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Introduction

Why Nation Building?

Why did some countries fall apart, often along ethnic fault lines, while others held together over decades and centuries, despite hosting a diverse population? Why is it, in other words, that nation building succeeded in some places and failed in others? This book shows how slow-moving processes unfolding over generations influence the prospects of nation building around the world. In places where centralized states had emerged long ago, citizens speak the same language today and can thus more easily forge political alliances across ethnic, racial, and regional divides. If governments have inherited a tradition of bureaucratic centralization they are also more capable of providing public goods and can therefore encourage their citizens to support the state politically and develop a sense of loyalty toward the nation. Finally, the early rise of civil society organizations enables politicians to knit different regions of a country into a quilt of political networks. Ties that bridge divides reduce the salience of ethnicity in politics, undermine support for separatism, make violent conflict and war less likely, and eventually lead citizens to identify with the nation and perceive it as a community of lived solidarity and shared political destiny.

Political integration and national identification thus form the two sides of the nation-building coin. To achieve both, it is crucial to forge political ties between citizens and the state that reach across ethnic divides and integrate ethnic majorities and minorities into an inclusive power arrangement. If citizens are connected to government through relationships of authority and support, an inclusive national community emerges and nation building can be said to have succeeded. Whether such ties emerge from democratic elections or through other political institutions is not of primary concern, I will

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argue. Conversely, not all democracies have succeeded at forging an integrated nation. The United States, for example, maintained slavery during the first 70 years of its democratic existence and politically excluded African Americans for another century after slavery ended, creating a lasting legacy of subordination and segregation.

This understanding of nation building diverges from that of most contemporary policymakers. After the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, experts in Western think tanks, governments, and militaries sought to craft programs that would foster national cohesion in a handful of years. They often used the term "nation building" synonymously with democratization (Dobbins 2003–2004) or even more generally with rebuilding states after the governments of faraway lands had been toppled by Western troops (see summary in Osler Hampson and Mendeloff 2007). The underlying assumption of much of this debate in the United States was that its government is entitled to overthrow threatening regimes around the world as it sees fit as long as it then "rebuilds" these nations in its own capitalist and democratic image and "teach[es] these peoples to govern themselves," as a well-known public intellectual put it (Fukuyama 2004: 162).

This book joins others (Mylonas 2012; Sambanis et al. 2015) in an effort to rescue the meaning of nation building from these debates and assumptions. It also arrives at a different set of policy prescriptions. As discussed in the concluding chapter, nation building from the outside, such as attempted in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bosnia, is likely to fail if domestic conditions don't already favor political integration across ethnic divides. More to the point, public goods need to be provided by local governments, rather than foreigners, if the goal is to foster the political cohesion of struggling nations. Furthermore, the tectonic theory of nation building introduced here suggests that fixing failed states or building nations cannot be done within the time span of an American presidency or two. It is a matter of generations rather than years.

MODERNIZING THE MODERNIZATION LITERATURE

My understanding of nation building directly follows up on an earlier, now largely forgotten literature in the social sciences. Such eminent scholars as Karl Deutsch (1953), Reinhard Bendix (1964), Clifford Geertz (1963), and Edward Shils (1972) sought to understand the challenges of political integration faced by the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia. As I do in this book, they distinguished between the formation of nation-states and nation building. Creating an independent nation-state with a flag, an army, an anthem, newly minted money, and freshly printed passports did not guarantee that citizens identified with the nation or that they accepted the authority of

the state. These scholars also distinguished between political stability and nation building. Not every new nation-state that remained peaceful did so because nation building had succeeded. In many newly independent states, autocratic regimes lasted for decades thanks to the ruthless repression of political opposition, rather than because they were able to integrate their countries politically.

The first generation of nation-building scholars also identified the conflicts that nation building often entailed and the obstacles it faced. Locals might resist a national government that intruded more into their daily lives than did its colonial predecessor. Political elites competed over who controlled the new center of power. Economic poverty, artificially drawn boundaries, the legacies of colonial divide-and-rule policies, and the weakness of postcolonial states made national political integration difficult. In order to understand how these obstacles could be overcome, this first generation of scholars dared to compare—in line with the classic tradition of historical sociology since Max Weber: lessons learned from 18th- and 19th-century Europe were swiftly applied to the developing countries of Asia and Africa, mostly in the form of broad historical analogies.

In justifying these comparisons, most authors relied on modernization theory. They thought that the introduction of modern bureaucracies, technological changes that increased communication and information flows across regions, and granting citizenship rights to the lower classes all transformed the way states related to their subjects, whether in Meiji Japan, Bismarck's Germany, or contemporary India. In other words, they saw nation building as a challenge that arose wherever modernity brought previously smaller and self-contained social units into closer contact with each other.

From the 1970s onward, Marxists faulted this school of thought for overlooking class exploitation within newly independent countries and their continued dependency on the centers of the capitalist world system. Proponents of the emerging rational choice school criticized nation-building scholars for not asking why self-interested individuals would engage in something as idealistic and lofty as "nation building." Advocates of multiculturalism accused nation builders of violating the rights of minorities and annihilating their cultures through forced assimilation (e.g., Connor 1972). Methodologists deplored the habitus of "armchair theorizing" and the tendency to cherry-pick examples that suited the argument, eschewing a more systematic and disciplined analysis of negative and positive cases. Soon, the topic was abandoned or subsumed under other strands of research, such as on civil war, economic development, or democratization.

This book revitalizes the earlier interest in the topic. Like the works of the first-generation scholars, it pursues a broad comparative agenda, taking us

around the world and across centuries to wherever the model of the modern nation-state was introduced: the ideal that a country should be ruled in the name of a nation of equal citizens rather than in the name of God or a royal dynasty. This was the case in 19th-century Switzerland and Belgium, early 20th-century Russia and China after the end of empire, and Botswana and Somalia during the 1960s—the six examples discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Unlike the earlier generation of scholarship, however, this book precisely identifies the processes and mechanisms of political integration, rather than pointing at the abstract forces of modernization. And rather than collecting illustrative examples to support broad theoretical claims, it pursues the old questions with more analytical precision and methodological rigor. It uses three carefully chosen pairs of country cases to show how a particular mechanism fostering nation building operates in the details of the historical process. It then demonstrates, through the statistical analysis of large datasets, that these mechanisms are at work in the rest of the world as well. The book thus deploys a "nested methods" design, in which different research strategies combine to support the same theoretical argument (cf. Lieberman 2005; Humphreys and Jacobs 2015). If these different routes of empirical investigation lead to the same points of conclusion, this should increase our confidence that the hypothesized causal forces are indeed at work "out there" in the world (for a more detailed discussion of methodological principles, see Chapter 1).

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATION BUILDING

But isn't the idea of nation building rooted in the Cold War ideology? Indeed, the term was meant to suggest that the newly independent countries of the Global South could modernize to become as democratic, capitalist, and individualist as Western societies, rather than turn to the communist nemesis (see Latham 2000). More important, who needs a book on nation building now that we have entered the postnational age when more and more individuals hold multiple citizenships, migrate back and forth between continents, organize in transnational social movements, and create new, postnational identities fed by free-flowing streams of digital information and communication? In other words, isn't studying nation building passé? I see three major reasons why revisiting the question is necessary.

First, nation building brings peace and fosters economic development. In previous research my colleagues and I showed that a lack of political integration across ethnic divides often leads to civil war (Wimmer et al. 2009): armed rebellions spread in countries where a large proportion of the population is not represented and has no say in national-level politics and government. If the elites of marginalized groups can escape surveillance and recruit followers

and if the state reacts to such initial mobilization with indiscriminate violence, armed conflict becomes very likely indeed (Lindemann and Wimmer 2017). Failed nation building, in short, is a recipe for civil war.

Ethnopolitical exclusion also inhibits economic growth, as shown by Birnir and Waguespack (2011; see also Alesina et al. 2016). Ethnocratic rulers favor businesses, economic sectors, and occupations that are dominated by citizens of their own ethnic background. They therefore choose policies that don't benefit the entire economy. Conversely, the success of the East Asian developmental states has shown that national political integration—rather than freewheeling markets uninhibited by government intervention, as the so-called Washington consensus once had it—is a key precondition for economic development (see also Rodrik et al. 2004).

Second, the topic of nation building is important because many societies around the world struggle with ethnopolitical inequalities inherited from the past—and not just in the Global South. Many successor states of the Soviet Union face the same challenges as the newly formed states that emerged from the colonial empires in the 1960s: regional disintegration, separatism, escalating political competition between ethnic elites, and so on. Recent developments in Ukraine illustrate the point. In many much older countries the question of national political integration now dominates politics more than ever, including in Belgium, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

One should also note that few alternatives to national political integration are in sight. The European Union, once the crown witness of those who saw the coming of a postnational age, seems to have failed, as the Greek financial troubles and the subsequent refugee crisis showed, at "nation building" at a higher, European level. A sense of pan-European solidarity is hard to instill in populations whose visions of the world remain shaped by the nation-building projects of the 19th and 20th centuries. On a global level, the Internet has certainly created unprecedented flows of information and allowed new, postnational forms of identity and solidarity to flourish. Furthermore, national boundaries have become increasingly porous for elite migrants with multiple passports and marketable skills sought by global companies. But only 3% of the world's population lives outside their country of birth. More generally, politics remains tied to democratic legitimacy, which continues to be organized within national states. And so does the provision of roads and health clinics, the organization of military defense, and social security—even within supranational political units such as the European Union. The recent resurgence of nationalist political movements in the West therefore doesn't come as a surprise. The postnational age has yet to arrive.

Third, one can easily strip the term "nation building" of the ideological connotations that some may associate with it. Nation building does not mean modernist "progress" along a continuum "from tribe to nation" (Cohen and

Middleton 1970). It can be understood in less evolutionary and less teleological terms as extending networks of political alliances, whatever their nature, across a territory. A nation can be built on a "tribal" basis, as the example of Botswana will show. When studying nation building we also don't have to assume the perspective of nationalists who see history as a one-way road toward the fulfillment of the national project (see the "methodological nationalism" discussed by Wimmer and Glick Schiller [2002]). To avoid this trap, I will consider the counterfactual possibility that a nation-building project could have failed (or succeeded) or that other projects—perhaps focused on differently defined national communities—could have won out in the historical struggle. I will discuss at length, for example, that China could have fallen apart along its deep linguistic divides, similar to Romanov Russia, and so could have Switzerland. Nation building can be studied, in other words, without assuming that historically stable "nations" are the relevant units of observation or that success or failure is somehow predetermined by political destiny.

Nation building, as defined here, is also not synonymous with the forced assimilation of minorities by nationalist governments (as argued by Connor 1972), let alone with the scapegoating of minorities by chauvinist movements seeking to rally conationals around the flag. Quite to the contrary, political equality between ethnic groups is a key defining element of nation building, as we will see in a moment. Oppressing or even physically harming minority individuals shows that a nation-building project has failed—not that it is on the road to success.

One example may suffice to illustrate the point. In Ukraine, the rise of an independent, if short-lived, state after the fall of the Romanov empire was accompanied by signs of popular identification with the Ukrainian nation—propagated by the newly established nationalist government and army. This army funded the production and distribution of a postcard that shows a united Ukrainian nation, defended by heroic Cossack troops fighting both the Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik armies during the Russian Civil War. During these years, the Jewish population of Ukraine suffered some of the worst pogroms of its history, many committed by these very same armed forces. In cases of successful nation building, such as in Switzerland and Botswana, there was certainly plenty of nationalist rhetoric and xenophobia as well, especially in the early moments of nation building. These were never directed against domestic minorities, however, and never reached deadly dimensions.

Maybe this is the moment to pause and briefly discuss nation building from a normative point of view. Given its role in preventing war and poverty, many observers see nation building in a positive light, and so do I. However, it is open to debate whether this means that we should embrace the political philosophy of "liberal nationalism" (Miller 1995; Tamir 1995), according to which nationalism is morally superior to other, more cosmopolitan political ideolo-

gies because it facilitates providing public goods such as peace, welfare, and a sense of cultural dignity. As I have argued previously, even where nation building succeeds and domestic minorities are integrated into the ruling coalition, we observe new boundaries of exclusion that are normatively problematic: non-national others remain outside this integrative realm of the nation and are systematically discriminated against (Wimmer 2002; Shachar 2009). Normatively speaking, nations remain as problematic as other political communities with strong membership rights.

I am also agnostic as to what the appropriate units should be within which to foster political integration. Should we advocate nation building in large and heterogenous states, or is it normatively preferable to have smaller and more homogeneous units? I haven't heard any convincing arguments why homogeneous states such as Korea, Poland, and Iceland should be preferred over heterogeneous states such as India, Tanzania, and Switzerland, even though nation building in polyglot countries is more difficult to achieve, as we will see. Studying nation building thus means neither to argue against secession nor to advocate for it. This normative agnosticism is supported by research showing that secession and the creation of more homogeneous states is not a recipe for future peace (Sambanis 2000; Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl 2009); nor are ethnically homogeneous countries more peaceful (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Wimmer et al. 2009). Similarly, large economies can foster growth as much as smaller ones more open to trade (Alesina et al. 2005). Small and large, heterogeneous and homogeneous—all states face the same task of political integration. This book seeks to understand under which conditions it *can* succeed rather than to argue how it *should* proceed in an ideal world.

The Argument

CHAPTER 1

To understand why nation building fails or succeeds, I assume what is called a "relational" perspective and combine it with elements of exchange theory. Seen from a relational perspective, ties between individuals and organizations form the core of a society. We therefore don't focus on the institutional rules that govern behavior, on market mechanisms that coordinate decisions, or on individual motives that drive actions, as in alternative theoretical perspectives. Instead, we seek to understand how political alliances form between national government on the one hand and individuals and political organizations—voluntary associations, parties, professional organizations—on the other hand.

I distinguish between three aspects of these relationships: how they are organized, what kind of resources are exchanged, and how partners negotiate and communicate with each other. For each of these, I identify a crucial factor that enables alliances to reach across regional and ethnic divides, generating

an inclusive configuration of political power and therefore fostering nation building. Chapter 1 elaborates this theory in more detail. Chapters 2–4 show how these factors shape the historical process by analyzing three pairs of countries, each pair and each chapter illustrating one of the three mechanisms.

CHAPTER 2

The organizational aspect concerns the institutional form that political alliances assume. They can be weakly institutionalized, as when a vote is exchanged against the promise to implement a specific policy or when the political loyalty of a client is exchanged against the patron's support in the event of an emergency. Or they can be fully institutionalized, as in countries with strong, independent parties or with many voluntary organizations such as local political clubs, reading circles, trade unions, professional associations, and the like.

Such voluntary organizations facilitate building alliances across ethnic communities and regions, I will argue. They bundle individual interests, as it were, such that politicians or state agencies can respond to them more easily. In patronage systems, by contrast, each alliance needs to be managed separately: a patron needs to provide political protection or government favors to each of his clients on an individual basis. On average, access to government therefore tends to be more limited. Furthermore, voluntary organizations can build horizontal alliances with each other—such as a coalition of all local nursing associations of California—and alliance networks can therefore proliferate across the territory and across ethnic divides, generating a nationwide umbrella organization that can then be linked into a governing alliance. Patronage systems, by contrast, tend to spread vertically between more and less powerful actors and thus within, rather than across, ethnic communities.

How far such voluntary organizations have developed matters especially in the early years after a country transitions to the nation-state—when an absolutist monarchy is overthrown or when a former colony becomes independent. If a dense web of such organizations has already emerged, the new power holders can tap into these networks to extend relationships of authority and support across the country. Under these circumstances, it is less likely that ethnic minorities or even majorities remain without representation in national level government because voluntary organizations, from whose ranks the new political elite will be recruited, will already have developed branches in various parts of the country inhabited by different ethnic communities.

This is shown empirically by comparing Switzerland and Belgium in Chapter 2. In Switzerland, voluntary organizations—shooting clubs, reading circles, choral societies, and so on—had spread throughout the territory during the

late 18th century and first half of the 19th century thanks to an even economic development across all major regions and thanks to the decentralized and comparatively democratic character of the political system. In Belgium, by contrast, Napoleon, as well as the authoritarian Dutch king who was crowned after Napoleon's demise, suppressed these associations. More importantly, Belgian associations remained confined to the more affluent and more educated French-speaking regions and segments of the population.

When Belgium became independent of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1831, the new rulers of the country were linked into these French-speaking associational networks. They declared French the official language of the administration, army, and judiciary. Flemish speakers were not part of these networks and were ruled, despite forming a slight demographic minority, as an internal colony until the end of the century. Early nation building failed, and the language issue became heavily politicized later on. The country is now close to breaking apart along the linguistic divide.

In Switzerland, the transition to the nation-state occurred after a brief civil war in 1848. The liberal elites who won the war and dominated the country for generations relied on the already existing cross-regional, multiethnic civil society organizations to recruit followers and leaders. The ruling elites were therefore as multiethnic as the population at large. Language diversity never became a serious political issue during most of the subsequent history of the country—and to this day.

CHAPTER 3

The political economy aspect concerns the resources that the state exchanges with its citizens. Citizens are more likely to politically support a government that provides public goods in exchange for the taxes, dues, and fees collected from them. The relationship between rulers and ruled is then no longer based on extraction under the threat of force—as was typically the case for the more coercive regimes that preceded the nation-state. The more a government is capable of providing public goods across all regions of a country, the more attractive it will be as an exchange partner and the more citizens will attempt to establish an alliance with the political center. The ethnic composition of governing elites will reflect such encompassing alliance structures and thus the ethnic diversity of the population.

This second mechanism is illustrated in Chapter 3 with a comparison of Somalia and Botswana. When Botswana became an independent country in 1966, its government efficiently expanded export opportunities for cattle breeders, extended roads across the country, constructed schools as well as health and sanitation facilities, and provided emergency relief during the

periods of drought that periodically devastated the cattle economy. These initiatives profited all regions equally, and there was little evidence of ethnic favoritism in the distribution of public goods. Correspondingly, the ruling party gained support across regions and ethnic constituencies, which in turn translated into a parliament and cabinet that largely mirrored the ethnic composition of the population. This inclusionary power configuration then produced, over time, a strong identification with the state and the Tswana majority, into which more and more minorities assimilated over time.

In Somalia, conditions for nation building were less favorable. After the British and Italian colonies were unified into an independent country, there was little capacity to provide public goods to the population overall. The rapidly expanding bureaucracy was nourished by foreign aid, marked by clan and lineage clientelism, and endemically corrupt. Siad Barre's military coup changed this dynamic only temporarily. Given the lack of institutional capacity, his regime tried to provide public goods through military-style campaigns, such as when it sent all middle and high school students to the countryside to teach the nomad population how to read and write—rather than through a nationwide system of elementary schools. The government could not build durable political alliances across Somalia's various clans in this way. Barre based his rule increasingly on loyal followers from his own (and his mother's) clan coalition. Those who lost out in the power game resented this ethnic tilting of the power structure. Civil war, pitting changing alliances of clans and warlords against each other, soon broke out.

CHAPTER 4

The third aspect concerns how actors communicate with each other when negotiating political alliances. Establishing ties across regions and across ethnic divides is easier, I argue, if individuals can converse with each other in a shared language. This decreases "transaction costs," meaning the effort needed to understand each other's intentions, to resolve disagreements and negotiate compromise, and thus to build durable relationships of trust. In line with Deutsch's early theory of nation building, linguistic divides therefore tend to slow down the spread of political networks across a territory.

Chapter 4 illustrates how the communication mechanism operates by comparing China and Russia from the early 19th century to the end of the 20th. China's population speaks many different tongues, which should make nation building more difficult. But letters, newspapers, books, and political pamphlets are written in a uniform script. The very nature of this script allows speakers of different languages to understand each other with ease. Scriptural homogeneity also enabled the Chinese court, throughout the imperial period, to recruit its administrators and army officers through a system of written

examinations which did not privilege any of the spoken languages of the empire. This in turn ensured that this elite was as polyglot as the population at large. Political factions among this literati class also contained members from all language groups, and the same was true for the anti-imperial, nationalist associations that formed in the late 19th century. After the nationalist forces rose to power under the Kuomintang and overthrew the imperial dynasty in 1911, the power structure therefore remained multiregional and showed few signs of a linguistic tilt. The same can be said of the Communist Party that took control of the state in 1949. Correspondingly, no linguistic nationalism ever emerged among the non-Mandarin-speaking groups of the Han majority. The Han were imagined as an ethnically homogenous and linguistically diverse nation. The dogs of linguistic nationalism never barked among the Han Chinese.

They did throughout the modern history of Russia, however, and the empire twice fell apart along ethnolinguistic lines: after the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917 and again in the thaw of Gorbachev's reforms around 1989. In no small measure, I will argue, this was because it is difficult to form political alliances across a population that speaks and writes a great many languages of entirely different linguistic stock, from Finnish to German, from Russian to Turkish, from Korean to Romanian, and written in different scripts, including Latin, Arabic, Cyrillic, and Mongolian. When the age of mass politics arrived during the late 19th century, political networks clustered along linguistic lines because recruiting followers in a foreign language and script proved to be rather difficult. The mobilization of the Jewish population through Yiddish propaganda pamphlets will illustrate this most clearly. The popular parties that emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries therefore catered exclusively to specific linguistic communities, or they resembled patchworks of linguistically confined alliance networks. National consciousness became cast in dozens of separate, linguistically defined molds rather than in an overarching identity comparable to that of the Han Chinese. Soviet nationalities policy after the revolution of 1917 cemented this state of affairs by alphabetizing and educating minorities in their own language and giving them privileged access to newly formed, linguistically defined provinces and districts. This ensured that clientelist networks would form within these separate ethnic compartments. The integrated, multiethnic nation—the "Soviet people" that leaders of the Soviet Union dreamed of—could not be built.

STATE FORMATION AND NATION BUILDING

Looking further back into history, one wonders where a government's capacity to provide public goods and the linguistic homogeneity of a population come from. I will argue that they are both legacies of states already built before

the age of mass politics arrived in the late 19th century and with it the challenge of national political integration. Where indigenous elites were able to monopolize and centralize political power, bureaucratic administrations emerged that learned how to organizationally integrate and politically control the various regions of the country. In the 20th century or after independence had been achieved, subsequent governments could rely on this know-how and bureaucratic infrastructure to provide public goods equitably across regions. Over the very long run, political centralization also encouraged subordinate elites and their followers to adopt the language (or in the Chinese case, the script) of the central elites, both to promote their own career and to lay claim to the prestigious "high" culture of the political center.

This is illustrated by the Botswana case, where the Tswana kingdoms had developed, in the precolonial and colonial periods, into half a dozen highly centralized and tightly integrated polities. After independence, these kingdoms were subsumed and subdued under a national government, which greatly facilitated public goods provision by the postcolonial bureaucracy. The centralized mini-states also promoted, throughout the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods, the assimilation of non-Tswana populations into the dominant Tswana culture and language, thus creating a linguistically more homogeneous society. In Somalia's history, no centralized polity governing over the interior lands and its nomadic majority ever emerged. This represented a major impediment, as Chapter 3 will show, to postcolonial public goods provision. Centralized indigenous states, on which colonial rule often rested, therefore provided an important background condition for successful nation building because they left a legacy of bureaucratic capacity and a uniform language that helped establish ties across the territory of a country.

FROM PAIRED CASE STUDIES TO LARGE *N*

The three pairs of cases were chosen because they illustrate the three mechanisms in the clearest and most effective way. Switzerland and Belgium are similar in terms of geographic location, population size, and linguistic diversity but diverge when it comes to how far voluntary organizations had spread in the first half of the 19th century. Somalia and Botswana share the African colonial experience, are characterized by similar levels of ethnic diversity, and their economies were both based on cattle breeding. But the postcolonial government of Botswana was much more capable in providing public goods. China and Russia form their own centers of civilizational gravity, contain enormous, polyglot populations, and were never subjected to Western colonial rule. China's elites communicated in a shared script across linguistic divisions, however, while Russia's communicative space was fragmented by linguistic and scriptural diversity.

Quite obviously, these case studies don't allow us to see which of the three mechanisms is more important. This becomes evident as soon as we compare cases across pairs, rather than within them. Somali all speak the same language, while the Swiss are linguistically more diverse—and yet the two histories of nation building diverge in opposite ways. In Switzerland, the organizational mechanism seems to have "overpowered," as it were, the linguistic diversity mechanism. Does this mean that the organizational mechanism always trumps? Another cross-pair comparison shows that this is not necessarily the case. Compared to Switzerland, China lacked much civil society development up to 1911 and yet a similarly transethnic alliance structure emerged thanks to the integrated communicative space established by the shared script. In other words, the *ceteris* refuse to be *paribus* when we compare across a handful of cases only, a problem comparative social scientists have always struggled with.

Perhaps more importantly, other factors could be crucial for nation building but were not considered in the country case studies in any systematic way. Doesn't the colonial experience itself make a difference? Countries like Somalia and Botswana were subjugated to European colonial powers and shaped by their divide-and-rule policies, which could make the task of national political integration more difficult than in Switzerland, Russia, or China.

Alternatively, don't political institutions determine the prospects of nation building? Forging political alliances across regions and ethnic groups could be easier in democracies such as Switzerland, Belgium, and Botswana because their elites need to win the votes of a majority of the population. By contrast, the authoritarian regimes of Romanov or Soviet Russia, China, or Somalia under Siad Barre relied on narrower coalitions. Or perhaps we should focus on global processes and argue that governments are more inclusive if they are exposed to global ideas of multicultural justice and therefore seek to recruit elites from diverse backgrounds.

Or else, isn't nation building mainly a matter of economic development? Perhaps Botswana would not have been able to provide public goods so effectively without the discovery of diamonds in its sandy soils—while Somalia remained dependent on shipping camels and sheep to Saudi Arabia. Or is it easier to build nations in countries like Switzerland, where religious and language boundaries do not overlap? In Romanov Russia, by contrast, most linguistic minorities also adhered to a different religion than the Russian-speaking and Russian Orthodox majority. If that is the case, ethnic divides could become more politically divisive and nation building more difficult. Or perhaps we should take a more bellicist perspective and argue that nation building succeeds where countries have fought many wars with other countries, gluing their populations together through total mobilization for war. Similarly, it could be that European states had an easier time building nations because

centuries of boundary adjustments and ethnic cleansings have led to more homogeneous populations that could then be integrated into a coherent national polity.

To answer these kinds of questions, the next three chapters shift to a different mode of analysis. They pursue the same arguments but analyze large datasets with information on almost all countries of the world, thus mobilizing the comparative power of large-N research. This will allow us to see whether some of these other factors indeed shape trajectories of nation building around the world. It will also allow us to determine whether the three mechanisms highlighted by my theory are at work in countries beyond Switzerland, Belgium, Somalia, Botswana, China, and Russia.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 focuses on the political integration aspect of nation building. For a quantitative analysis, we first need to measure how far political integration has succeeded, how inclusionary the configuration of power in a specific country is. The Ethnic Power Relations dataset, assembled previously with a team of coauthors (Wimmer et al. 2009), offers such a measurement. It enables us to identify ethnic communities that are not represented at the national levels of government and to calculate the population share of these excluded groups.[1] These data are available from 1946 to 2005 for 155 countries—almost the entire world except some mini-states in the Caribbean, Europe, and the Pacific Ocean.

In the first step of the statistical analysis, I show that political integration is more likely where there are many voluntary organizations per capita, where governments offer many public goods, and where the population is linguistically homogeneous. To make the results of this analysis accessible to readers not accustomed to statistical research, I calculate how much the percentage of the excluded population would change, in an average country, if we reduced public goods provision by a certain amount, leaving everything else the same. We can then do the same for the number of voluntary organizations and linguistic homogeneity. Public goods provision will be measured by the density of railroad tracks and by the percentage of the adult population that is literate, which is strongly influenced by the public school system. The development of voluntary organizations is measured by a simple count of nongovernmental associations per capita. To measure linguistic homogeneity, we can calculate the chances that two randomly chosen citizens of a country speak the same language.

Figure 0.1 shows the results, which should be easy to interpret. Each independent variable is represented by its own column indicating how much political exclusion is reduced if we increased that independent variable by one
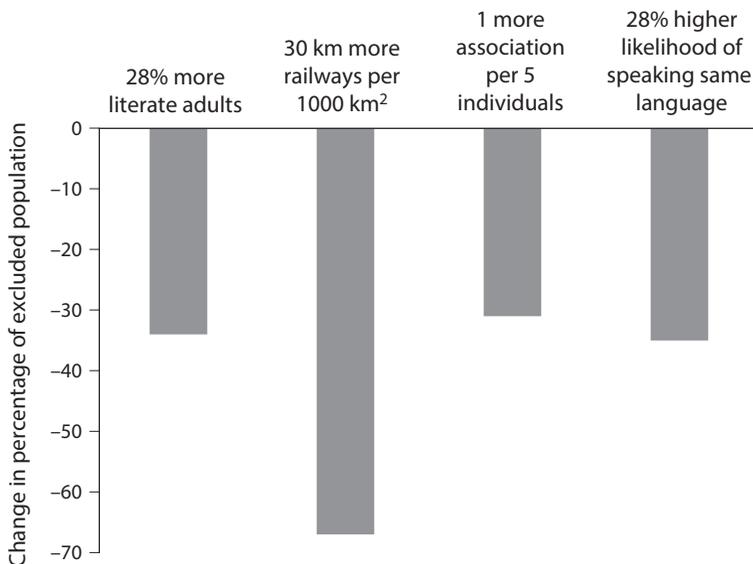
FIGURE 0.1. Determinants of nation building
Note: These figures are based on Models 1 and 10 in Table 5.2 and represent *z*-standardized coefficients.

standard deviation. A standard deviation measures how much two-thirds of the data differ from the mean value.[2] For example, increasing the literacy rate by a standard deviation of 28% is associated, on average, with a 30% lower share of the excluded population. As the figure makes clear, the associations between ethnopolitical exclusion and the three main factors facilitating nation building are quite strong.

I do not find much support for the other possible explanations of nation building briefly discussed above. While democracies are indeed more inclusive than nondemocracies, this is not because democracy leads to the political inclusion of minorities. Rather, exclusionary regimes, such as Syria under Assad, are less likely to transition to democracy and thus remain authoritarian. There is also little support for the idea that countries will fail at nation building if they look back on a long colonial experience; if they were subject to particularly divisive imperial policies; if they inherited a racial divide from slavery or settler colonialism; if they are economically poor; if they remained sheltered from global ideals of minority representation; if religious and language cleavages overlap; or if they look back on a long history of interstate wars or ethnic conflicts.

In a second step, I show that linguistically more homogeneous societies as well as governments capable of providing public goods were shaped by strongly centralized states that had emerged in previous centuries and, in the

case of Africa and Asia, before Western colonization—another crucial element of the tectonic theory of nation building introduced in this book. To measure levels of state centralization I rely on two datasets. The first is available for 74 countries of Asia and Africa whose precolonial political structures are documented in the *Atlas of World Cultures*, assembled by anthropologists in the mid-1950s. This measurement does not make much sense for the settler societies in the New World, where existing indigenous states were dismantled centuries ago, or for Europe, whose states either remained independent or were incorporated into the Romanov, Hapsburg, or Ottoman empires many generations ago. The second dataset, collected by economists, covers 141 countries and measures the extent to which indigenous states controlled the territory of today's countries in the second half of the 19th century. This measurement is also meaningful for the settler societies of the Americas and the Pacific as well as for Europe. Statistical analysis then shows that countries that were governed by centralized states in the late 19th century provide more public goods and are less linguistically diverse after World War II.

A third step pursues history further into the past by asking where such highly centralized indigenous states came from. I will evaluate, in a somewhat more tentative way, some classical arguments about the rise of the territorial state, from Tilly's famed assertion that "states made war and wars made states" to more recent demographic and geographic theories of state formation. I find that the Tillyean view might very well hold for the history of Western state formation but not the rest of the world. Outside the West, countries with high mountain ranges and deep valleys seem to have developed centralized states perhaps because state builders were more successful where peasants could not escape them by simply moving away. Around the world, where population density was high enough to sustain a nonproductive political elite at the end of the Middle Ages, centralized territorial states emerged later on. With this analysis, we have arrived at causal forces such as topography and historical antecedents that cannot possibly be influenced by contemporary nation building. Put into social science jargon, they could be considered "exogenous." We can thus stop kicking the can down the historical road and avoid entering the dark domains of infinite regress.

CHAPTER 6

Chapter 6 focuses on the second aspect of nation building: the degree to which the population identifies with and feels loyal to the state and the nation. Nationalism should be more popular in states with an inclusive ruling coalition comprising majorities and minorities alike. Those tied into networks of exchange with the central government should find the idea of the nation as a family of lived solidarity and shared political destiny more plausible than those

who are treated as second-class citizens without any meaningful representation in national-level government.

To explore this hypothesis, I have assembled, with a team of research assistants, a dataset based on representative surveys from 123 countries comprising roughly 92% of the world population. All surveys contain the same question: "How proud are you to be a citizen of your country?" I take this question as a rough indicator of how far an individual has internalized a nationalist view of the social world. By linking the ethnic background questions in these surveys with the list of ethnic groups in the Ethnic Power Relations dataset, we can ask whether excluded groups are less identified with their country, thus substantiating the overall argument with an analysis at the group level. This is possible for 223 ethnic groups within 64 countries.

In line with the exchange theoretic argument, citizens of more exclusionary states are less proud of their nation. At the ethnic group level, members of discriminated-against groups feel far less proud of their country and nation than do groups represented in national government. On average, discriminated-against individuals score 1.5 points lower than included individuals on a pride scale from 1 (not at all proud) to 4 (very proud). In a more dynamic analysis, I also show that groups that lost power recently are less proud than others because their exchange relationships with central government turned less favorable.

CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7 takes a side step with regard to the central line of inquiry of this book. It focuses on public goods provision as one of the three crucial factors enhancing nation building. A large literature in economics and political science maintains that ethnic diversity impedes the provision of public goods. Some authors think that this is because individuals can't cooperate easily across group boundaries, while others believe that they have a hard time agreeing on what public goods the state should provide. Seen from the long-term, historical point of view advocated in this book, however, the statistical association between linguistic diversity and low public goods provision is not brought about by a causal process.

Rather, *both* high diversity and low capacity to provide public goods emerge in societies without a historical legacy of centralized states, as argued throughout the preceding chapters. Chapter 7 shows this through a statistical analysis. Once we include a measurement of past levels of state centralization in the equations, the statistical correlation between diversity and public goods provision disappears. This is demonstrated with a series of different measures of public goods provision and a range of different measurements of diversity.

The chapter thus calls for revisiting the link between diversity and public goods provision and embedding its study into a longer-term, historically informed perspective. Overall, the book argues that a polyglot population is indeed less likely to succeed at nation building—but not because diversity is detrimental to public goods provision, as shown in Chapter 7, but because establishing political networks across a territory is more difficult if citizens speak many different languages (Chapters 4 and 5). Diversity, however, is not an "exogenous" variable outside the domain of human interactions, similar to topography, as many economists would have it. Diversity is not destiny, but a product of history. It is endogenously transformed and modified in long-term processes of state formation and nation building.

CHAPTER 8

The concluding chapter teases out the policy implications of the preceding analysis. If democracy is not an ideal recipe for nation building, what else can outsiders do to help bring a country's population together? Not that much, must be the answer from the long-term historical perspective established by this book. After all, historical legacies such as inheriting a tradition of centralized statehood cannot be manipulated after the fact. Furthermore, nation building takes time, if it is indeed driven by the three slow-moving forces identified here. In the postcolonial age, no outside force has the legitimacy or necessary stamina to wait long enough for political alliance networks to spread across a diverse territory. And finally, providing public goods from the outside doesn't help build such alliances nearly as effectively as when the national government offers security, education, basic infrastructure, health care facilities, and so on.

Chapter 8 shows this empirically on the basis of survey data from Afghanistan. Over the past decade, public goods projects by the Afghan government did indeed foster its legitimacy, led citizens to accept its authority for resolving local disputes, and encouraged them to identify as members of the Afghan nation rather than as members of an ethnic group or as Muslims. This offers some direct evidence for how public goods provision enhances nation building. Public goods projects undertaken by international NGOs or the American military, by contrast, were not nearly as effective as tools of nation building. Foreign-sponsored projects even increased support for the Taliban rather than reducing it as intended by the strategy of "winning hearts and minds."

These cautionary notes shouldn't lead us to conclude that nothing at all can be done. First, outside actors can channel resources through national governments, even though that might mean first investing in their capacity to provide public goods. International development agencies such as the World Bank have long focused on such capacity building and have become much

better at it, not the least because in contrast to many Western governments, they don't follow a direct political agenda. Support for such organizations might therefore be one of the most promising ways to promote nation building in the Global South. Outside actors can also continue to support voluntary organizations that provide an alternative to ethnic patronage networks; and they can help finance strong public school systems that teach children to master a national language.

Second, political craftsmanship can help integrate a country's population, even if historical circumstances are not favorable. A statistical analysis in Chapter 8 shows that some states are doing quite well in politically integrating a diverse population even though they lack a history of political centralization, provide few public goods, govern over a polyglot population, or count only few voluntary organizations. Many of these exceptional countries were governed over long periods of time by skilled national leaders committed to an inclusionary nation-building project.

Third, outside actors can identify such leaders and support them politically. In some countries, political movements committed to the goal of nation building may already be fighting against an exclusionary, ethnocratic regime. Outside support for such political movements and leaders might eventually lead to a more inclusionary power configuration and thus foster peace and prosperity in the future. In most contemporary conflicts, *hélas*, it is very hard indeed to identify such political forces. Outside support or even military intervention, while perhaps expedient from a short-term foreign policy or security point of view, might not help nation building in the long run if local politicians are not already committed to the goal and capable of assembling a broad and inclusive coalition.

Situating the Argument

I conclude this introduction by comparing the overall argument to others that have figured prominently in recent social science research. The theory and empirical findings of this book can easily be represented in a figure (see Figure 0.2). The first half of the book illustrates how the main mechanisms shape historical developments in three pairs of country cases. The second half of the book uses statistical techniques and global datasets to identify the average effects of these mechanisms on countries around the world.

When comparing this work to others within the same broadly defined field, some differences in topical focus become apparent. Charles Tilly (1975) and a range of authors in his wake (Vu 2009) were interested in the rise of centralized states in the early modern period. Here I focus on its consequences for the prospect of national integration in the 19th and 20th centuries and on the mechanisms through which state centralization in the past influences
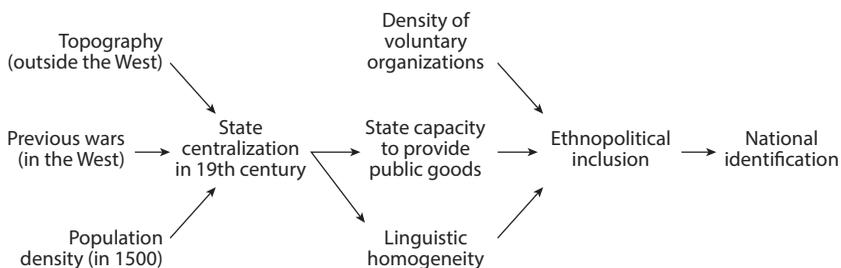
FIGURE 0.2. The argument in a nutshell

nation building in the present. Much of the literature on nationalism asks why it emerged in the first place and has identified major structural forces such as print capitalism (Anderson 1991), industrialization (Gellner 1983), the shift from indirect to direct rule during political modernization (Hechter 2000), or the role of intellectuals who recast ancient ethnic traditions into nationalist narratives (Smith 1986). In this book I don't ask why nationalist visions of the world emerge but how far they are subsequently realized and adopted by the population at large.

Other approaches to nation building focus on faster-moving, contemporary processes, such as the logic of coalition building between elites and their constituencies (Slater 2010; Roessler 2011) or the role of international actors such as rival states (Mylonas 2012). The theory of nation building proposed here highlights tectonic shifts rather than changing seasons. Relational networks evolve over the long run and relatively independent of global conjectures, international interventions, or coalitional politics, all of which reshape rather than fundamentally alter the course of political developments, as we will see in the case studies.

Some prominent theorists have examined how contingent events (Sewell 1996), transnational connections between political movements and states (Subrahmanyam 1997), or political leadership (Read and Shapiro 2014) shape historical trajectories. The six case studies certainly contain plenty of material to support such a view of history: Switzerland and Belgium were profoundly influenced by the French Revolution; Somalia's Siad Barre established deep ties to communist Russia; China's nationalists were inspired by European ideas that they received via Japan; Belgium's history would perhaps have taken a different path without Napoleon; and Botswana might not look the same today without its talented first president. But this book puts other, structural forces into relief that limit the range within which events, transnational influences, and strong-willed individuals can move historical trajectories. Political craftsmanship can enhance the prospect of nation building somewhat when these structural forces don't favor it, as mentioned above, but it does so within

limits established by these forces. To put this into another metaphorical image, I am mostly interested in why certain parts of the world are covered with a certain kind of vegetation rather than with explaining the (contingent) movement of a particular group of deer through a forest.

Contingency also plays a crucial role in two popular books that seek to explain the "success and failure" of societies over long stretches of time. They merit a more extended discussion. Their empirical focus is again slightly different. Acemoglu and Robinson's *Why Nations Fail* (2012) is mostly interested in economic growth, while Fukuyama's *Political Order and Political Decay* (2014) seeks to understand why some states remain stable over centuries while others descend into anarchy. According to Acemoglu and Robinson, economies grow in favorable institutional environments: where individual property rights are secured and political institutions are broadly based and inclusionary. Capitalist democracies offer incentives to innovate and generate, through creative destruction à la Schumpeter, the economic dynamism necessary to sustain high growth rates.

Similarly, Fukuyama identifies three characteristics of stable states. They need to have political power and capable administrations: states that don't have bureaucrats can't do much, nor can states that haven't established a monopoly of violence throughout their territory. Governments should also be responsive to the changing views and interests of the population at large, not necessarily but preferably through regular multiparty elections. Finally, a stable state is based on the rule of law: disinterested bureaucrats impartially follow legal provisions without favoring their family, kin, or tribe.

Both oeuvres don't offer much of a causal argument but argue like recipe books: to have a successful society, they suggest, you need ingredients X, Y, and Z. But there is little analysis of why history, that grand master chef, puts certain ingredients into the pot of this society and other ingredients into that of another. Acemoglu and Robinson's views are more explicit in that regard: there can be no such analysis, they argue, because grand master History combines ingredients randomly, a view for which they received applause from fellow economists (Boldrin et al. 2015). To illustrate what a theory of history as pure contingency means, imagine a group of laboratory rats, each representing a different nation, running around in a labyrinth with scarce food. By sheer coincidence, some rats will eventually hit a door, squeeze through it, and find themselves in a good institutional environment with lots of food. The less lucky rats continue to starve.

This view only amounts to a true theory, however, if combined with a strong notion of path dependency: the openings through which the lucky rats squeezed would have to be one-way doors. But history is full of reversals, as Acemoglu and Robinson show. Early modern Venice had good institutions, but then bad ones emerged. Rome was on the right track until Caesar killed

its proto-democracy. In historical reality, therefore, the doors in the labyrinth open both ways. Some rats are lucky enough to run through the door to institutional paradise, others never hit it, and still others find it but return through another door to the realm of scarcity. Nations "succeed" or "fail" at random, and we don't quite know why.

This book offers a more deterministic view of history. Not all rats in the lab are the same; some are fatter than others—to remain in the metaphor at the risk of overstretching it. The likelihood that the fat rats will run through the door leading to nation building is consistently lower than the likelihood that the slim rats will end up there. In more substantial terms, the chances that a society such as Somalia that was stateless in the late 19th century will end up with a politically integrated nation 150 years later are lower than in the case of China, which looks back on two millennia of state centralization. The next chapter outlines this theory in more detail.

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