Frontiers and Ghettos

State Violence in Serbia and Israel

James Ron

Dear Erik,
With many thanks for all
your encouragement & support.
Sincerely,
J. R.

For Emma

Contents

Maps

Preface

All states use violence, either actual or threatened, to defend their borders and enforce the rule of law. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any reasonable society existing for long without some kind of centralized coercion. At times, however, the state's coercive apparatus does not focus solely on national defense or public safety, but instead aids the powerful, reproduces inequality, or promotes discrimination. Contemporary Serbia and Israel are two such cases. In each of these states, the military, police, and partially autonomous paramilitaries have used violence to further the interests of one national group over others. In each instance, the state's broader goal has been national exclusion of some kind or another. Actual patterns of nationalist state violence, however, have varied substantially over time and space.

Readers sympathetic to either the Serbian or Jewish national projects may argue there was little choice. To protect basic Serbian and Jewish collective rights, state violence of some sort, while regrettable, was necessary. Others might suggest otherwise, saying Serbia and Israel exaggerated the threats they faced or even helped create their enemies through discrimination. Important as that debate is, my concern here is not with the legitimacy of violence or with each conflict's root cause. Instead, assuming that political violence is already under way, this book seeks to explain why states use some methods and not others in given times and places. Like other nationalist states, Serbia and Israel have occasionally resorted to mass expulsions of unwanted populations, but on

other occasions they have relied on subtler forms of national domina-
tion. What explains these variations? Why do states resort to ethnic
cleansing in some cases, but use police-style repression in others?

My explanation is straightforward. In times of acute political or mil-
itary crisis, today's high-capacity states will prefer to police, rather than
expel, unwanted groups living in areas of concentrated state power. This
is true even in strongly nationalist entities such as Serbia and Israel. At
the state's margins, however, military forces and their paramilitary al-
lies enjoy more freedom to maneuver, and it is here that nationalist vi-
olence is likely to be most intense. This is so because contemporary
nation-states are sensitive to the appearance of legality, in part because
of the increased salience of international human rights norms. Areas of
concentrated state power are zones of legal density and enhanced state
responsibility, but marginal regions are less clearly subject to state au-
thority. On the periphery, official security forces and their unofficial al-
lies operate in a more lawless environment, facilitating their resort
to despotism. Note, however, that a region's definition as center or
periphery is not set in stone, and that in times of military or political
emergency, some areas' status can be rapidly redefined. "Central" or
"peripheral" areas are social and political constructs subject to renego-
tiation.

As the book's title suggests, I use two key spatial metaphors to illus-
trate my case. In spring 1992, I argue, Bosnia became a "frontier" vis-à-
vis Serbia, making it feasible for Serbia to engage, covertly, in awful acts
of ethnic cleansing. Frontiers are peripheral regions unincorporated into
a powerful state's legal zone of influence, and as such are more prone to
acts of lawless nationalist violence. The Palestinian West Bank and Gaza
Strip, by contrast, became a "ghetto" vis-à-vis Israel during the 1970s
and 1980s. Thus, when the first Palestinian uprising began in December
1987, Israeli forces found themselves engaged in acts of harsh policing,
not ethnic cleansing. They did so despite the existence of powerful po-
litical forces favoring more radical policies toward Palestinians. Ghettos
are repositories of unwanted and marginalized populations, but are
nonetheless included within the dominant state's legal sphere of influ-
ence, classifying them as quasi-members of the polity. Ghetto popula-
tions are more likely to be policed than forcefully deported.

Having advanced my argument in bold terms, I must offer a few
caveats. First, the universe of cases to which this argument applies is con-
fined to highly capable states with functioning bureaucracies, internal

coherence, and the ability to enforce laws over much of their territory.
These states are also likely to view themselves as part of "civilized" in-
ternational society. Temporally, my argument refers chiefly to conflicts
during the 1970s, 1980s, or 1990s, when norms of international human
rights monitoring grew increasingly widespread. My argument, for ex-
ample, does not apply to Nazi Germany, because it took place during a
period of weak international human rights monitoring. Nor, for that
matter, does it apply to the Bosnian Serb entity formed in Bosnia during
1992, as it was not a high-capacity, strong state.

If patterns of state violence vary by geographical zone, then borders
of both the internal and international sort must also play a key role. Sol-
diers, secret police, and their paramilitary allies, after all, need some
way of differentiating between one zone and another. Thus while bor-
ders are socially constructed lines in the sand, they have dramatic real-
world significance, marking the transition from zones of high and low
state power. State violence takes place in bounded physical spaces
termed here "institutional settings." Armed representatives of the state
are sensitive to boundaries between these settings, realizing, if only sub-
consciously, that methods appropriate in one are unthinkable in an-
other. Borders shape state violence in dramatic and abrupt ways, shift-
ing the state's coercive repertoire from ethnic cleansing to policing, and
vice versa.

The relevance of all this to today's headlines is substantial. Nation-
ally motivated Serbian violence in the former Yugoslavia ended, at least
for now, with NATO's 1999 takeover of Kosovo and the fall of Serbian
strongman Slobodan Milošević. In the Middle East, however, violence
rages on. Fighting between Israeli troops and Palestinian militias is es-
calating, and in the immediate future, Palestinians in the West Bank and
Gaza Strip—as opposed to Palestinians living elsewhere—may enter the
most physically dangerous chapter of their 120-year battle with Jewish
nationalism. In the year 2000, Israel began using warlike methods in the
Palestinian territories for the first time in decades, deploying shoot-to-
kill ambushes, armored vehicles, and warplanes. In late 2001, Israeli
tanks responded to Palestinian suicide bombers by seizing Palestinian
autonomous zones and inching toward full-scale war, a trend that ac-
celerated in spring 2002. This shift in repertoires has been a shock to
those immersed in the Palestine-Israel conflict, because until recently, Is-
rael relied almost exclusively on harsh *police*-style methods of control
in the West Bank and Gaza. Israeli tactics are now changing dramati-

Legend:
- Sandžak Region
- — Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
- — Internal Province
- —·— International Boundary

Map 1. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and its Bosnian "frontier"

cally, due largely to the region's slide from center to the margins of Israeli state power. As the West Bank and Gaza become increasingly peripheral to the Israeli state, they experience a more despotic regime of domination.

Palestine's reconfiguration to the periphery of Israeli state power
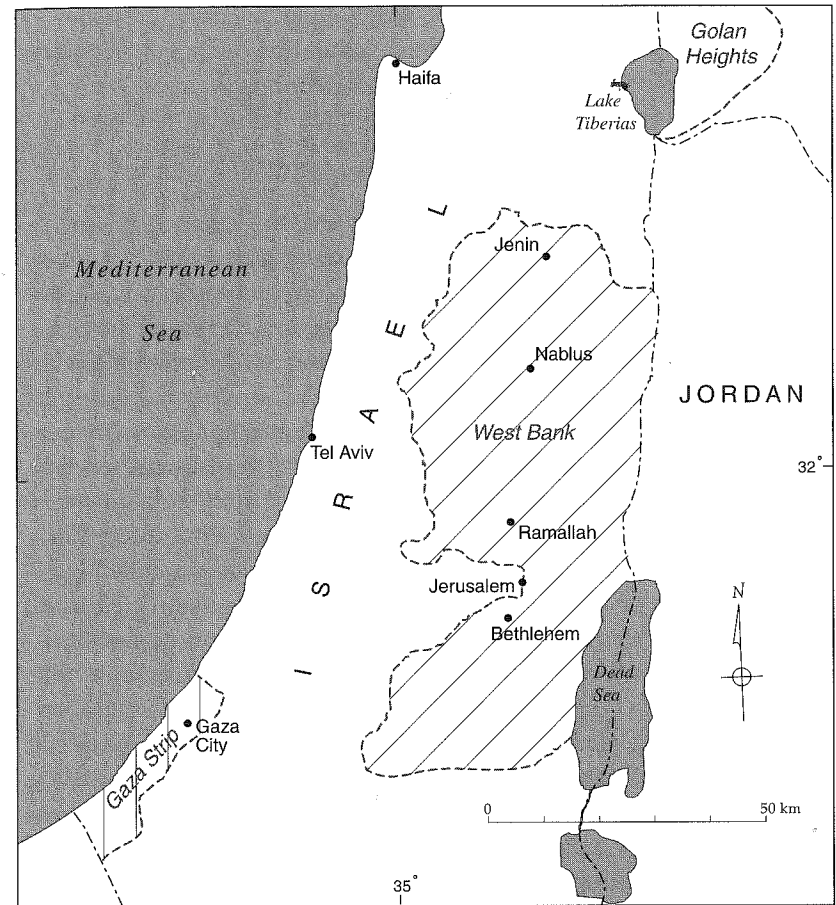
Map 2. Israel and its Palestinian "ghetto" (the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip)

began in the mid-1990s. From 1967 until then, Palestinian territories were a de facto ghetto within Israel, securely trapped within the boundaries of a powerful Jewish state. The 1993 Oslo accords, however, created small, partially autonomous Palestinian enclaves scattered throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Although these pockets did not have unfettered access to the outside world, their interior was relatively free from an Israeli military presence. The more these lands escaped direct Israeli control, however, the more precarious their future grew. To restate this book's central thesis, nationalist states tend to be most radical at their margins, not their core. As Palestinians approached a semblance of

territorial autonomy, in other words, they confronted dangers similar to those faced by Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population in 1998, when parts of the contested province slipped from Serbian control.

THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THIS BOOK

My interest in geographic settings, nationalism, and repertoires of state violence was sparked by an intense, personal experience. From January 1985 to January 1988, I served as a conscript in the Israeli army, spending much of my time in an infantry unit. At the time, draftees rotated between occupation duty in southern Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. Those were relatively peaceful years, and I experienced little real combat. Still, I did witness remarkably different patterns of state coercion in each zone. Through a mixture of tacit and explicit signals, my colleagues and I learned that violent tactics appropriate to Lebanon were wrong for the West Bank or Gaza, and that methods permitted in Palestinian lands were unthinkable in Israel proper. To take one example, Israeli shoot-on-sight ambushes in the 1980s were common in Lebanon, but the same forces used quite different methods in the occupied Palestinian lands. As soldiers moved from one zone to another, in other words, they changed tactics quite dramatically. These variations were not organized solely along geographic lines, however, as we treated Jews and Arabs differently regardless of locale. As enforcers of Israeli state policy, our actions varied both by region and by nationality. These distinctions were integral to our daily routine, attracting little attention on all sides. When I began thinking more carefully about my military experiences, however, these patterns became intriguing sociological puzzles. Why would the Israeli army treat Lebanon and Palestine so differently?

My interests were strengthened in 1995, when I was sent by Human Rights Watch, a New York–based group, to study Turkey's war against Kurdish insurgents.[1] Turkish forces had burned down dozens of Kurdish villages in the country's southeastern region, using rape, torture, and other intensely violent measures. When Kurdish civilians fled the area defined as the "emergency zone," however, Turkish security forces used quite different methods of control, even though Kurdish squatter neighborhoods often harbored insurgents. What was appropriate for Turkey's southeast was entirely inappropriate in the country's west. As had been true for Israel, Turkey's coercive style varied from one geographical arena to the next. In areas where Turkish state power was less overwhelming, moreover, its methods were more blatantly destructive. While

the Israeli case highlighted variations across *international* borders, Turkish patterns underlined the role of *internal* boundaries. I do not include the Turkish case in this book, as this is a focused comparison of Serbia and Israel. My Turkish experiences did convince me, however, of the importance of internal as well as international boundaries.

Working in the world of international human rights documentation, I came to believe that scholars, journalists, and human rights analysis were missing an important aspect of state violence. Contrary to conventional wisdom, security forces and their semi-private allies often distinguished between institutional settings, with vital consequences for states, insurgents, civilian victims, and human rights advocates. These nuances, however, were often overlooked by scholars and state critics, many of whom lumped *all* coercive policies together under the rubric of "human rights abuses," ignoring geographically specific distinctions. I resolved to develop a way of distinguishing theoretically between different zones of state violence, and of explaining these zones' emergence over time. Most importantly, I wanted to explore an intriguing paradox: Why, when unwanted populations were fully dominated by contemporary ethnonationalist states, were they more likely to be policed than expelled? Why wouldn't states treat areas they controlled fully with even *greater* violence?

To those familiar with the awful abuses suffered by victims of these and other wars, academic theorizing may seem callous, opportunistic, even obscene. The neutral language of social science can never do justice to articulating the enormity of wartime suffering; but that effort is perhaps best left to journalists, novelists, and poets. As social scientists, our job is more modest. We provide explanatory tools to illustrate the social forces causing and shaping patterns of human misery. Whether or not this provides any tangible benefit to the world is difficult to say.

THE CASES

This book's central case studies are Serbia's 1992–93 campaign against non-Serbs in Bosnia, and Israel's 1988 efforts to put down the first Palestinian uprising, popularly known as the first Intifada.[2] In these periods, both Serbia and Israel were overtly nationalistic states that felt compelled to use violence to defend the security of their national communities, narrowly defined. In each case, however, agents of the state used quite different methods. Serbia responded to Bosnia's 1992 demands for independence with acute violence aimed chiefly at forcing non-Serbs to flee. In

1988, by contrast, Israel responded to similar Palestinian claims with ethnic policing, a pernicious but less destructive policy. Although Serbia and Israel were similar in important respects, their repertoires of violence in these two instances varied dramatically. In explaining this divergence, I draw on the work of organizational and political sociologists, as well as theorists of international norms.

I test and elaborate my argument by studying variations within each case. Serbia did not use ethnic cleansing against minorities in territories that it fully controlled, while Israeli violence in Lebanon, an area beyond Israel's firm and legal control, was far *more* destructive than in Palestine. The book thus proceeds along two comparative tracks, studying divergent repertoires between Serbia and Israel on the one hand, and among different regions within each case, on the other.

METHODS AND SOURCES

My sources include field interviews, newspaper reports, and scholarly publications.[3] For the Israel-Palestine study I make use of interviews conducted during 1992–94, first for Human Rights Watch, and then for my own academic purposes. In 1992, I wrote a report on the actions of Israeli undercover units seeking to arrest or kill Palestinian activists, interviewing dozens of Palestinians as well as Israeli soldiers, bureaucrats, and journalists.[4] The next year, I analyzed Israeli methods of interrogation in the West Bank and Gaza, interviewing over sixty former detainees and dozens of Israeli and Palestinian lawyers, activists, and officials.[5] I used a translator for Arabic-language interviews, but spoke in Hebrew with Jewish Israelis. To this I have added quotes and insights from forty-five semi-structured discussions with Israeli military veterans interviewed during 1992–94.

For the Serbian case, my sources are similarly diverse. In early 1996, I traveled to Croatia and Bosnia for the International Committee of the Red Cross, a Geneva-based humanitarian group, studying their efforts to protect civilians and prisoners of war. This project included 100 interviews with expatriate and local employees of international agencies, as well as Croatian and Bosnian officials. Virtually all my informants were involved in efforts to monitor, control, and analyze patterns of state violence. In 1997, I went to Belgrade on my own behalf, asking questions about Serbia's involvement in Bosnia and about violence in ethnically mixed areas of Serbia and Montenegro. Relying again on translators, I interviewed over 100 human rights advocates, academics, former fight-

ers, journalists, and local politicians. In spring 1999, I traveled to Albania's border with Kosovo for Human Rights Watch, interviewing ethnic Albanian refugees fleeing Serbian ethnic cleansing. For reasons of confidentiality, most informants in both the Israeli and Serbian cases are not identified by their real names. In some cases, I cite a specific interview and identify the informant by a first-name pseudonym. In a handful of instances, I supply the informant's actual full name.

This book also draws on discussions with investigators studying armed conflicts worldwide. Hundreds of researchers travel the globe each year for Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and others, researching state violence and amassing a wealth of practical, empirical knowledge. Some of this appears in written reports, but much remains tucked away in individual memories, available only through discussions and interviews. Finally, my analysis also relies on comparative insights from my work for Human Rights Watch in Turkey, Nigeria, and Chechnya.

COMPARING SERBIA AND ISRAEL

For some, the Serbia-Israel comparison may stretch credulity, given their apparently radical differences. Upon closer examination, however, there are some intriguing similarities. First, while the population of both states is multinational, the state apparatus has been captured by one national or ethnic group. As a result, each country's bureaucracy engages in overt and tacit discrimination, prioritizing the interests of one national community over others. Serbs and Jews enjoy more state protection, official respect, and privileges than non-Serbs or non-Jews.

Second, both Serbian and Jewish nationalists claim territories lying beyond their internationally recognized boundaries. In today's world, globally recognized borders are hard to change, but influential Serbian and Israeli nationalists feel strongly that adjacent lands belong only to them.[6] Political scientist Ian Lustick calls Israel an "unsettled state" because of its ambiguous relationship to territory and borders, and this term applies to Serbia in the 1990s as well.[7] Third, the two countries' political discourses share some important themes, with Serbia's concern for its historical roots in Kosovo resembling the attachment many Jews feel toward Judea and Samaria, the biblical term for the West Bank. In both Serbia and Israel, moreover, prominent nationalists have discussed the option of expelling unwanted populations to ensure demographic and military superiority. Without forced population transfer, they say, Serbia

and Israel will always face acute demographic and security crises. Although normatively repugnant, this policy recommendation flows logically, but not inevitably, from Serbia's and Israel's founding principles. Once a state energetically prioritizes one community's rights over others, the notion of ethnic cleansing is bound to arise in one form or another.[8]

Conventional wisdom suggests that Serbia and Israel are not comparable because their methods of repression in Bosnia and the West Bank/Gaza were so radically different. When we examine variations within the Serbian and Israeli cases, however, these sharp distinctions begin to fade. Serbian violence in ethnically mixed areas *within* Serbia was more restrained than in Bosnia, while Israeli actions in Lebanon were more destructive than in the West Bank/Gaza. Both states, in other words, employed diverse tactics in different arenas, with some overlap. Some Serbian actions within Serbia resemble Israeli ethnic policing efforts in Palestine, while some Israeli methods in Lebanon resemble Serbian actions in Bosnia. Israel was not guilty of genocide in Lebanon, and its soldiers did not engage in mass rape and other war crimes of the sort committed by some Serbian fighters in Bosnia. At the same time, Israel did resort to expulsions and dangerously indiscriminate shelling in Lebanon, and its secret services did work closely with Lebanese paramilitaries guilty of Bosnia-like atrocities. Lebanon and Bosnia are similar in some respects, but they are not parallel cases.

One clear *difference* between Israel and Serbia is the way in which Western powers and international organizations have responded to each country's territorial and military ambitions. Serbian interventions in Bosnia and elsewhere were harshly condemned by Western powers, who convinced the UN Security Council and NATO to deploy sanctions and, eventually, military force to punish Serbian transgressions. Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and Lebanon, on the other hand, has attracted more muted forms of international criticism. Largely due to America's special relationship with Israel, Western powers and the UN Security Council have regarded Israel's actions with greater understanding than Serbia's, with important and unanticipated consequences. In Bosnia, Western sanctions drove Serbian intervention underground, promoting the use of private paramilitaries and underworld thugs, and facilitating Serbia's resort to ethnic cleansing. Israel's control over the West Bank and Gaza, conversely, was done quite openly, relying on Israel's regular security forces, and this resulted in a subtler regime of domination. Different international attitudes, in other words, dramatically shaped each state's coercive style. Greater Western pressure on Serbia provoked more openly destructive Ser-

bian methods, while greater Western permissiveness led to less acute methods of Israeli control. Contemporary human rights norms being what they are, the West's tolerance for Israel's West Bank/Gaza occupation came attached with some important strings, pushing Israel toward a policing strategy in the occupied lands during the 1980s and early 1990s.

The Serbia-Israel comparison is bound to be controversial, and many readers will remain skeptical. I can only ask that you bear with me, reading as much as you can of the material presented below. If my interpretations push you to think differently about Serbia, Israel, and state violence, I will be content.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Puzzles of Violence

In the midst of Israel's hotly contested 1996 election campaign, Palestinian militants launched a series of deadly bomb attacks in Israel, killing dozens of Jews in downtown Tel Aviv. The deaths came at a particularly inopportune time for the then-ruling Labor Party, preoccupied as it was with convincing Jewish voters it could be as tough as the political right on national security. Some Labor ministers proposed dramatic acts of retaliation, including expelling entire groups of Palestinians or destroying Palestinian villages. The government vetoed those suggestions as too drastic, however, preferring instead to intensify ongoing policing measures such as arrests, coercive interrogations, and restrictions on Palestinian travel and movement.[1]

In a separate incident soon after, Lebanese Islamist guerrillas fired a handful of rockets toward northern Israel, causing no casualties and only limited physical damage. This time, however, the Israeli government did not hesitate, ordering the Israeli army to mount Operation Grapes of Wrath, a prolonged bombardment of southern Lebanon that displaced 400,000 civilians, killed and wounded hundreds, and destroyed homes, roads, and bridges.[2] With this spectacular display of violence, Israeli officials signaled Lebanese guerrillas that more rocket attacks would trigger disproportionate Lebanese suffering, and responded to calls for vengeance by some Israeli-Jewish voters.

The difference between Israel's methods in Lebanon and Palestine, the term I use here for the West Bank and Gaza, is remarkable. Both were

Israeli-occupied Arab lands bordering on Israel, but the Israeli state distinguished clearly between them when choosing its repertoires of violence. Israel defined Lebanon as an object of war but saw Palestine, in those years, as an object of policing. What explains this difference?[3]

One answer might point to different levels of threat, suggesting that Israel's methods were shaped by the magnitude of the security challenge it faced. The Lebanon-based guerrillas were more dangerous, and thus Israel dealt with them more harshly. Upon closer investigation, however, that argument fails to persuade. If intensity of threat alone determined Israel's methods, the government should have ordered the army to bombard *Palestine,* not southern Lebanon, since it was Palestinian militants who were able to explode bombs in the center of Israel. The West Bank challenge, moreover, posed a far greater threat to Zionism than did Lebanon. For many Jewish nationalists, the West Bank was an integral part of Greater Israel, while for many military strategists, Israeli control over the area was vital to national security. Lebanon, by comparison, was both ideologically and strategically less important. Were the Israeli army to have behaved in accordance with objective levels of threat, it should have treated Palestine more harshly than Lebanon.

This puzzle is further complicated by historical variations in Israel's treatment of Palestinians. Prior to its 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, for example, Israeli forces mounted large-scale raids on West Bank and Gaza villages, killing many in what was then Jordanian- or Egyptian-held territory.[4] During the 1947–49 Israeli-Arab war, moreover, Jewish troops forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and then bulldozed villages to prevent their return.[5] Ever since Israeli troops took the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 war, however, Israel ceased using intensely destructive violence, relying instead on harsh, police-style tactics. The more Israel consolidated its control over Palestinian lands and populations, in other words, the less dramatic its methods of coercion became. Strangely enough, this occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, when anti-Palestinian sentiment in Israel rose sharply.[6]

Similar puzzles appear in repertoires of Serbian violence during 1992–93, the first year of the Bosnian war. Ethnic Serb paramilitaries based inside Serbia and its smaller ally, Montenegro, launched cross-border sorties into Bosnia-Herzegovina and expelled Muslim and Croat populations. In the Bosnian town of Višegrad, for example, fighters from the Serbian White Eagles paramilitary reportedly massacred many Muslim Slavs in full view, dropping their bodies from the town's central bridge.[7] Strangely enough, however, those same militias seemed reluctant

to kill Muslim Slavs living in Serbia proper. This was true even in the Sandžak, a Muslim-majority region of Serbia and Montenegro just over the border from Višegrad. There, White Eagles and others maintained rear bases amid hundreds of thousands of Muslims similar in every way to their Bosnian co-nationals, save for their geographic location. Serbian paramilitaries used despotic violence in Bosnia, but did not bring those methods back home.[8] Like Israel's security forces, Serbian paramilitaries seemed surprisingly sensitive to geography and borders.

An even broader puzzle emerges when we compare the Serbian record of 1992–93 to that of Israel in 1988, the first year of the Palestinian uprising. Both states were overtly nationalist in their orientation, perceiving themselves as defenders of a persecuted people threatened by powerful neighbors. Both were prone to ethnocentrism, partly as a result of World War II traumas. While the Nazis were killing Jews en masse in Eastern Europe, their Croat allies were doing the same to ethnic Serbs in Yugoslavia, albeit with less efficiency. The legacy of those horrors, combined with domestic politics and regional tensions, transformed both Serbia and Israel into nationalist states intent on securing contested lands. Serbia hoped to ensure ethnic Serb hegemony in mixed areas such as the Sandžak, Vojvodina, Kosovo, and parts of Bosnia, while Israel promoted Jewish rule over the West Bank and Gaza. Both Serbia and Israel had a national political core that sought to expand into adjacent areas, persevering in the face of bitter opposition from ethno-national rivals such as Palestinians, Croats, Bosnian Muslims, and ethnic Albanians.

Yet while Israel and Serbia shared many characteristics, their armed forces responded differently to challenges from Bosnia and Palestine. The Bosnian government's 1992 demand for independence prompted Serbian-backed ethnic cleansing, but the 1988 Palestinian bid for sovereignty prompted Israeli ethnic policing, a pernicious but less dramatic effort. Ethnic cleansing involved the forcible removal of unwanted populations through violence and terror. Ethnic policing included corporal punishment, mass incarceration, and administrative harassment, but left the unwanted population in place. Why did these two similarly constructed states respond in such different ways? Why, after a century of often violent colonization, did Israel use policing rather than expulsion, despite a groundswell of popular support for pushing Palestinians out?[9]

Matters are further complicated when we note differences within Serbian and Israeli zones of influence. Serbia treated Muslim Slavs differently depending on whether they lived in the Sandžak or Bosnia, while

Israel differentiated between Arabs in Lebanon or Palestine. How should we account for these within-case variations?

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS: REGIME, CULTURE, AND OBJECTIVE THREAT

If we were to focus solely on Bosnia and Palestine, we might argue that Serbian and Israeli policies differed as a result of fundamental differences in regime type. Israel was a democracy in the late 1980s, whereas Serbia in 1992 had a quasi-authoritarian, populist regime. Wouldn't Israeli democracy explain its more subtle methods of control? Wouldn't Serbian authoritarianism explain its resort to an unabashedly brutal regime of domination?

There are difficulties with this argument, however. First, the designation of Israel as a democracy is problematic, since its military was absolute ruler over some 1.8 million Palestinians.[10] Although the occupation was officially transitional, it had endured for over three decades, and a generation of Palestinians had grown up under Israeli occupation. Within Israel proper, moreover, some 3.5 million Jews enjoyed a broader range of political rights and social respect than the country's 800,000 Palestinian citizens. Like the grossly imperfect democracy of post-communist Serbia, in other words, Israel combined both authoritarian and democratic features.

Second, variations within the Serbian and Israeli cases suggest that the nature of each country's regime cannot, on its own, explain patterns of state violence. How can Israel's regime type explain its different styles of violence in Palestine and Lebanon? How can Serbian authoritarianism explain the Sandžak/Bosnia variation? Why, moreover, did Serbian authoritarianism not translate into *greater* tyranny at home? Why were Muslims safer in Serbia than in Bosnia?

The drawbacks of regime-based arguments emerge more generally from the tarnished record of democracies and semi-democracies worldwide. France, for example, waged vicious wars, replete with forced displacement, torture, and indiscriminate terror, against rebellious colonized peoples in Algeria and Vietnam. The world's largest democracy is India, but its war with Kashmiri separatists is an entirely brutal affair. Turkey is democratic in many ways, but has forcibly depopulated large swathes of its Kurdish-majority southeast. Regime type, in and of itself, is too blunt an explanatory tool to account for an individual state's varying repertoires of violence.

What, then, of the notion that Jewish and Serbian nationalisms were profoundly different in content? If Zionism, for example, was fundamentally kinder than Serbian nationalism, wouldn't that explain Israeli restraint? Regardless of this claim's validity, arguments of this sort encounter the same difficulties as regime-based explanations. How can the supposed moderate nature of Zionist ideology explain *both* the Lebanese and Palestinian experiences? How can Serbian radicalism explain both Sandžak moderation *and* Bosnian extremism? Nationalism may explain why states use discrimination and violence in the first place, but it cannot explain divergent repertoires of coercion by the same state in the same general time period.

A third explanation—objective threat—is also unpersuasive.[11] As noted above, Israelis might have viewed Palestine as a far greater threat than Lebanon, but it was in Lebanon, and not in Palestine, that Israeli artillery had free rein. In Serbia, similarly, Kosovo's 1.8 million ethnic Albanians presented the most powerful threat of all to Serbian national interests, but it was Bosnian Muslims, who in fact presented the least acute threat to Serbian national security, who were first targeted. If national security was the guiding logic, then Kosovo should have been ethnically cleansed long *before* Bosnia. The Sandžak poses a similar puzzle. Serbian officials saw a Muslim presence in the Sandžak as a strategic nightmare, and if objective levels of threat were determinate, they would have ethnically cleansed the area along with Bosnia. Perceptions of national security matter enormously, of course, but interpretations of what constitutes a "threat" are always mediated by other factors.

REPRESSION IN SEMI-DEMOCRACIES

Despite intense media interest in Israel and Serbia, these are not particularly unique cases. Instead, they are members of a larger group of states that define their communities more narrowly than their actual populations, relying on ascribed characteristics such as nationality, religion, or ethnicity. In such cases, a dominant group captures the state apparatus, using the bureaucracy, legislature, and armed forces to promote in-group privileges. Consequently, such states are wracked by struggles over collective dignity, identity, and resources. These disputes turn especially bitter when out-groups seek territorial autonomy or independence. Examples include Kurdish rebels in Turkey, Kashmiri separatists in India, Chechen insurgents in Russia, and indigenous peoples in Mexico. Like Serbia and Israel, these states all enjoy some measure of internal democ-

racy and accountability, but they are also discriminatory in allocating re-
sources, public services, and social respect. In seeking to capture both the
democratic and discriminatory aspects of such states, scholars have used
terms such as "semi-democracies" or "ethnocracies," with the latter de-
scribing polities where exclusion is constructed along ethnic lines.[12]

All states seek to monopolize the use of force in their territory, and the
rulers of semi-democratic states are no different. As a result, they feel
compelled to use substantial violence to efficiently dispatch physical
challenges to their rule. At the same time, however, these rulers en-
counter pressures from domestic and international audiences urging
greater restraint. These audiences are influenced by local and interna-
tional laws and norms, which cumulatively require states to subject their
use of force to scrutiny and regulations. Domestic constituencies urging
the state to play by the rules of the game are strengthened by a dense net-
work of international human rights activists, nongovernmental groups,
United Nations (UN) bodies, and bilateral agencies.

Although human rights critics cannot halt excessive or illegal state vi-
olence, they can raise popular awareness and impose modest penalties on
some human rights abusers. International tribunals are prosecuting war
crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and individual govern-
ments, from Chile to Spain, Belgium, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Chad, have
launched investigations of generals and politicians suspected of abuses,
including some unrelated to their own country's experience. Human
rights terminology is increasingly prominent in foreign news reporting,
often rivaling economic and political interpretations of ongoing events.[13]
Human rights–inspired intervention by Western militaries in Bosnia,
Kosovo, East Timor, Congo, and Sierra Leone, along with international
human rights pressure in dozens of other conflicts, attests to the theme's
growing salience.

The effect of international human rights oversight is greatest on small
or moderately powerful states such as Serbia and Israel, dependent as
they are on international flows of aid, trade, and legitimacy. When ex-
cluded populations resist, these states discover that repression is an in-
creasingly complex affair, especially in an era of instantaneous global
communications. How can one both suppress insurgencies and at the
same time project a legitimate image to domestic and international ob-
servers? Countries such as Israel, Mexico, Turkey, India, and others con-
stantly wrestle with this dilemma, seeking to evade criticism while si-
multaneously conducting effective repressive campaigns. Their dilemmas
are exacerbated by a recent wave of global democratization, which has

made small and moderately powerful states increasingly vulnerable to
domestic human rights pressure. Negotiating the contradictory impera-
tives of repression and legitimacy, states are trapped in what Isaac Bal-
bus has called the "dialectic of legal repression."[14] Across time and space,
coercive forces negotiate this dialectic in different ways, leading to dis-
similar and often unanticipated outcomes.

During counterinsurgency operations in the early 1990s, for example,
Turkish security forces burned Kurdish villages to crush the Kurdish
Workers Party, or PKK, but did not kill large numbers of civilians or
drive them across international borders.[15] Forced dislocation *within*
Turkey without large-scale massacres was Turkey's de facto compromise
between its contradictory cravings for both security and legitimacy. As a
result, the fate of Turkey's Kurds has been very different from those of
Iraq, who were killed in large numbers during the Iraqi Anfal campaign
of the late 1980s. Iraq was not a semi-democracy and was relatively in-
different to international pressures because of its oil wealth. Unburdened
by the need to cater to domestic or international critics, the Iraqi regime,
unlike that of Turkey, had few constraints on its behavior.

Serbia and Israel, like other medium-sized semi-democracies, were
trapped within the dialectic of legal repression during the late 1980s and
early 1990s. On the one hand, both states had constructed discrimina-
tory systems privileging one group over another, especially in times of
war and crisis. Israel was organized as the state of the Jews, rendering
the position of Arabs quite precarious, while Serbia was increasingly or-
ganized as the state of the Serbs, threatening the welfare of Muslim Slavs,
ethnic Albanians, ethnic Croats, and others. Given nationalist politics in
each country, it would have been hard for either government to ignore
resistance from ethno-national outsiders, especially when those same
groups appealed to international powers for support. In both cases, lead-
ers saw violence as a necessary response to pressing security threats.

At the same time, both countries had domestic critics and interna-
tional obligations, forcing them to consider norms governing the use of
force. Although ruled by a populist and authoritarian regime, Serbia
had, ever since 1990, enjoyed vigorous elections, as well as a moder-
ately free press. And while Israel dominated Palestine through its mili-
tary, it was also a democracy of sorts within its de jure borders, grant-
ing full rights to Jews, and many rights to Palestinians with Israeli
citizenship. Israel's democratic elements had a longer pedigree than
those of Serbia, but Israel did not have Serbia's forty-year legacy of mul-
ticultural communism. Both Serbia and Israel, moreover, were exposed

to international human rights pressures, since both saw themselves as part of the West, and both sought access to economic, political, and cultural flows from the wealthy, trend-setting global core.

In both cases, the dilemmas created by the dialectic of legal repression were profound. Neither Serbia nor Israel was entirely committed to any one violent repertoire, adopting different methods in different geographic regions, often at one and the same time. The Serbian and Israeli coercive apparatuses, like most complex organizations, did not present a single, unified face to the world; instead, they were often bundles of diverging policies.[16]

INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS: FRONTIER AND GHETTO

Repertoires of state violence are shaped by pressures for repression *and* restraint, both of which come together in different ways over time and space. Repression is deployed in discrete institutional settings that vary in terms of visibility, level of state control, and degree of state regulation.[17] These settings are specific in terms of both conflict and geography, and each has its own rules of the game. The notion of institutional setting is borrowed from organizational sociology, and refers here to a clearly defined social or geographic space where organizational action is shaped by notions of appropriate and legitimate behavior.

Two settings of particular importance here are what I call "frontiers" and "ghettos." Bosnia became a frontier vis-à-vis Serbia in 1992, facilitating Serbia's resort to ethnic cleansing, whereas Palestine became a ghetto within Israel, prompting ethnic policing. Both Serbian and Jewish nationalism contained radical and more moderate strains, but actual repertoires of domination were determined by institutional setting. The impact of institutional settings is nicely illustrated by the within-case variations discussed in this book. The Sandžak, for example, was a ghetto of a certain type within Serbia (and Montenegro) during the 1990s, and therefore experienced less extreme forms of nationalist violence than Bosnia. And Lebanon, which served as a frontier of sorts vis-à-vis Israel, experienced more dramatic repertoires of Israeli violence than did Palestine. Serbian state behavior in the Sandžak was not identical to Israeli conduct in Palestine, and the Lebanese experience is not an exact replica of Bosnia's trajectory. Still, these comparisons do highlight the ability of institutional settings to shape repertoires of state coercion.

The crucial difference between frontiers and ghettos is the extent to

which states control these arenas and feel a bureaucratic, moral, and political sense of responsibility for their fate. States enjoy an unrivaled level of control over the ghetto's borders and territory, suppressing challenges to their monopoly over force. Although this grants states some distinct advantages, it also implies important responsibilities. Ghetto residents are despised members of society, but both local and international rules stipulate that the state bears substantial responsibility for their welfare. Frontiers, by contrast, are perched on the edge of core states and are not fully incorporated into their zone of control. States do not dominate frontiers as they do ghettos, and they are not bound by the same legal and moral obligations. In times of crisis and uncertainty, frontiers more easily become sites of ethnic cleansing.

By applying the notion of frontier to Bosnia, we can better understand why Serbia resorted to ethnic cleansing in 1992–93. On their own, the breakdown of the Yugoslav state, Serbian nationalism, and Bosnian demands for independence might not have prompted ethnic cleansing. It is only when Serbian nationalism interacted with the Bosnian frontier that expulsion became a viable option. When we view Palestine as a ghetto within Israel, moreover, the reasons for Israel's reliance on ethnic policing become clear. Institutional context promotes some policies over others, with poorly regulated environments selecting out more radical strands of nationalist thought, and more heavily institutionalized arenas promoting police-like regimes of domination.

OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 discusses relevant theoretical issues in greater depth, using a modest amount of academic terminology. Then, Part I, comprised of Chapters 2 through 5, argues that the interaction between Serb nationalism, which pushed Serbian officials to promote Bosnian ethnic cleansing, and Western recognition of Bosnian sovereignty, which prohibited Serb cross-border activity, created two distinct institutional settings: a Bosnian frontier and a Serbian core. The core was Serbia, senior partner in the new rump Yugoslavia,[18] while the frontier was Bosnia, situated to the west of the newly created international border. Bosnia became a frontier in 1992 because the new, Muslim-led Bosnian government was enfeebled, and the new Bosnian Serb entity, later known as Republika Srpska, was just emerging. As a result, the eastern and northwest parts of Bosnia were largely controlled by local Bosnian Serb fighters working with roving, semi-private paramilitaries from Serbia proper. Both were

classic frontier agents, belonging officially to no legally constituted authority and enjoying considerable local autonomy. Together, these actors were responsible for much of the initial wave of Bosnian ethnic cleansing.

Chapter 3 includes a discussion of one of the most hotly debated issues of the Bosnian war, the links between the Belgrade government and ethnic Serb fighters in Bosnia. Human rights activists and journalists have made considerable efforts to prove Belgrade's connection to Serb forces in Bosnia, a task complicated by the dearth of relevant documentation. These intensive *legal* investigations, however, have helped obscure the broader *sociological* importance of Serbia's clandestine links. The lack of public chains of command-and-control between Belgrade and Bosnia indicate the extent to which Belgrade's cross-border activities were driven underground by Western recognition of Bosnia's sovereignty. Covert linkages allowed Serbia to remain involved in Bosnia, but ensured that the region was not officially Serbia's responsibility. Once forced into an underground, illegitimate social space, ethnic Serb fighters encountered new opportunities and constraints. Secrecy helped them conduct ethnic cleansing in defiance of state and international norms, but illegitimacy prevented them from laying official claim to their conquests once the fighting ended.

Chapters 4 and 5 test my argument by examining patterns of nationalist violence inside the Serbian core. Here, the Serbian political elite's responsibilities for human rights abuses were clear and the setting was more heavily institutionalized. During the early part of the 1990s, when the Bosnian war was at its height, the state prevented Serbian paramilitaries in Kosovo, the Sandžak, and Vojvodina from using Bosnia-style methods against non-Serb populations. As Chapter 5 explains, however, Kosovo's institutional setting changed in 1998–99 from ghetto to frontier through a combination of Kosovo Albanian and international actions. The result was a full-scale Serbian ethnic cleansing effort.

In Part II, Chapters 6 to 8 discuss the emergence of the Palestinian ghetto and patterns of Israeli violence, including its 1988 policing campaign in the West Bank and Gaza. The introduction to Part II briefly surveys the rise of radical Jewish nationalism in the late 1970s and 1980s, while Chapter 6 traces the emergence of a Palestinian ghetto enclave during those same years. Palestinian militants tried and failed to disrupt Israel's ghetto-formation policies through armed rebellion, and then also failed to gain international recognition of their sovereignty. Chapter 7 analyses Israel's ghetto policing tactics, while Chapter 8 probes two al-

ternatives to the ethnic policing model: Jewish vigilantism and Israeli operations in Lebanon. As was true in Serbia, some semi-private Jewish paramilitaries wanted to expel Palestinians, but failed to gain state support because of the West Bank and Gaza's ghetto status. In Lebanon, by contrast, Israel encouraged allied paramilitaries to use intense violence and deployed a range of despotic methods itself. Both Palestine and Lebanon were not part of Israel's de jure territory, but Palestine had become a ghetto, while Lebanon retained some frontier-like qualities, leading to varying repertoires of violence.

Institutional Settings and Violence

Since the end of the Second World War, most violent conflicts have begun as struggles *within* states, not as international disputes. More often than not, strife is triggered by state discrimination against marginalized populations.[1] Some state bureaucracies categorize insiders and outsiders by national, ethnic, or religious criteria, while others rely more heavily on kinship, tribe, or social class. Although states use different methods to classify privileged and excluded populations, systematic discrimination of any type tends to provoke resistance and violence, prompting even greater state repression.[2] This dynamic is particularly acute in semi-democratic or ethnocratic states such as Serbia and Israel, where group discrimination is coupled with substantial sensitivity to international norms and the rule of law.[3] These states are discriminatory but partially democratic, making resistance both inevitable and feasible.

Serbia and Israel differed in important ways, but they resembled one another in the periods under discussion in that both were organized to promote the interests of one ethno-national community over others. In some respects, this flows from their shared origins in the national self-determination movements sweeping Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[4] Struggling against the declining Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, would-be leaders of national minorities sought to define and disseminate a sense of collective identity among Serbs, Jews, Poles, Croats, Czechs, and others. Most importantly, they often claimed contested lands as their nation's patrimony, even

when those regions were also home to others. For the Serbian and Jewish national movements, the struggle for self-determination was lent particular urgency by the terrible violence their peoples suffered during World War II at the hands of Nazis and their collaborators.[5] This shared history of vulnerability generated a recurring interest in national unification, territorial control, and state power.

Contemporary Serbian nationalism, which began in the mid-1980s, sought to reorganize Serbia so that it would protect the interests of ethnic Serbs, provoking anxiety and countermobilization.[6] In the 1990s, this countermobilization occurred in Serbia proper (in areas such as the Sandžak and Kosovo), as well as in other parts of the former Yugoslavia, including most importantly Croatia and Bosnia.[7] The contemporary Zionist movement, for its part, began in 1967 to extend Jewish control over the West Bank and Gaza, triggering Palestinian resistance and, in December 1987, a popular rebellion.[8] Both the Serbian and Jewish states had elevated the interests of one national community group over all others within a shared geographic space, stimulating antagonism and resistance.

CENTER AND PERIPHERIES OF STATE POWER

The previous chapter suggested that Serbian and Israeli methods of violence tended toward police-style efforts where state control was highest, and toward more destructive tactics where the state's grip was weak. This observation prompts elaboration of a general hypothesis of state repression: the more tightly outsider populations are controlled by contemporary, semi-democratic states, the more likely they are to experience police-style repression. The less firmly these regions are controlled by nationalist states, conversely, the more likely they are to experience destructive violence and even ethnic cleansing. Zones of intense state power prevent nationalism from developing to its most virulent proportions, but at the margins of state authority, extremism flourishes. State violence is organized very differently in the core as opposed to the periphery of power.

The rest of this book elaborates and defends this argument for the Serbian and Israeli cases. As such, it represents an effort at theory building, not theory testing, and I make no claim for its unproblematic application elsewhere. Aided by comparisons, theory-building exercises identify important variables, concepts, and arguments that can later be extended to or tested on other cases, a theme I briefly explore

in the concluding chapter. In its present form, my explanation provides a reasonable interpretation of empirical variation across and within the Serbian and Israeli cases. By studying failed attempts by some paramilitaries to import specific methods of violence from one institutional setting to another, moreover, I dramatize the importance of context. When nationalist militias try but fail to use Bosnia-style methods in Serbia proper, their aborted trajectory underlines the power of institutional settings. With some modification, this same approach might help explain patterns of state violence in other high-capacity and partially democratic states such as Turkey, apartheid-era South Africa, and India.[9]

THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

Conventional wisdom views nationalist violence as a burst of uncontrolled brutality, not a rule-bound endeavor. In instances of state-organized repression, however, agents of state violence are embedded in context-specific webs of rules, regulations, and expectations. Armies, paramilitaries, and police forces use violence in specific, norm-laden institutional settings. These settings differ in terms of how fully they are controlled by the state and how saturated they are by regulations, as well as in the degree to which the state is accountable for a region's fate. Densely institutionalized settings score high on most or all of these measures, while weakly institutionalized settings score much lower. For example, marginalized groups living in the national capital are in a more heavily institutionalized setting than are co-nationals in poorly controlled peripheral provinces. These differences, in turn, influence patterns of state violence. States are more likely to use police-style methods in institutionally dense settings, but more destructive tactics in institutionally thin arenas.

I borrow the notion of institutional setting from organizational sociology's institutionalist theory, a body of research highlighting the ability of context—alternately termed organizational environments, organizational fields, or institutional environments—to shape organizational choices, attitudes, and methods.[10] Explicit rules and tacit norms pervade institutional settings to a greater or lesser extent, pushing organizations to behave in contextually appropriate ways.[11] I extend this insight to state repression, arguing that violence takes place in discrete institutional settings, each of which has its own logic of appropriateness.

FRONTIER AND GHETTO

Although frontiers and ghettos are only two of many possible settings, they are particularly relevant to our cases. Both Serbia and Israel coveted lands outside their internationally recognized boundaries, but each of these areas was differently constituted, with Bosnia serving as frontier, and Palestine as ghetto. In both cases, unwanted populations were repressed and excluded, but repertoires of actual state violence were radically at odds. Institutional settings served as mediating structures, transforming similarly nationalist orientations into dissimilar regimes of domination.

Frontiers: Poorly Regulated Arenas of State Action

Initial American explorations of the frontier's sociological significance highlighted its positive impact on U.S. society and its economy, suggesting that the ready availability of land lent the country its energy, dynamism, and democracy.[12] Critics, however, noted that this interpretation ignored the Native American frontier experience of dispossession, segregation, and death.[13] Building on this later work, I define frontiers as geographic zones demarcated by explicit boundaries of some sort and not tightly integrated into adjacent core states. Core agents may be involved in frontier politics, but their involvement is often indirect. Under these conditions, the rules states make for themselves, and that international actors make for states, do not fully apply, granting frontier agents substantial autonomy.[14] Until core polities close the frontier and extend central authority, they often choose to influence events through clandestine frontier allies operating with little respect for the law.[15] Frontiers are thus weakly institutionalized and often chaotic settings prone to vigilantism and paramilitary freelancing.[16] In the American West, for example, over 300 different vigilante groups were active between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries,[17] taking the law into their own hands and using lynching, whipping, and other extra-legal methods to establish dominance.[18] Frontiers permit and even promote intensely destructive and graphic violence.

The results are illustrated by the American experience.[19] When the frontier was open and indigenous populations were unincorporated into the U.S. polity, they were targeted for dispossession and massacre. Once the frontier was subject to central state regulation, by contrast, aboriginals were locked in reservations, where they were policed and oppressed,

but not killed outright. They had lost their freedom and land, but their new institutional setting shielded them from the final act of physical destruction. By passing from frontier to reservation, surviving Native Americans were spared utter liquidation.[20]

Part I of the book applies the notion of frontiers to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992–93, arguing that international politics inadvertently helped transform Bosnia into a frontier vis-à-vis Serbia. In April 1992, Western powers recognized Bosnian independence, transforming what had been an internal Yugoslav boundary into a sovereign, international border. Although ethnic Serbs on both sides of the border protested, international pressure compelled Serbian authorities to publicly acknowledge the new line as a meaningful boundary. At the same time, however, key Belgrade authorities sought to shape Bosnian events by supplying Bosnian Serbs with logistical and military support and encouraging the dislocation of non-Serb populations. The Bosnian frontier was external to the Serbian core, but was still heavily, albeit clandestinely, influenced by Belgrade's decisions. Bosnian Serb combatants and Serbian cross-border paramilitaries served as clandestine frontier agents and carried out most of Bosnia's ethnic cleansing.

The importance of Bosnia's institutional setting is graphically illustrated by the fate of non-Serb populations living just over the border within Serbia proper. Although Serbian paramilitaries harassed and intimidated these populations, they did not employ Bosnia-style methods of forced displacement. Bosnian frontier met Serbian core at the border, where Serbian nationalism was transformed into a very different regime of violence. Frontier led to death or dispossession, but core offered some crucial protections.

Ghettos: The Ambiguity of Unequal Inclusion

Experts generally view ghettos as impoverished neighborhoods segregated by religion, race, or ethnicity. One scholar defines African American ghettos as "excluded from economic and social privileges, deprived of social esteem, and unable to influence the . . . rules which define their participation within the wider society," and similar themes of segregation, marginalization, and disempowerment are invoked by others as well.[21] Viewed from another perspective, however, the ghetto's fate is less clear-cut; the ghetto *is* incorporated into the dominant polity, albeit with ambivalence and disdain. Due to their halfway status, ghettos are segregated and repressed, but rarely liquidated outright. Ghettos are more

heavily institutionalized settings than frontiers, and are therefore objections of policing, not ethnic cleansing or genocide. Ghetto critics are right to emphasize the ills of poverty, crime, and broken families, but this perspective obscures the ghetto's remarkable ability to survive and to receive some of the benefits available to more favored populations, including a minimum of legal protection. Despite marginalization, ghetto residents remain alive and in their homes, presenting a perpetual challenge to the dominant society. While sheer survival is indubitably cold comfort to ghetto victims, it remains an analytically crucial point. In other words, frontiers are precariously perched on the *edge* of the dominant polity, whereas ghettos are situated squarely *within* it. Frontier residents can be expelled or killed, but ghetto residents can only be harshly policed.

The ambivalent status of the ghetto was dramatized during U.S. urban unrest in the 1960s, when largely white police shot, detained, and beat largely black ghetto residents.[22] Despite the crisis atmosphere, however, the authorities did not deploy their most awful methods. National Guardsmen were deployed against "organized agitators" and "revolutionaries," but physical liquidation was never on the agenda.[23] The authorities might dispatch more police, adopt more aggressive policies, and imprison more people, but they could not expel or kill ghetto residents en masse.

The notion of the ghetto is relevant to our story because of the West Bank and Gaza's relationship with Israel, which never officially annexed these regions (except East Jerusalem) after 1967, but did tacitly incorporate them as subordinate parts of the Israeli polity. Western powers did not openly endorse Israel's tacit annexation, but did not firmly support Palestinian sovereignty either, merely pressing Israel to respect Palestinian human rights. When the Palestinian uprising began, consequently, Palestinians were harshly policed but not ethnically cleansed.

DESPOTIC VS. INFRASTRUCTURAL REGIMES OF POWER

Why are ghettos policed, not destroyed? Thinkers such as Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, Michael Mann, and Charles Tilly offer some tentative answers.[24] In the pre-modern period, sovereigns used intense but sporadic violence against internal rebels, believing that a few dramatic punitive acts would keep others in line. Modern states, conversely, cut back on the intensity of methods, shifting to smoother but more comprehensive regimes of control. Although the modern state's ability to

shape society has increased enormously, the sheer deadliness of domestic state coercion has declined.[25] Scholars offer different interpretations of this trend, but historical sociologist Michael Mann's distinction between despotic and infrastructural power seems particularly useful. Mann writes that pre-modern despots could do as they wished with their victims, but they had less access to powerful technologies of control over society at large.[26] Modern "infrastructural" states, by contrast, can penetrate society and implement their policies more widely, but are also obliged to operate within certain recognized moral and legal limits. Modern states, Mann notes, cannot "brazenly kill or expropriate their [internal] enemies" without exciting intense opposition, and they cannot change fundamental rules of state behavior at will.[27] As infrastructural power grows, in other words, despotic power declines. Social theorist Anthony Giddens views this as an increase in the "scope" of state power at the expense of intensity, while French social philosopher Michel Foucault writes of transitions from "punishment" to "discipline."[28]

What prompted this shift? Some argue it stems from the material interests of capitalists seeking predictable, routinized, and low-key methods of rule to promote trade, while others suggest it stemmed from shifts in the balance of state-society power. As rulers demanded greater loyalty, taxes, and military service from their citizens, the latter discovered they could successfully press sovereigns to modify their ways. Still a third group believes that state elites initiated the shift themselves to rationalize and improve techniques of mass control. Regardless of the precise explanation, most agree that an important change in state-society relations took place during the move from pre-modern to modern European statehood, forcing states to become increasingly bound by rules they themselves created.

Infrastructural power relies on centralized control over the means of violence. In states with low infrastructural capacities, the means of coercion are broadly dispersed through the population, but when sovereigns successfully concentrate the means of violence, infrastructural power rises. Ironically, however, centralized coercion does not grant states unlimited powers, but is rather associated with rules, regulations, and norms limiting the state's methods against the now defenseless citizenry. Under infrastructural regimes of power, weaponless citizens are to be policed, not destroyed. Clearly, any notion that modern infrastructural power *invariably* limits state repression is wrong, since some states with high infrastructural power massacre their own populations. As the examples of Nazi Germany and Rwanda demonstrate, powerful state

apparatuses can be used to commit genocide against their own citizens.[29] Yet broadly speaking, the more securely the state dominates society, the more incentives it faces to reduce its reliance on despotic methods.

This trend is illustrated by the Soviet experience, where Stalin's tyranny was eventually replaced with a smoother system of control. Post-Stalinist "socialist legality," one observer writes, "was not wholly without content when it came to restraining regime behavior," since Soviet internal security forces often went to "extraordinary lengths . . . to pretend—sometimes it seems almost to themselves—that the rules [were] being followed."[30] As theorists of the modern state might anticipate, increased Soviet infrastructural control eventually limited its resort to despotic methods. Like other high-capacity states, the post-Stalinist Soviet Union adopted a more encompassing, but less spectacularly brutal, regime of social control. Importantly, this suggests that states will be reluctant to openly flout laws they themselves have created. Nevertheless, it seems clear that some institutional settings are more conducive to one type of regime over another. Densely institutionalized settings such as ghettos are areas of high infrastructural power, explaining the state's reliance on police-style or infrastructural methods. Weakly institutionalized arenas such as frontiers, conversely, are subject to lower levels of infrastructural strength, leading to more despotic regimes of power.

Most of us would probably prefer to face infrastructural rather than despotic state power, just as ghetto ethnic policing seems preferable to frontier-style cleansing. Still, it would be wrong to regard the shift from despotism to infrastructural regimes of violence as an unproblematic improvement, a point often made by those skeptical of modernization's benefits. As Foucault persuasively argues, pervasive modern disciplinary techniques can be more invasive than occasional acts of kingly punishment.[31] Despotism is explicit, dramatic, and awful but is often irregular and fleeting. Infrastructural power is less blatant, by contrast, but often penetrates social life to a much greater extent. Policing, moreover, excites less broad condemnation, as Palestinians have discovered.

INTERNATIONAL NORMS: HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOVEREIGNTY

International norms help explain how particular institutional settings emerge and function.[32] In a world of global journalism, instant communications, and transnational human rights networks, internal wars are subject to intense international scrutiny.[33] Nowhere is this more true

than in Bosnia and Palestine, where the conflicts were subjected to systematic international intervention and mediation. Serbian and Israeli decision makers constantly sought to shape, respond to, and evade global scrutiny, making international forces an integral part of our story.

There has been an explosion of transnational norm making and activism in relation to a broad array of issues such as women's rights, immigration, and human rights.[34] This trend is being driven by intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank, as well as nongovernmental organizations such as Transparency International, Greenpeace, and Human Rights Watch. Studies show that as the density of international norms and networks grows, states feel compelled to at least *try* to demonstrate to global audiences that they are modern, civilized, and efficient, adopting approved global rules and models of action.[35] Many of these global norms have been so internalized by state agents that they pass without notice, becoming constitutive of state action.[36] Others, including human rights, are often less thoroughly internalized, serving only as externally imposed constraints on policy.

In April 1992, the sovereignty norm helped create a Bosnian frontier because Western powers chose to recognize the Bosnian republic's borders as sovereign, forcing Serbia to officially disengage. This severed Bosnia from Serbia's formal control (through the Yugoslav federation), promoting frontier-like conditions. In 1988, conversely, Palestinian demands for independence were rebuffed by the same powers. Instead, Western powers applied the norm of human rights to the West Bank and Gaza, promoting Israel's use of ethnic policing. Greater Western support for Bosnian sovereignty, ironically, helped prepare the ground for more intense Serbian despotism.

Human Rights

The treaties, norms, and conventions surrounding the notion of human rights increasingly play an important role in global affairs, and states are under more pressure than ever before to appear respectful of their populations' dignity and rights.[37] In a sense, human rights norms represent the codification and dissemination of the rules and regulations produced by infrastructural power. Even if states do not actually wield infrastructural control over a given area, they feel pressured to use policing and law enforcement tactics, since that is what human rights norms require. Increased global human rights pressures are evident in the global media's

use of the term. Between 1982 and 1994, for example, the Reuters World Service registered a 500 percent increase in stories with the words "human rights," while the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) registered a 600 percent increase. Other agencies, such as China's Xinhua's press service, witnessed even more dramatic growth.[38] The number of international nongovernmental organizations dealing with human rights, moreover, is also on the increase. From only 33 such international groups in 1953, the numbers rose to 79 in 1983, and 168 a decade later.[39]

These changes are reconfiguring the global normative environment, with important consequences for smaller but significant regional powers such as Serbia or Israel.[40] Forced into a subordinate position vis-à-vis global (but often Western-dominated) rule makers, regional and local powers are obliged to take human rights into consideration.[41] Semidemocracies such as Serbia, Israel, Mexico, Turkey, and Indonesia also have vocal human rights organizations of their own, lending global norms even greater domestic resonance. Local and global human rights activists often collaborate, infusing one another with information, resources, and legitimacy.[42] In these cases, global human rights norms and norms of domestic infrastructural power are mutually reinforcing. These two sources of restraint in heavily institutionalized settings—domestic infrastructural power and international human rights norms—are analytically distinct but mutually reinforcing.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty, a second and more established global norm, is also highly relevant to our story. Sovereignty divides territory into exclusive chunks of property, affecting styles of state violence in contradictory ways.[43] In our two cases, sovereignty helped trigger violence by providing Serbian and Jewish nationalists with powerful grievances. Since both countries' internationally recognized borders excluded coveted lands, nationalists in each felt duty bound to change their country's boundaries. In both cases, moreover, frustrated sovereignty claims provided incentives for ethnic cleansing. Some Serbian nationalists believed their claim over Bosnia would be bolstered by removal of the non-Serb population, while some Jewish Zionists held similar views regarding Palestine. Thus in one important sense, sovereignty served as a catalyst for Serbian and Israeli violence.

At the same time, sovereignty constrained repression by enhancing each state's infrastructural power in contested areas, creating the pre-

conditions for policing, rather than cleansing. Broadly speaking, infrastructural power is strengthened by international recognition of a state's right to be sovereign ruler over a given piece of territory. Without such recognition, states are constantly anxious that their claim to rule will be undermined.[44] To clarify, it is helpful to distinguish between sovereignty's empirical and juridical aspects.[45] Empirical sovereignty is the state's actual physical ability to control territory, expropriate the means of violence, administer the population, and shape social and political life. Juridical sovereignty, by contrast, is the theoretical right states have to do such things, and this is achieved through diplomatic practices, treaties, and international norms. States earn empirical sovereignty, conversely, through physical violence, control, and administration.[46] Infrastructural control is based chiefly on mechanisms of empirical sovereignty, but cannot endure without juridical recognition.[47]

A second way in which sovereignty promotes policing over cleansing is through its link to the global human rights norm. The two norms have become increasingly intertwined, creating a "package deal" in which governments gain juridical rights to territory in return for a commitment to treat the population appropriately.[48] Although actual policies obviously diverge substantially from international standards, no state can remain entirely indifferent.

Finally, sovereignty promotes policing by making it difficult for governments to disclaim responsibility for rogue internal violence. Given human rights pressures, governments are often tempted to argue that private actors are responsible for illegal violence, but the spirit of juridical sovereignty complicates this effort.[49] Sovereigns are expected to have expropriated the means of violence from the citizenry in their own territory, and actions by lawless private forces undermine the state's legitimacy, a fate most rulers seek to avoid.

INVENTING WITHIN LIMITS

Until now my discussion appears to suggest that institutional settings somehow dictate state action through preexisting institutional routines, norms, or logics of appropriateness. Such a determinist understanding of repression, however, would be misguided. As this book's case studies demonstrate in detail, states respond creatively to rules and institutional settings, taking structural constraints into consideration while simultaneously devising new methods of violence.[50] State repression is not cleanly produced by institutional rules, but is rather created through a

chaotic negotiation process in which soldiers, police, and paramilitary gunmen work with, around, and through institutional rules.[51] At the same time, however, room for maneuver is not unlimited, and institutional settings do matter. As French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu suggests, social action is a process of "invention within limits."[52] To discover how this works in practice, we must closely examine the nuts and bolts of repression in individual settings of violence.

PART ONE

Patterns of Serbian Violence