern world, segmental institutions are almost always necessary for the creation of a new state, because usually these institutions alone have been able to align all these factors in a configuration that favors the success of a nation-state project.<sup>25</sup>

Political institutions have a profound effect in coordinating identities, framing and coordinating grievances, channeling ambition, distributing resources for collective action, creating opportunities to act effectively, and winning international recognition. Concerning identities, the hypotheses of the segmental institutions thesis identify the conditions under which one identity on the periphery is likely to coordinate and to achieve regional ascendancy in political-identity hegemony.<sup>26</sup> Under this hegemony the political leadership identified with a segment-state and its nation-state project may not be able to mobilize extensive nationalist support, but it can block the expression of alternative projects.<sup>27</sup> Concerning grievance and greed, the hypotheses of the segmental institutions thesis identify institutional conditions under which grievances—such as those identified in relative deprivation theories—are likely to focus on independence as a solution, and ambition is channeled toward creation of an independent political system rather than seeking advancement within the existing political system.<sup>28</sup> The hypotheses of the segmental institutions thesis are consistent with many insights of the resource-mobilization approach to social movements

<sup>23</sup> Gurr (2000, 65–96) incorporates all of these in a process model. Also see McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 243–46, 252–55; Hechter and Okamoto 2001.

<sup>24</sup> Thus, partisans of approaches that seek to privilege one or the other of these factors must assume that the other factors are always favorable. See McCarthy and Zald 1987; Oberschall 1973.

<sup>25</sup> In addition to these mainstream explanations, political geographers privilege geography (Hartshorne 1936; M. Anderson 1996; Mellor 1989, 74–103; Parker and Dikshit, 1997) and sociobiologists privilege genetics in their explanations (Van den Berghe 1978).

<sup>26</sup> The emphasis on identities is particularly prominent in the work of Connor (1994), Geertz (1963), Haas (1993), and A. Smith (1981). Also see Nagel 1994.

<sup>27</sup> On the relative importance of language and religion in the genesis of nation-states, see A. Smith 1986; Armstrong 1982; Safran 1992.

<sup>28</sup> On grievances, see Gurr 1971. On greed and grievances, see Collier and Hoeffler 2000; Nagel and Olzak 1982; Ragin 1979; Rudolph and Thompson 1985.

as well. Specifically, the segment-state's superior organizational resources and its hierarchical rather than atomistic or corpuscular structure give it many advantages over its competitors in the competition to place claims on the bargaining table and to wring concessions from the central government.<sup>29</sup> According to the hypotheses of the segmental institutions thesis, segmental institutions are also essential to creating a political opportunity structure that makes it more likely that secessions will succeed.<sup>30</sup> For example, segmental institutions give some proponents privileged access to the leadership of the common-state; the leaders of autonomous homelands or colonies often become the officially sanctioned voice of every interest on the periphery before the common-state government. Segmental institutions also increase the likelihood that strong segment-state governments will confront a weakened common-state government. Finally, the segmental institutions thesis argues that segment-states are much more likely to gain international recognition as sovereign states than projects that lack segment-states. International recognition can determine whether a nation-state project achieves *de jure* status and can deter any attempt by the common-state government to reintegrate a secession state. Yet the segmental institutions thesis argues that these last steps are often only a ratification of a lengthy process of gestation of political-identity hegemony, focusing of greed and grievance on the solution offered by a nation-state project, empowerment of proponents of that project, and weakening of an existing common-state.

### *Nationalism*

The most profound implication of the segmental institutions thesis may concern our understanding of the relationship between nationalism and nation-states. A usual story told about the creation of nation-states focuses on the political awakening of a people or the politicization of an ethnic group that galvanizes it into a nation, provides it a platform for nationalist mobilization, and finally empowers it with a state of its own. This is a common theme that unites scholars on both sides of their sectarian disputes between primordialists and constructivists. For primordialists such as Walker Connor, the demand for a nation-state and separatism arises from the awakening of ethnic self-awareness.<sup>31</sup> For constructivists such as Paul Brass, the process of nationality formation is "one in which objective differ-

<sup>29</sup> McCarthy and Zald 1987, 15–42; Oberschall 1973; McAdam 1982; Morris 1984; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1988; also see Hardin 1995; Hechter and Okamoto 2001, 202–3.

<sup>30</sup> Tarrow 1977, 142; 1989, 32–38; Tilly 1978, 1984, 297–317. Also see Oberschall 1973; Rothschild 1981, 96, 99.

<sup>31</sup> Connor 1972; A. Smith 1986. Also see H. Seton-Watson 1977, 1–5.

ences between ethnic groups acquire increasingly subjective and symbolic significance, are translated into a consciousness of, and a desire for, group solidarity, and become the basis for successful political demands.”<sup>32</sup> These are prominent themes in interpretations of the fourth phase of nation-state creation, from 1986 to 2000.<sup>33</sup> The story of many new nation-states in the fourth phase—and even many failed national projects—is widely told as the awakening or the failure of national identity.<sup>34</sup> For example, Ian Bremmer attributes the secession of union republics in 1991 to the failure of the USSR to create a Soviet nation that could bind its various peoples and to counter “the persistence of popular national feelings.”<sup>35</sup> Gail Lapidus offers a compelling account of how the political liberalization called *glasnost* created the conditions for “cognitive liberation” in which cultural and intellectual elites began “to reshape and transform collective consciousness within the national republics.” The subsequent mobilization of these communities—particularly by the popular fronts—and the political success of nationalists in the union republic elections of 1990 revealed “the emergence of mass nationalism as a major political force.”<sup>36</sup>

In a similar way, Miroslav Hroch seeks to explain which nationalist movements among the “small nations” of Europe succeeded.<sup>37</sup> He defines the small nations as those peoples without states of their own that nevertheless challenged the existing states of Europe. For Hroch, the explanation of success lies with the development of a national movement. Hroch postulates that the fundamental phases of a national movement are growing cultural awareness of national distinctiveness among intellectuals, the development of a political program of independence, and mass mobilization on behalf of this program. Thus, for Hroch, the question is framed to exclude the role of statehood as a cause (rather than a consequence) of independence and to focus on nationalist mobilization as an essential step to statehood. Among his eight case studies, however, the two unambiguous successes are precisely cases of national revival with the aid of segment-states; thus, the Norwegian and Finnish movements were able to achieve sovereignty largely through their own efforts. The other movements that Hroch analyzes either failed to achieve independence (the Belgian Flemish and Schleswig Danes), or achieved independence only as part of another nation-state project (Czechs and Slovaks), or came to power not through their own efforts but as a result of great power intervention in wartime or in a peace settlement (Estonians, Lithuanians, and Czechoslovakians).

<sup>32</sup> Brass 1991, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Armstrong 1982; Breuilly 1994; Gellner 1983.

<sup>34</sup> Crowther 1991; Rutland 1994; Zaprudnik 1993.

<sup>35</sup> Bremmer 1997, 9–10.

<sup>36</sup> Lapidus 1992. Also see Beissinger 2002.

<sup>37</sup> Hroch 2000, xiii, 22–24, 177–91; also see Deutsch 1966, 86–106.

The segmental institutions thesis presents an alternative view: few nation-states actually resulted from such a process. Neither the national awakening stories nor the national mobilization stories can be generalized as a hypothesis that accurately identifies which nation-state projects have succeeded. In only a minority of successful nation-state projects was nationalism a strong popular force prior to statehood or independence. Dankwart Rustow notes that seldom in the founding of nation-states did national unity precede the creation of state authority; a rare exception is Japan. More typically, state authority came first, as in most of Western Europe.<sup>38</sup> Rupert Emerson argues that typically it was the state that was the “nation-maker” rather than nations creating states; this, he argues, was true almost everywhere—in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and much of Asia.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in the story of new states created by decolonization, the crises of national identity typically followed independence.<sup>40</sup>

This is true of the so-called “new” nation-states of Eastern Europe created in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hans Kohn, writing during World War II, contended that the process of nation-state creation was different in Eastern Europe because nationalism preceded statehood, and so nations “grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern.”<sup>41</sup> In most new states of the region, however, national identity was not well developed prior to independence, and even less so before any statehood. As noted previously, before Bulgaria achieved autonomy and statehood at the Berlin Conference of 1878—a solution imposed on the Ottoman Empire by the European powers—Bulgarian elites had been divided on the issue of whether to seek political autonomy; popular support for this objective was sparse.<sup>42</sup> In Albania, which had neither statehood nor autonomy on the eve of independence (1912), indigenous leaders, according to Charles and Barbara Jelavich, “did not want the Ottoman Empire dismantled, nor did they seek an independent state.”<sup>43</sup> In the western borderlands of the Russian Empire, according to Ronald Suny, independence “was not the result of a broad-based and coherent nationalist movement that realized long-held aspirations to nationhood.”<sup>44</sup>

Even in the fourth phase of nation-state creation this ambiguity of nationalism prior to independence was common in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Even autonomy and statehood in the form of a segment-state did not necessarily galvanize a single secessionist nationalism prior to indepen-

<sup>38</sup> Rustow 1967, 127–28.

<sup>39</sup> Emerson 1960, 114–19.

<sup>40</sup> Pye 1962, 1971.

<sup>41</sup> Kohn 1944, 329.

<sup>42</sup> Jelavich and Jelavich 1977, 134–47.

<sup>43</sup> Jelavich and Jelavich 1977, 222.

<sup>44</sup> Suny 1993b, 37, 81.

dence. For example, in the three countries that delivered the coup de grâce to the USSR in the Belovezhskii settlement in December 1991—Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine—popular sentiment was opposed to or ambivalent about secession. Even two years after the breakup of the USSR, John Dunlop could describe Russians as “a people in quest of an identity,” because many Russians still clung to the idea that the USSR was their nation-state.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, Mark Beissinger attributes the continuing weakness of Russian identity to the ambiguity in the Russian mind concerning any distinction between the Russian nation and the Russian empire.<sup>46</sup> As late as 2000, a survey of 1,600 Russian citizens found that 55 percent “believe it is Russia’s historical mission to incorporate various peoples into one state that would be a successor to the pre-1917 Russian Empire or the Soviet Union.”<sup>47</sup> In Ukraine, citizens were divided in their national identities—Soviet and Ukrainian identities—and, as Alexander Motyl concludes, independence came “not because the [Ukrainian] nationalists tried harder or because they were stronger, but because the external conditions were right.”<sup>48</sup> Belarusian popular nationalism was particularly weak, and support for the USSR remained high in Belarus even after the breakup.<sup>49</sup> In a national referendum on May 14, 1995, with a 65 percent turnout, 83.3 percent supported the restoration of Russian as an official language of the state and economic integration with Russia, and 75.1 percent supported restoration of the Soviet-era symbols of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>50</sup>

Similar observations have been made about the ambivalence of popular nationalism in the creation of some of the postcommunist nation-states in Eastern Europe. Indeed, the Czech and Slovak nation-states achieved sovereign independence even though a solid majority of the population apparently favored a united Czechoslovakia.<sup>51</sup> Martin Butora and Zora Butorova estimate that supporters of independence in Slovakia constituted less than a third of the population and that supporters in the Czech Republic constituted less than that. Even after separation, surveys in 1993 indicated that less than one-third of the combined Czech and Slovak populations would have voted for independence in a referendum and twice that number would have voted to retain Czechoslovakia.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Dunlop 1993–94, 603. Also see Dixon 1996; Solchanyk 1992, 31–45; Colton 2000, 158.

<sup>46</sup> Beissinger 1995, 149–84.

<sup>47</sup> *Interfax* December 26, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Motyl 1993, 23; Solchanyk 1994; Pirie 1996, 1096; Barrington 1997; Kuzio 2000; Wilson 2000, 160–61.

<sup>49</sup> Jocelyn 1998, 73–83; Marples 1996, 124.

<sup>50</sup> See Olcott 2002, 24–50; Akiner 1995, 60; van der Leeuw 2000, 169; Roy 2000.

<sup>51</sup> Wolchik 1994, 177.

<sup>52</sup> Butora and Butorova 1993, 721–22; also see Hilde 1999.

The segmental institutions thesis supports the view that widespread popular nationalism seldom exists prior to statehood and typically does not precede independence, and thus does not provide an entirely satisfactory explanation for which nation-state projects succeed. In a minority of cases—and Israel and Pakistan present two of the clearest cases of this—nationalism preceded both statehood and independence. More frequently, successful claims on behalf of a nation-state have not been backed by extensive or intense popular nationalism because much of the population is parochial or cross-pressured. In a few instances, such as the United States, the creation of a nation occurred nearly simultaneously with the achievement of independence and statehood.<sup>53</sup> More frequently, states created nations and popular nationalism, and states created these after independence.

The absence of a coherent popular and elite nationalism has not been fatal to nation-state projects in the way that the absence of a segment-state has been. Yet the segmental institutions thesis argues that a successful claim does require something that sometimes resembles nationalism—political-identity hegemony. This describes a situation in which other ethnopoliticians cannot trump the nation-state project that supports segment-state independence by mobilizing the population on behalf of an alternative national claim. Thus, in the breakup of the USSR, Gorbachev's government largely failed in its attempt to trump the secessionist claims of union republic leaders by mobilizing the Soviet identity among members of titular nationalities.<sup>54</sup> According to the segmental institutions thesis, segment-states provide their leaders with unique opportunities to establish this political-identity hegemony. Segment-state leaders with political-identity hegemony are in a critical “switchman” role to determine when any national identity will be mobilized into political action.<sup>55</sup>

#### STATES COORDINATE NATIONAL IDENTITIES

In the absence of a state, either a nation-state or segment-state, that propagates a specific nation-state project, national identities seldom coordinate on a single alternative to the existing common-state. The state coordinates identities by serving as a unique focal point, but it reinforces this natural psychological tendency by rewarding supporters, suppressing proponents of alternative nation-state projects, and propagating the official project

<sup>53</sup> Kohn 1957; Morgan 1976.

<sup>54</sup> Alternatively, Moscow could trump the national claims of the leaders of provinces and second-order homelands with Russian majorities. See, for example, Muiznieks 1990, 19–24; Kirkow 1995, 932–33.

<sup>55</sup> Tarrow 1977, 4.

through public education, public ceremonies, and the many other tools a state uses to celebrate itself.<sup>56</sup>

The segmental institutions thesis argues that in the rare circumstances in which a strong nationalism exists prior to independence, it is usually the product of a segment-state. This provides the focal point for the coordination of imaginations and the political resources to privilege one project above others by hiring linguists, historians, and polemicists to embellish and propagate this project. In short, the segmental institutions thesis treats the role of nationalism in the creation of nation-states as largely an endogenous factor in the process that led from segment-states to nation-states, rather than a prior condition or cause. The heroes in the forging of nationalism are often not the romantic poets but politicians, humble bureaucrats, and the authors of dreadfully dull textbooks, who help shape each generation's knowledge of its world.<sup>57</sup> For example, many Soviet bureaucrats circulated and rose within the narrow nationalized hierarchies of their respective union republics. John Armstrong noted about these denizens of the governmental-administrative apparatus, or apparatchiks, that they "can scarcely fail to develop a certain amount of fellow-feeling with other officials in the area, perhaps even that feeling of 'local patriotism' which leads Party officials to endeavor to conceal the faults and the self-seeking of their associates from higher authorities."<sup>58</sup> At the union republic level this patriotism became a formal nationalism. Thus, as Roman Szporluk notes, "national awakers" emerged from within "established power structures, power relationships, and the values upholding them."<sup>59</sup>

For almost two centuries, political leaders and apparatchiks have been the core of nation-state projects that succeeded. Benedict Anderson finds a similar pattern in the colonies of Latin America almost two hundred years ago in the phenomenon he labels Creole nationalism. This emerged within "administrative units" among bureaucrats who came to imagine these segments of the state as "fatherlands." These "absolutist functionaries" spread this sense of political solidarity to the broader population with the assistance of "provincial Creole printmen."<sup>60</sup>

In this way the histories of successful nationalisms are surprisingly uniform around the world. Students of nationalism have tended to view the type of nationalism that predominates in the region that is now the post-communist world as somehow different from the original nationalisms that emerged in Western Europe. The segmental institutions thesis suggests

<sup>56</sup> Schelling 1960.

<sup>57</sup> Compare A. Smith 1986; Connor 1994, 145–64.

<sup>58</sup> Armstrong 1959, 84.

<sup>59</sup> Szporluk 2000, 366–67.

<sup>60</sup> B. Anderson 1991, 53; also see Herbst 2000, 58–109.

that it is not fundamentally so. Hans Kohn first argued that Western nationalism, found in England, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States, arose only after the formation of *de facto* nation-states. Eastern nationalism, found in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Asia, arose among ethnic groups prior to the consolidation of nation-states.<sup>61</sup> In this now common view, Eastern European and Eurasian nationalisms frequently challenge existing states and seek “to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands.”<sup>62</sup> The segmental institutions thesis leads us to see Eastern nationalism as much more like Western nationalism than Kohn would have had us believe. Both originated as nationalism among political leaders and bureaucrats, which states—both sovereign states and segment-states—then propagated among ever-widening circles of the population.<sup>63</sup>

In France, for example, the conception of France emerged within the royal court, and as late as the early twentieth century the state was still turning peasants into Frenchmen. In less than a generation—in the brief span of time immediately before and during the French Revolution of 1789—many French elites outside the government began to think like nationalists. This was the surprising and unintended consequence of steps, such as public instruction, undertaken by the king’s bureaucracy over the preceding century to form Frenchmen loyal to the Crown. It set the stage for the National Assembly to follow the lead of the Americans and announce that “the source of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation.”<sup>64</sup> The inculcation of a new nationalism in previously parochial peoples took the concerted efforts of the French state at least another century. Eugen Weber traces how French mentalities changed in the half century before World War I: “A lot of Frenchmen did not know that they belonged together until the long didactic campaigns of the later nineteenth century told them they did, and their own experience as conditions changed told them that this made sense.” As Alexandre Sanguinetti summarizes, “France is a deliberate political construction for whose creation the central power has never ceased to fight.”<sup>65</sup>

Similarly, in Great Britain, the reality of a new state formed in 1707 and the concerted effort of the Crown and civil service forged a new national identity. The latecomer, British nationalism, triumphed where older, narrower English and Scottish nationalisms had failed. As Linda Colley docu-

<sup>61</sup> Kohn 1944.

<sup>62</sup> Liebich 1995.

<sup>63</sup> Jocelyn 1998, 78–79; Roy 2000, x [sic], 107. Also see Pflanze 1996; Kuzio 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Bell 2001, 13–14.

<sup>65</sup> Weber 1976, 113. Also see Sahlins 1989, 286.

ments, the British identity was invented and deliberately propagated by the state through carefully staged royal visits, with the assistance of newspapers. British civil servants were among the first to develop an identity that transcended narrower identities as English, Scots, and Welsh. As elsewhere, the development of nationalism was linked with the popularization of politics: “Being a patriot was a way of claiming the right to participate in British public life, and ultimately a means of demanding a much broader access to citizenship.”<sup>66</sup> Britishness did not replace or emerge from specific identities like Englishness; it did not emerge from integration or homogenization of cultures. “Instead, Britishness was superimposed over an array of internal differences” that in the nineteenth century did not become national identities in the sense of bringing rights to participate in political life in separate states.<sup>67</sup> By 1900 the British national identity had become widespread throughout the island.<sup>68</sup>

Even in the great unification projects of the mid-nineteenth century, nationalism was the project of a state. As the Risorgimento leader Massimo d’Azeglio proclaimed, “We have made Italy. Now we have to make Italians.”<sup>69</sup> Similarly, in Germany, as Abigail Green stresses, German nationalism before unification was weak and had limited popular appeal. Even after 1871, “the German people themselves proved strangely unmoved by national unification.”<sup>70</sup> This newly constructed identity to support the little German (*kleindeutsch*) nation-state that excluded Austria was propagated by the empire under Prussian leadership. Yet the German Empire also revealed the complications that arise in propagating a hegemonic nationalism in a segmented state. With the preservation of segment-states such as Württemberg and Bavaria until World War I, the public received conflicting messages about their fatherlands. German nationalism only slowly gained ascendance in the public.

The importance of the state in propagating nationalism in France, Britain, Italy, and Germany is underscored by the stark contrast with the late development of Austrian nationalism. As Peter Katzenstein noted in 1976, “in the last 150 years the concept of Austria has been disturbingly ambiguous.”<sup>71</sup> Only after 1960 and decades of a separate independent state did a solid majority of Austrians favor the Austrian nation-state over alternative projects, such as unification with Germany.<sup>72</sup> Prior to the breakup of the

<sup>66</sup> Colley 1992, 5; also see 370.

<sup>67</sup> Colley 1992, 6.

<sup>68</sup> Davies 1999, 815.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Bell 2001, 198.

<sup>70</sup> Green 2001, 6, 298–99; also see 97–147, 268, 271, 312–37.

<sup>71</sup> Katzenstein 1976, 12.

<sup>72</sup> Katzenstein 1977.

Austro-Hungarian Empire in World War I, its German-speaking population divided among at least five different nation-state projects—the Greater Austria–Middle Europe project (*großösterreich-mitteeuropäische Lösung*), which would have united the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire with the German Empire; the Greater German project (*großdeutsche Lösung*), which would have abandoned the non-German-speaking areas of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and united the German-speaking areas with the German Empire; the Austro-Hungarian project, which would have kept the empire separate and whole but Germanize the empire; the German-Austria (*Deutschösterreich*) project, which would have separated the German-speaking parts of the empire in an independent state; and separate projects for provinces such as Tyrol. The failure of any single project to achieve hegemony was the consequence of the competing pressures from alternative state elites and institutions—the leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the leaders of “the Kingdoms and Lands Represented in the Parliament” (as the empire minus Hungary came to be styled), and the leaders of diets of separate provinces, such as Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Upper Austria, and Lower Austria. Missing was a pre-independence segment-state for Austria to privilege its nation-state project.

This challenge to the traditional narratives about nation-state creation begs the question of why these narratives are so common. The traditional view of the creation of nation-states that upholds the conventional sequence from national awakening to national independence has enjoyed currency because strong interests come to be associated with this interpretation after a nation-state project has achieved sovereign independence. Governments have an interest in propagating the view that their authority originates with the sovereign will of a people. The official stories of creation are akin to stork myths; both are told by the older generation to disguise many embarrassing facts from the next. (National myths, however, are more powerful than stork myths, because through persistent retelling they can actually create a national awakening.) The conventional sequence finds such resonance in the academy because the research methods of humanists, even when the scholars are not partisans of a particular nation-state project, privilege the story of successful nation-state projects. Most studies select on the dependent variable and seek to explain successful bids for independence.<sup>73</sup> Far fewer books have been published about the failures, with the possible exception of books about the Confederate States of America. With the outcome known, researchers tend to look for evidence

<sup>73</sup> “Selecting on the dependent variable” refers to the methodological problems that arise when a scholar attempts to explain variation in some outcome, such as success versus failure of nation-state projects, but selects only cases of success. The scholar has no evidence to ascertain whether the claimed causes of success were, in fact, absent from the cases of failure.

to explain the success. Scholars interpret ambiguous evidence through knowledge of the outcome. Often the easiest path to ordering history comes through reifying the vaporous connection of national identity that purportedly infuses the air prior to independence but leaves few tangible traces other than the outcome. What evidence that does exist for this official interpretation is collected and preserved in climate-controlled national libraries and archives, while evidence for alternative outcomes is often incinerated as inconsequential litter after a rally for a different nation-state project or as dangerous sedition.

“ETHNIFICATION” TO PRIVILEGE ONE NATION

The segmental institutions thesis also challenges the common view that nationalism represents the politicization of ethnicity. As the Eurasian experience highlights, often ethnicity is the product of a nation-state project, not the other way around. The state creates an ethnic myth to privilege its nation against challengers. Ernst Renan once described the existence of a nation as “an everyday plebiscite.” Yet no nation-states would remain stable if they rested on the shifting majorities that would emerge in daily plebiscites. In the extreme, this would lead to an endless cycling of nation-states as temporary majorities based on various cultural divides and various shared historic memories enjoyed their moments in the sun *seriatim*. So, not only do governments make it very difficult to hold such plebiscites, they expend enormous energy to privilege the nation-state project that favors the status quo. Among the most important ways to privilege the project is to “ethnify” the nation, that is, to propagate a myth of common origin.<sup>74</sup> (The term *myth*, following the tradition of Émile Durkheim, refers to a commonly held belief about origins that may be based on fact, fiction, or some combination of both.)

In short, the plebiscitary nature of the nation-state necessitates the ethnification of the nation. This is an attempt to constrain the present and future by a myth about the past. Nation-state projects concern the present and look forward by claiming that a people should have a state of its own from now on. Ethnic group myths look backward to identify the origins of the group in some remote seminal event and to memorialize their many generations of life together since that event.<sup>75</sup> To give stability to the future, nationalists often create ethnic myths that claim the nation is not simply the consequence of a momentary coordination in response to a plebiscite but the result of centuries that cannot be undone by a single vote.

<sup>74</sup> On alternative views of ethnic groups, see Burgess 1978.

<sup>75</sup> For example, see Schermerhorn 1970. There is a tendency to conflate these two very different concepts; see, for example, Dunn 1995.

This view of the origins of the most important ethnicities is consistent with the view of constructivists, who point out that ethnic groups are constructed,<sup>76</sup> yet it stresses that it is the nation-state that gives stability to ethnicity over time. That is, in an institution-free world, ethnic identities would themselves be constantly shifting, because they build on identities that are multiple and frequently intermittent, fluid, and changeable.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, they can be manipulated by strategic politicians.<sup>78</sup> To provide stability to the nation-state, political leaders must create ethnic groups, but the unique position of the nation-state in turn provides stability to the ethnic groups.

Nowhere are the deliberate act of ethnifying nations and the mutually reinforcing stability of ethnicity, nationalism, and states more apparent than in contemporary Eurasia. In the Soviet successor states, the existence of Tajiks and Moldovans, the division between Kazakhs and Kyrgyzes, the disappearance of Turkestanis and Sarts, and so forth are the consequences of segment-states creating or refashioning ethnicity. Soviet segment-states and now post-Soviet nation-states have provided a new stability to ethnic identities. The governments have reinforced this by creating official histories that explain the primordial roots of the titular nationality in the territory and its intergenerational unity as an ethnic group.<sup>79</sup> Thus, Kazakhstan's 1995 constitution and its new textbooks claim that the republic stands on the primordial homeland of the Kazakh people: "the emergence of the Kazakh Khanate in the fifteenth century is now being promoted as the birth of Kazakh statehood; the 540th anniversary of this event (which cannot, in fact, be attributed to a precise date) was celebrated in 1995."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Uzbekistan's government has reified the Uzbek ethnic group with a myth that traces its continuity back to the Middle Ages.<sup>81</sup> Both governments lavishly reward scholars to embellish and propagate these ethnic myths.

Yet the ethnification of nation-states is much older. Indeed, Americans may have been among the first to invent an ethnic myth to privilege a nation-state project with a story of common origin, the immigrant myth. At the time of independence, the American population was divided among separate colonial segment-states, and many individuals were personally divided among multiple national identities as British, Americans, and colonials. According to Samuel Eliot Morison, only 40 percent of the population actively supported independence, while 10 percent continued to support

<sup>76</sup> Eriksen 1991, 263–64; C. Young 1976.

<sup>77</sup> Kasfir 1979; Rothschild 1981, 96, 99.

<sup>78</sup> Weinstein 1979, 360.

<sup>79</sup> Roy 2000, 15–18.

<sup>80</sup> Akiner 1995, 62, 69.

<sup>81</sup> Yalcin 2002, 61–66, 92–96.

the common-state (Britain).<sup>82</sup> The 40 percent supporting independence were further divided among proponents of competing nation-state projects such as a united states or separate independent states.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps even more inhabitants of the segment-states of North America were so cross-pressured by the competing demands of their multiple national identities that they were unable to choose among projects and simply remained neutral. Morison estimates that half of the colonists were indifferent or neutral among the competing nation-state projects.

Once one nation-state project was successful, however, Americans began to ethnify themselves. Much like other myths of ethnic origins, the story that Americans tell about themselves focuses on movement into the homeland from somewhere else. Its legends and icons celebrate this break with their previous separate experiences and stress the generations of common experiences ever since. Thus, the Pilgrims, one of the first to break with the Old World and settle in the New, became a symbol of all Americans. Many of the shrines to the nation celebrate the commonality of the Pilgrim experience, whether the break with the past existence began at Plymouth Rock or at Ellis Island. Despite their separate lives prior to the immigrant experience—and most myths of national origin recognize a prior period when the ethnic group was divided by or subsumed by other peoples—the migration and their subsequent lives together made them one. For many Americans raised on this mythology (as I was), this ethnic myth makes better sense of the disparate pieces of a family history than ethnic identities that would link us to peoples outside the United States who are simply foreign.<sup>84</sup> The challenge that our myth simplifies a more complex history and may even distort the facts a little is, of course, true; it is also trivial and irrelevant.

This ethnification of nations has been common throughout the old nation-states of Europe as well.<sup>85</sup> Ethnic myths constructed in the nineteenth century created histories of lengthy unity that could not be undone by a simple plebiscite. Thus, European nationalists, as Patrick Geary notes, “look to the moment of primary acquisition, when ‘their people,’ first arriving in the ruins of the Roman Empire, established their sacred territory and their national identity.”<sup>86</sup> Yet the peoples of late antiquity and early medieval Europe that later nationalists identified as precursors were not cohesive cultural communities with common social patterns, language, or even identity. For example, the French people at the purported moment

<sup>82</sup> Morison 1965, 236.

<sup>83</sup> For examples of the competing nation-state projects in the American colonies, see Wood 1969, 356, 371.

<sup>84</sup> Hardin 1995, xi.

<sup>85</sup> Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; also see Schulze 1998, 15.

<sup>86</sup> Geary 2002, 156.

of primary acquisition were actually diverse collections of Gauls, Romans, and Franks. (Moreover, they were only a fraction of the Franks, who also ruled kingdoms in southern Germany.) Waves of migration brought to this so-called homeland still more diverse social patterns, languages, and even identities. Thus, “the Franks ‘born with the baptism of Clovis’ are not the Franks of Charlemagne or those of the French people Jean Le Pen hoped to rally around his political movement.”<sup>87</sup> It took an act of pure invention to overlook such anomalous facts and to celebrate Charlemagne as a Frenchman rather than yet another German seeking to submerge France in a larger Middle European state.

In Austria, majority support for the proposition that Austrians constitute an ethnic group (*Volk*) that is separate from the Germans emerged only in the decade after a majority of Austrians had concluded that they should have a state of their own. That is, ethnic identification followed political identification. By the mid-1960s most Austrians supported independence; it was only in the 1970s that a majority endorsed the proposition that they constituted a separate cultural community.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, in Latin America, most of the largest ethnic groups are the products of nation-states, not the other way around. The fact that we often distinguish Salvadorians, Argentineans, and Cubans and frequently dismiss as wrongheaded the attempts of bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., to bundle all together as Hispanics attests to the power of states to forge ethnicity.

### *International Recognition*

Great powers attempt to influence which nations get states by selectively extending and withholding recognition. Yet the segmental institutions thesis stresses that early in the developments leading to a nation-state crisis between a segment-state and a common-state, the threat of withholding international recognition typically comes in a small, remote voice that has little influence on the participants. Once a nation-state crisis has fully developed, the threat of withholding recognition has little ability to reverse the crisis. Rather than assigning primacy to international constraints on domestic politics, the segmental institutions thesis stresses the constraints imposed by segmental institutions on the choices before foreign powers. This constraint of domestic institutions on international choices is mirrored in five patterns over the past century. First, although the international community has prevented de facto independence from becoming de jure independence—as in the cases of Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transdniestria in the Eurasian region—in most in-

<sup>87</sup> Geary 2002, 157.

<sup>88</sup> Katzenstein 1977.

stances the threat of nonrecognition has seldom blocked or reversed de facto independence. Second, the threat by great powers to withhold recognition has had little effect on reversing the course of nation-state crises unfolding in segmented states. For example, at the end of the cold war, the West European states withheld recognition from Lithuania in March 1990. On August 1, 1991, during his visit to Kiev, President George Bush urged the Ukrainians to reject “suicidal nationalism” and to negotiate with Moscow for reform of the USSR.<sup>89</sup> In neither case did nonrecognition stop the deterioration of the segmented state, and in the end, the great powers accepted the new nation-states created by the secession of segment-states. Third, recognition in most instances has not made independence happen without a prior domestic process created by segmental institutions. Forty years of recognition of the Baltic states by the United States and even the fiction of diplomatic relations did not make this a reality until domestic political processes in the Soviet segmented state made it happen. Similarly, the last-minute attempt to save Azerbaijan and Georgia in 1920 with diplomatic recognition could not preserve their independence. Fourth, international recognition typically comes only after the politics of segmented states have, in fact, made new sovereign states. In both 1919 and 1991 in the Eurasian region the international community was careful to withhold recognition from Finland, Ukraine, and other states until domestic political processes had legitimated their secession and independence. Fifth, international recognition can block the reversal of a successful secession by deterring the common-state government from attempting to reintegrate a former segment-state. Nevertheless, without extraordinary international support or even outright intervention—such as that which created the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the German Democratic Republic—international recognition alone has usually done little more than ratify the outcomes created by segmental institutions.

The segmental institutions thesis challenges the view put forward by some students of international relations that the norms of international recognition explain why the major source of new nation-states since World War II has been decolonization rather than division of metropolitan cores. International relations scholars note that from 1941 to 2000, about 70 percent of new states had formerly been external rather than internal segment-states. According to the claim for the primacy of international norms in selecting among nation-state projects, the great powers and the international community more broadly have sought to limit disruption to existing states by limiting the right of national self-determination since World War II to the nation-state projects of external segment-states; for example, only

<sup>89</sup> Motyl 1993, 181.

these get the official label “decolonization” at the United Nations.<sup>90</sup> The segmental institutions thesis points up that the relationship between norms and outcome is spurious: at the beginning of the century (1901) at least 85 percent of segment-states, in the first years after World War II (1946) at least 77 percent of segment-states, and in each year until 1971 a majority of all segment-states were in fact external segment-states commonly called colonies or protectorates. It is no surprise that the majority of new states were created by decolonization. Moreover, any presumed norm did not end secession by internal segment-states; indeed, as figure 1.1 shows, in the fourth phase of nation-state creation, internal segment-states once again became the primary source of new nation-states.

The segmental institutions thesis also challenges the claim of international relations scholars that in effect characterizes the privileged access of segment-states to independence as itself the manifestation of an international norm that prohibits use of violence to change international boundaries. The special relationship between segment-states and successful nation-state projects actually predates the purported emergence of such an international norm. Moreover, the international community has refused to articulate any norm that would privilege segment-states for independence.<sup>91</sup> Thus, in the United Nations’ *Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States*, the rejection of violence to change borders is coupled with the additional stipulation that the principles of the declaration do not justify *any* action to facilitate secession or division of existing states.<sup>92</sup> Governments and the international community have, in fact, avoided articulating such a norm out of fear that this would unleash a wave of secessionist claims to dismantle states by declaring their segment-states independent. If the rejection of violence to change borders has favored segment-states, it is through two rather indirect consequences. First, the norm limits the only practice that in the early part of the twentieth century provided an alternative to segment-states as a source of new nation-states, great power intervention to redraw international borders. After this option was closed, almost all candidates for recognition have been segment-states, and the role of the international community has usually been limited to selecting which segment-

<sup>90</sup> Mayall 1999, 475; 1990, 50–69. The pressure to expand the right of self-determination to include indigenous peoples has created a contradictory theme since the collapse of the Soviet Union: according to Article 3 of the 1993 *Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, “Indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.” See UN, Doc.E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/3/26 (1993).

<sup>91</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 892.

<sup>92</sup> Compare Zacher 2001; UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (1970). Also see Buchanan 1999.

states that are in fact already independent to give imprimaturs. Second, once international recognition gives this imprimatur to a segment-state, the norm deters the former common-state from attempting to reclaim its “lost” segment-state.

### Research Strategy

In this book I generalize to the world at large and to the span of a century insights derived from closely following developments in the fourth phase of nation-state creation, 1986–2000. The juxtaposition of theory and empirical evidence that describe developments in many places and at many times permits tests of whether the segmental institutions thesis identifies a general pattern applicable to at least a century of nationalism around the world.

### *Overview*

In the following chapters, to make sense of empirical observations, I develop the segmental institutions thesis. This thesis links institutions to bargaining within the segment-states and between segment-state and common-state leaders. The thesis then links this bargaining to the likelihood of common-state failure and the independence of new nation-states. The causal logic is strongly influenced by formal theories of bargaining developed originally in the field of economics. Key claims of cause and effect are, as far as possible, rooted in generalized findings that have been shown to be valid through rigorous formal proofs undertaken by others. Thus, claims about causation behind correlations are supported not only by process tracing through the narrative evidence but also by theory with deductive rigor.<sup>93</sup>

Much of the narrative evidence is drawn from the experience of the USSR and the Soviet successor states. My project began with close analysis of the politics between the union republics and the USSR, and then the politics between the new common-states, such as Russia, and the segment-states within them, such as Chechnya or Tatarstan. I began with interviews in the mid-Volga region during a six-month stay in Tatarstan. These interviews gave rise to many of the questions and hunches about bargaining within a segmented state that form the core of the segmental institutions thesis. I then turned to public documents and newspaper accounts to ascertain whether the politics of the mid-Volga region were duplicated in other Russian regions and in the other Soviet successor states. Where possible, I supplemented narrative evidence with statistical data from the USSR and

<sup>93</sup> Bates et al. 1998, particularly 3–22.

its successor states to test my interpretations of patterned relationships more rigorously. If, like many other studies of the origins of nation-states, this study had gone no farther, it might have fallen into the trap of selecting on the dependent variable, tracing backward to the preconditions for success, without asking whether these conditions were absent from or present in the cases that failed to lead to new nation-states. For this reason, I have taken care to compare nation-state projects that achieved sovereign independence, such as the Soviet successor states, and those that did not, such as Tatarstan or Turkestan.

And, had my study examined only the USSR and its successor states, it could be faulted for drawing conclusions applicable only to a narrow (though important) part of the world and a short period of time. So, to test whether the conclusions drawn from the late- and post-Soviet experience could be generalized beyond the last two decades of the twentieth century, I compared the experience of this period with the end of the Russian Empire and the creation of the USSR seventy years earlier. What I call the Eurasian cases constitute comparisons of four sets of cases associated with the breakup of the Russian Empire following the Russian Revolution of 1917, the recentralization of the Soviet segmented state during Stalin's consolidation of power in the 1920s, the disintegration and breakup of the USSR from 1988 to 1991, and the pattern of disintegration and recentralization in the fifteen Soviet successor states. This comparison across more than seventy years has a second methodological advantage: it permits quasi-experimental comparisons before and after the introduction of segment-states. Comparisons within a more limited time frame, even those of global reach, permit only correlational analysis when variations in segment-states occur only rarely. By carefully comparing Eurasian ethnic groups and nation-state projects over this longer period of time, it is possible to observe the effect of the introduction of segment-states associated with some ethnic groups and nation-state projects but not others.

I had still to test whether these generalizations drawn from the Eurasian region were applicable globally to the age of nationalism. For this I turned to statistical evidence, using three global data sets that I created for this book. The first contains observations of 658 different ethnic groups in 153 independent states for the forty-five years from 1955 to 1999. This data set permitted testing whether nation-state projects associated with segment-states are more likely than other nation-state projects to become parties to nation-state crises. The second data set contains observations on the 191 new sovereign states created after 1815, including data on their juridical status just prior to independence. The third data set contains observations on the 336 internal and external segment-states that existed in the twentieth century. The second and third data sets permitted testing the proposition that the segment-state is the common denominator in suc-

cessful nation-state projects and refining this thesis with data on the conditions under which segment-states are actually likely to achieve sovereign independence.

### *The Contemporary Eurasian Cases*

A central claim of this book is that the creation of the post-Soviet nation-states provides insight into why some nation-state projects and not others succeed at achieving sovereign independence. This is not to say that the late- and post-Soviet experience is identical in every detail to that of the nation-states that came before but rather to say that the common outcome does have common causes that many area specialists have long thought were unique maladies of their individual regions. This study shows, for example, that many patterns that Africanists have long lamented as a unique handicap of African statehood and that postcommunist specialists have seen as a distinctive malady of transitions from communism in multinational federations are actually common to almost all new nation-states. That is, the focus in this study on the emergence of new nation-states from the USSR and the politics of the Soviet successor states is useful because these are cases that underscore that the process of separation—whether it is the decolonization of dependencies or the breakup of the metropolitan cores themselves—conforms in important ways to a common pattern. The breakup of the USSR has been studied by scholars both as a case of the end of an empire (paralleling the end of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires or the liberation of colonial peoples) and as a case of secession (paralleling the division of Pakistan or Ethiopia and potentially Canada).<sup>94</sup> It is both.

The Soviet transition is part of the process that also touched Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia during the recent transformation of the Communist world. In 2000 there were twenty-eight nation-states where just a decade and a half earlier nine Communist countries had stood. This postcommunist transition constituted the major part of the fourth phase of nation-state creation and represented the second most intense burst of new states to enter the international system since 1815. In place of the USSR there are now fifteen independent states. The end of communism not only swept away a workers' state built on transnational appeals of proletarian and socialist internationalism, it also ended the attempt to create a new nation-state that transcended the boundaries of the individual segment-states. The USSR claimed to be the enactment of the Soviet people and to embody

<sup>94</sup> For examples of studies that treat the Soviet Union as an imperial or colonial relationship, see Barkey and von Hagen 1997; Beissinger and Young 2002; Carrère d'Encausse 1980; Gleason 1997; Spruyt 2005; Suny 1993b, 128–31; and Taagapera 2000.

“the state unity of the Soviet People.”<sup>95</sup> All Soviet successor states jettisoned this mythology of a Soviet people or an ethnically indifferent working class; in their declarations of sovereignty, declarations of independence, and most constitutions they proclaimed their states to be the realization of their respective nation’s will to statehood. In the preamble of Estonia’s 1992 constitution, its authors proclaim that the state “is established on the inextinguishable right of the Estonian people to national self-determination . . . [and] shall guarantee the preservation of the Estonian nation and its culture throughout the ages.”<sup>96</sup> The triumph of these fifteen successor states came at the expense of alternative nation-state projects that sought to draw the international boundaries of the region differently.

### Organization of the Book

The organization of this book in four parts highlights the major elements of the segmental-institutions thesis: the book begins with the independent variables (segmental institutions), traces the consequences of these for political processes on the periphery and between center and periphery, and identifies the outcomes of these processes in nation-state crises and the creation of new nation-states. The first part introduces the institutional foundations and provides a theoretical and conceptual overview of the segmental institutions thesis. Following this introduction to the thesis, chapter 2 develops the concept of the segmented state more fully and provides an overview of the varieties of segmental institutions existing around the world over the past century. I devote particularly close attention to the segmental institutions of the Russian Empire (pre-1917), the former USSR (1922–92), and the USSR’s fifteen successor states (1992 to the present).

The major part of the book investigates the political processes created by segmental institutions in two arenas: on the political periphery of an existing state and between the political center of that state and the periphery. Part 2 presents a theory of the conditions under which political-identity hegemony is likely to emerge within a candidate for nation-statehood on the periphery of an existing state. The focus is on bargaining among politicians pressing competing nation-state projects and cross-cutting interests. With political-identity hegemony a cohort of politicians associated with a specific nation-state project comes to dominate politics and control the expression of national identity within a people and their homeland. Part 3 presents a theory of the conditions under which nation-state crises between segment-state and common-state governments are likely to

<sup>95</sup> Constitution of the USSR (1977), Preamble and Article 70.

<sup>96</sup> Constitution of Estonia (adopted by referendum on June 28, 1992).

emerge. The focus in these chapters is on the political dynamic that emerges in center-periphery bargaining. Segmental institutions create motives, means, and opportunities for escalation of both the stakes and the means in this bargaining. This can escalate to a nation-state crisis—a turning point at which further escalation may bring about the failure of the existing state and the creation of new nation-states.

Part 4 turns to the outcomes of this bargaining on the periphery and between center and periphery. Chapters 9 and 10 present hypotheses, narrative evidence, and statistical tests that address the conditions under which nation-state crises are likely to occur, common-states are likely to fail, and new nation-states are likely to emerge. Chapter 11 turns to the implications of these findings for our understanding of the international system. The segmental institutions thesis identifies domestic political factors that explain why, despite enormous international pressures such as growing insecurity or globalization, the nation-state is likely to continue to be the primary building block of the international system. Proceeding still further, this thesis suggests effective ways to bring greater stability to the current configuration of nation-states and to minimize the likelihood of nation-state crises in the future.