Violence Research from North Africa to South Asia: A Historical and Structural Overview

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This is a historical and sociological overview of violence and violence research in and on North Africa, West Asia, and South Asia, considering only studies for a global audience. The main focus is on political violence, with a brief look at religious and communal violence, youth violence, and domestic and gendered violence. These regions have been consistently affected by political violence for many decades, the main source of which seems to be the ongoing state formation process, as well as social transformation in general. The literature on violence is dominated by international debates, at times with little regard to realities in the ground. It would be highly desirable for scholars from North Africa, West Asia and South Asia to play a more active role in research and debate.

1. Violence and Violence Research in the Contemporary World

International violence research is compartmentalized by subject and discipline. At least seven academic disciplines study physical violence in social relations: international relations, political science, sociology, history, social anthropology, social psychology, and criminology. Although they claim particular topics and issues as their own, there is considerable overlap and inherent interdisciplinarity in practice. It is the level of analysis that defines the identity of a discipline: Whereas international relations focuses on violence in the international system, political science looks at how states and governments make use of violence and/or are affected by it; sociology, history, and social anthropology all investigate violent behavior in social relations; and, finally, social psychology and criminology give most attention to violence at the individual level. This article primarily looks at international relations, political science, and sociology, thus focusing essentially on political violence.

International violence research is segmented by country and region as well. Research facilities and conditions vary enormously, and equally do research results. If we look at contemporary world society, it is fair to say that research conditions and outcomes are more advanced in and on Western Europe and North America, which are the regions where organized political violence has been largely contained since the Second World War (Beaumont 1995; Gantzel and Schwinghammer 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2003). Barring some notable exceptions that will be mentioned later in this article, we can see a pattern: In countries affected most by political violence, academic research tends to be poor, whereas it is strong in countries less affected by political violence. It may be argued that as soon as a group of people has agreed on some basic rules regarding the use of physical force, i.e. on the "control of violence" (Elias 1983), conditions for thinking about the subject matter change for the better. In many societies of the Global South, the rules guiding the use of force are not clear, and even if they are, they cannot be implemented; against this backdrop, it is not surprising that international violence research is less comprehensive there.

This paper looks into violence and violence research in two regions: West Asia (including North Africa) and South Asia.[1]

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[1] In our discussion of *West Asia*, often called the Middle East, we include the North African countries of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya, as well as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran (West Asia proper). *South Asia* consists of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan. For a similar classification, see Abhyankar (2008).

Social sciences are generally weakly institutionalized in both regions, and this is especially true of violence research.[2] Most universities and research institutes are badly under-funded, cut off from the international research community, or dysfunctional for other reasons. On closer examination, conditions vary enormously. At one end of the spectrum we have Afghan universities, which rarely meet international standards because of the poor level of education in general and three decades of civil war. To a lesser degree this also applies to other countries with a history of violent conflict and/or grave poverty and weak institutions. At the other end we have good academic research at reasonably well-funded and well-equipped universities and institutions in countries like India, Sri Lanka, or Turkey. The problem here is that most universities concentrate on teaching, whereas the research institutions are often close to government and the political arena. The middle range comprises countries where the political climate is not conducive to academic research. The use, and even more the control of violence can be contentious or taboo. Gender relations may be very sensitive, or elements of the country's own history, and sometimes the role of religion in violence. Often forms of violence are so politicized that it might be difficult do serious research rather than "taking sides" and engaging in political rhetoric. It is unsurprising therefore, to find no systematic and in-depth research on violence (or many other topics) in these circumstances.

As a result, research by outside scholars or local academics working abroad, in particular in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Western Europe, still dominates many areas of study (Skidmore and Lawrence 2007; Hinnells and King 2007; Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Cady and Simon 2007). By the same token, many analyses stemming from the region, in particular those on political violence, are written by journalists (Rana 2004) or by civil society and political activists (A. Roy 2009; Haqqani 2005). Although they may lack theoretical underpinning, these studies are crucial in providing basic information on events, perpetrators, and victims.

Although this article has an eye to journalistic accounts as well, its main focus is on academic violence research. Given the range of countries and the number of available studies, the choice of literature presented here is by necessity selective. Only studies written for a global audience will be considered here, which essentially means those written in the English language, and not those in Arabic, Persian, Hindi, or Urdu.[3]

2. Historical and Sociological Background: Power, Domination, and Violence

Major works of historical and political sociology claim that the exercise of physical violence, and even more the control of it, depends on economic development, the dominant principles of social organization, and the institutionalization of power (Tilly 1990; Axtmann 2000; Migdal 2001; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001): The rules and norms that regulate the use of force in society are not contingent; they are at the core of political domination. If this is true, then we can expect to find patterns in the use and control of violence that are specific to political communities, nations, and countries, and maybe even wider regions. Even today, it can be argued, despite all the transnationalization and globalization of violence and crime, political domination by the state matters. Thus we consider it a useful exercise to begin our review on violence and violence research in West and South Asia with a historical and sociological overview of power relations and political domination in these regions.

West Asia and South Asia are usually regarded as two distinct entities with little in common: Historically, the legacies of the Ottoman and Persian Empires loom large in West Asia, whereas South Asia's political institutions were shaped to large extent by British colonialism; culturally, West Asia's Islam stands against South Asia's Hinduism or religious pluralism; and politically, West Asia stands for authoritarianism, while South Asia has at its heart the world's largest democracy, India. As with many clichés, there is some truth in these portrayals, but there is also something missing: West and South Asia's common heri-

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2 Few studies from the region discuss this issue. One exception is the volume on Pakistan edited by S. Akbar Zaidi (2003).

3 Occasionally, articles in French, German, and Turkish will be mentioned as well.

tage. From the eleventh to seventeenth century, the two regions represented the center of an extended area of long-distance-trade, which reached from the Mediterranean to Indonesia, and whose cultural underpinning was Islam. The European colonizing powers later took advantage of the economic prosperity, cultural standardization, and political institutions established by this Indo-Islamic empire (Wink 1988, 2007). Even today the common heritage of West and South Asia plays a role in Islamic discourses of power, resistance, and violence (Jalal 2008; Nasr 2001).[4]

It should be noted that the uniting force was not Islam as such, but Islamic empires with bureaucratic rules and cultural standards (Eisenstadt 1963). Rulers adhered to the Islamic faith, and political domination was justified primarily with reference to Islam, but the population never was religiously (or culturally) homogenous. The variations in political domination and control of violence we see today are not attributable to religion or faith as such. In "Islamic" West Asia, we find loosely structured "tribal" societies that have retained their characteristics over centuries, sometimes even against Islamic teachings. And it is perhaps no coincidence that many of these areas remained economically poor, institutionally weak, and politically marginal until a few decades ago: the southern rim of the Persian Gulf, Libya, Iraq are cases in point. At the other end of the spectrum we have highly stratified societies with sophisticated political institutions and economic diversification; most of these areas belonged to the respective inner core of the old Ottoman, Persian, or Mogul empires before, or belonged to an even more ancient political culture like Egypt (Khoury and Kostiner 1990; Richards 1996; Inalcik 2000; Inalcik et al. 1997).

What is often perceived as "Hindu" South Asia has its very own Islamic legacy: The most basic political-administrative foundations of British India, which shape the political landscape of South Asia to this day, had already been laid by the Mogul Empire. The British Raj built on the political achiev-

ements of its predecessors. It makes hardly any sense to break South Asian political history into religiously defined periods, because Hindu, Muslim and Christian rulers all learned from each other. Political domination in South Asia is the result of a long-term and open-ended process of state-formation with no clear center or master cleavage (Doornbos and Kaviraj 1997). Somewhat excluded from this South Asian political amalgam is the southern part of the subcontinent (including Sri Lanka), which was barely touched by the Mogul Empire, and the "tribal" systems that can be found in the hill regions in Northern and Central India and the plains bordering Iran and West Asia. These regions were at the periphery of both Mogul and British rule, and retained much of their distinct cultural and political identity (Titus 1998; Bhattacharjee 2006; Raatan 2006).

The decline of the Mogul and Ottoman empires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not just a result of foreign aggression, but also of internal developments and decay and of the emergence of new, regional powers. Europeans were, at the beginning, not the only foreign rulers in the region, but the subjugation of Asia by Europeans was certainly a defining moment. European colonialism was a sea-change, symbolized in the early nineteenth century by the Napoleonic conquest of Ottoman Egypt and the British penetration of India (Albertini 1976). In many countries colonialism came later: Algeria in 1830, Morocco (formally a French protectorate only after 1912, but indirectly controlled long before that), Egypt (British sphere of influence after 1882), or Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Transjordan (French and British protectorates after the First World War). The timing and tools employed by the colonizing powers (England, France and Russia) made a difference. Some parts were subjected to direct domination (North Africa, parts of Central and South Asia, later also Palestine, Syria, Jordan and other parts of West Asia), others indirect (Iran, Egypt). In any case, colonialism as a form of foreign rule provoked resistance, as exemplified by the Indian Mutiny of 1858, the Arab insurgency against the Ottomans during the First World War, or by Kurdish

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4 To highlight this all-Asian link even conceptually, we cling to the old Nehruvian West Asia (Abhyankar 2008) and avoid the Eurocentric term Middle East.

movements against the Ottoman/Turkish, Iraqi, and Iranian governments.

The consequences of colonial domination did vary. Whereas British rule over South Asia, which lasted more than two centuries, was instrumental in bringing major political and economic change (Alavi and Harriss 1989), colonialism did not take such deep roots in West Asia: Large parts of this region were under the tutelage of the Ottoman Empire until the First World War, and Iran was never subjected to foreign rule at all (Owen 2006; Cleveland and Bunton 2009). Accordingly, the mechanisms of control of violence vary today: While in most parts of South Asia the legacy of a coherent and coercive state apparatus, the "steel frame" of former times (Woodruff 1954), still shapes practices and discourses of power and violence (Barlas 1995), the picture is less clear in West Asia (Albrecht et al. 2006).[5]

After the Second World War, the colonial era came to an end, first of all in South Asia. Although the colonial power gave up peacefully in 1947, the hasty partition of British India into predominantly Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan displaced more than ten million South Asians and left hundreds of thousands dead, many as victims of ethnic (or rather religious) cleansing (Talbot and Singh 2009). After the dissolution of the British Raj, the independent states of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (which seceded from Pakistan in 1971) evolved as semi-strong, moderately democratic developmental states (Jalal 1995). The role of the former colonial power and the new superpowers in day-to-day politics was limited, with India becoming a strong proponent of Third World assertiveness in the context of the non-aligned movement (Dixit 1998). Pakistan is a notable exception in this regard, developing close military ties with the United States in the 1950s, with authoritarianism establishing its roots at about the same time (Alavi 1998).

The emerging independent countries of West Asia tended to be weaker internally and externally. To begin with, decolonization involved armed conflicts, like the Arab insur-

gency against French control in Syria, against the British in Iraq, or against France in the Algerian War of Independence. Other outbreaks of violence occurred in state-formation and modernization processes, like in Turkey against the Armenians, in Saddam Hussein's Iraq against the Kurds, or in Iran against the opposition. In most cases, independence barely changed the character of political domination, with local elites running a marginally altered quasi-colonial state (Farhad 1975; Halliday 1979; Al-Barghouti 2008). States generally allied themselves with Western countries (first Britain/France, then increasingly the United States), or turned to the Soviet Union for support for non-Western development models. Authoritarian or dictatorial regimes became the norm.

Two important developments changed the situation: One new factor was the establishment of the state of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict that has dominated regional policies ever since; the second was the discovery of crude oil and natural gas reserves in several countries (Libya, Gulf states) in connection with a dramatic increase in world energy prices (after the 1973 oil shock). This created stronger "rentier states", making rulers more independent of their subjects, since their income came from external sources, not local taxes (Beblawi and Luciani 1987); and it revived old economic and cultural ties between West and South Asia, when millions of Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis temporally migrated to the Gulf States. On their return, these migrants brought not just money, but new ideas about the role of Islam in society as well (Addleton 1992).

With the end of the Cold War many countries, particularly in West Asia, lost the actual or potential support of the Soviet Union and were not longer able to play off the two superpowers against each other. The Second Gulf War (1991) indicated how a country like Iraq might try to exploit the new situation to expand its own regional role; but the result of that and of the Third Gulf War (2003) demonstrated the limits for would-be regional hegemons. Along different lines, India and Pakistan became more assertive

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5 It should be noted that one of the few societies that remained largely untouched by the bureaucratization efforts of the old empires and the later colo- nialists was Afghanistan. As a buffer state with weak institutions, this country turned out to be unable to channel social change peacefully, and outside inter- vention during the Cold War finally led to its disintegration (Rubin 1995).

politically and economically, with different levels of success: Pakistan has become victim of its own (successful) "jihadist" policies towards Afghanistan and is now witnessing institutional decay (Cohen 2004); India, by contrast, seems to be on its way to becoming a global power (Cohen 2001). As in other regions, state capacities to govern effectively seem to be in decline, while citizens' abilities to claim their rights are on the rise (Shafqat 2006; Chatterjee 2004).

3. Topics and Issues in Violence Research in West and South Asia

We focus here particularly on political violence (3.1.), examining separately violence related to inter-state conflicts (3.1.1.) and to intra-state conflicts such as civil war, insurgency, terrorism, and repression (3.1.2.), . Religious and communal violence (3.2.), youth violence (3.3.) and, finally, domestic and gendered violence (3.4.) will be discussed rather briefly. The rationale is to put research and research conditions into a structural and historical framework of the evolution of power and violence in both regions, so that strengths and weaknesses in the literature can be identified and contextualized. Facts and figures, if available, will be provided first, followed by a brief assessment of the available literature.

We must begin with a few remarks on terminology: Categories like political violence, religious violence, or domestic violence are subject to debate. In our view, violence should be considered *political* if and when it aims at the *state*. This can happen in two ways: either *directly*, by targeting politicians, civil servants, and offices, or *indirectly*, by spreading fear among the population and thereby undermining the state's writ and legitimacy.[6] Hence political violence is ultimately about access to and command over public offices, distribution of public funds, or the formulation or interpretation of the symbolic order of society.[7] It should be noted, however, that political violence rarely manifests itself as such. In most cases, actors do not state their political aims overtly, instead hiding behind ideological goals, religious motives, and romantic ideals. For that reason, we treat many ethnic conflicts and religious conflicts mentioned in the literature essentially as political conflicts (Mehta 1998; de Silva 2001; Sahadevan 2002; Cady and Simon 2007).

Another category for distinguishing between political and non-political conflicts is social organization. Those involved in violent political acts are usually members of tightly controlled, formal organizations whose membership transgresses primordial ties such as kinship (though leadership positions may be occupied by families or clans). *Criminal* actors may share these organizational features, but not the political goals. To be sure, there is considerable overlap between organized crime and (organized) political violence, from the level of individual careers (Schlichte 2010) to institution building (Tilly 1985). Yet despite these gray areas, most acts of political violence can be distinguished clearly from non-political acts by the effects they have (or are supposed to have) on the public. By the same token, not every act of *religious* violence is political; just think of the struggle for religious hegemony among sectarian groups (Hinnells and King 2007; Zaman 2002; Nasr 2000). Very much like violent conflicts among local *communities* or among youth, religious violence can acquire political meaning if cleavages overlap at the national or international level (Kalyvas 2003). *Domestic* violence comes at the opposite end of the spectrum from political violence. This does not mean that its prevention and prosecution cannot become a political issue (Shahidullah and Derby 2009), but perpetrators do not act violently in the domestic sphere in order to pursue political goals. Arguably, actors of domestic, communal, and youth violence share a low level of organization. They involve mostly individuals who are not formally controlled, but are tied by kinship alone.

3.1. Political Violence

Political violence has many faces: wars and international conflicts, insurgencies and guerrilla campaigns, riots and

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6 Terrorist attacks, for instance, are such acts of political violence that aim to generate psychological or psycho-social effects that reach beyond the ultimate victims.

7 There is a hidden assumption here, namely that the state as a political form is sociologically relevant in almost all parts of contemporary world society. Although we acknowledge, of course, that the conflicts most relevant to local society do not necessarily concern the state, as has been aptly shown by numerous works in political anthropology (Barth 1959; Scott 1998), we do consider this to be a passing phenomenon, as state power is set to penetrate each and every corner of the modern world (Gupta 1995; Krohn-Hansen and Nustad 2005).

uprisings, massacres and genocide, stone-throwing and terrorist attacks, military occupation and state repression, and so on. We could also differentiate by perpetrator, which might be an individual or an informal group, a political movement or party, a civil society organization or a state agency, a foreign private or state actor, or an intelligence agency. A very basic yet useful distinction is that the involvement of the state as an actor makes a difference: If two or more states are involved, it is *inter-state* violence, or international conflict; if only one state is involved, we have a case of *intra-state* violence, also labeled civil war or insurgency; and if the state is not a declared party to the conflict, or if there is no acknowledged conflict at all, but still violence, we have *other forms* of political violence.

3.1.1. Violence Related to International Conflicts

The available data show frequent involvement of the state in political conflicts in West and South Asia, at least compared to other global regions.[8] Even inter-state wars, which have been in decline ever since the end of the Second World War, are quite frequent. International conflicts between *Israel* and the *Arab states* (in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1969, 1973) and between the formerly independent northern and southern parts of *Yemen* (from 1955 to 1958 and from 1963 to 1967, in 1969 and in 1972) (O'Ballance 1971; Walker 2005) are cases in point, not to mention the three Gulf Wars involving *Iraq* (from 1980 to 1988, 1991, since 2003) (Simpson 2004; O. Roy 2007; Hippler 2008). *India* and *Pakistan* have been to war five times (in 1949, 1965, 1971, 1984, and 1999) (Ganguly 2003; Ganguly 1986), with China going to war with India as well (in 1962) (Maxwell 1970). Another object of inter-state warfare is *Afghanistan:* Since 1978 the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, and many other NATO and allied countries have been militarily involved in this conflict, not to mention neighboring states like Pakistan and Iran (Coll 2005; Dorronsoro 2005).

As regards the institutional quality of the concerned states, we can see that a loosely structured polity like Yemen has been affected by international conflict almost as much as a bureaucratic giant like India. Involvement by interventionist powers has been less in strong and semi-strong states than in weak states, and generally more in West than in South Asia. With reference to the object of conflict, we can say that most international conflicts in West and South Asia are territorial disputes and/or struggles for independence or autonomy, mostly from (quasi-)colonial powers, which means they become mixed up with intra-state conflicts: The question of Palestinian statehood lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflicts (Jung 2004), and the question of autonomy or independence for the former princely state of Kashmir has long been a major stumbling block of Indo-Pakistan relations (Lamb 1991).[9]

Palestine, *Kashmir*, (India vs. Pakistan) and the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan are major international issues; arguably, these four conflicts have attracted the most international media and academic attention, producing enough studies to fill whole libraries. The majority of publications have been authored by Western scholars, or by local academics working abroad. Irrespective of authorship and origin, there is a clear bias towards these conflicts, which are regularly highlighted in the international media. On conflicts like those in *Yemen* or *Western Sahara* there are few studies available (O'Ballance 1971; Wedeen 2004; Lawless 1987; Shelley 2004). Generally speaking, however, there is no great lacuna with regard to coverage of international conflicts as such; it is easy to find books and articles that report the facts and provide interpretations. The missing link with regard to violence research generally is the actual impact of international warfare on society, namely on how power and violence control are institutionalized in a country, both domestically and internationally. Civil and military bureaucracies thrive, by and

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8 Data on international conflict and civil wars presented in this article is based on the comprehensive figures in Gantzel and Schwinghammer (2000), and the regular updates of this database (in German) at www.akuf.de (Schreiber 2010). Central findings and conclusions are in accord with other authors (Beaumont 1995; Fearon and Laitin 2003) and databases

(SIPRI 2010).

9 On the actual impact of the fighting on people and society at large there are hardly any reliable figures available, at least on the regional and global level. We know that international conflicts are short-lived, with fewer casualties than many intra-state

conflicts. But even data collections like AKUF (Gantzel and Schwinghammer 2000), PRIO and SIPRI (SIPRI 2010; Eck and Hultman 2007) have to rely mainly on news reporting. For that reason, we refrain from providing aggregated figures on victims and damages here.

large, at the cost of civil society (Rosen 1996; Rizvi 2000; Siddiqa 2007; Cloughley 2008; Ahram 2009). A great many of the new regional powers we read about in the media have reinforced their state apparatus during wartime, or in preparation to avoid international conflict through deterrence (Dixit 1998; Cohen 2001).

As a notable side effect, in some countries regularly involved in international conflicts, academic (sub-)disciplines of *security studies* and *peace and conflict research* have emerged, and are, in many respects, at the same level as their Western counterparts (Chari et al. 2007; Singh 2006; Kasturi 2006; Saikia 2006; Sahadevan 2002). In countries like Turkey, India, Sri Lanka, Iran, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, scholars have developed a strong and independent perspective on the legitimacy and appropriateness of international violence among states, in particular among states of the Global South, which has so far been ignored internationally (Ayoob 2004; Singh 2007).[10] Many of these scholars, however, are attached not to universities, but to government-controlled think tanks, and at least until very recently, most of their articles were written from a national, state-centered perspective. As a rule, conflicts are put into the context of each country's particular struggle to achieve or maintain independence, peace, and security, and few attempts have been made to compare current scenarios with other historical cases. This is true even for peace research. Regime type and institutional background do not make a huge difference here (Sawant 2000; Krishna and Chari 2001; Mazari 2003).[11]

As regards the purpose and object of study, we can distinguish three kinds of analyses: Many studies focus on the effects of a particular conflict on international affairs and world politics, for instance by highlighting the potential or actual role of international powers in the conflict (Schofield 2010; Ali 2004; Rashid 2008). Another strand of analysis reflects upon ways and means to end violence, in particular by (peaceful) intervention from outside (ICG

2006; Ismael and Ismael 2005; Al-Marashi and Keskin 2008; Carter 2006). Fewer studies focus on the effect of violence on local society and civilian population (Chayes 2006; Giustozzi 2007; Bhatia and Sedra 2008), on professional soldiers (Key 2007; Buzzell 2005; Ben-Ari 2004; Musa 1984), or on civil-military relations (Kukreja 1991). Since theories of civil-military relations rely almost entirely on Western experiences (Feaver 1999), we see a huge potential for research here, in particular for collaboration between researchers in different countries. The entire field of security studies deserves a fresh approach from the South, to take into consideration the particular societal and political conditions of these regions (Ayoob 2002). Arguably, conditions for such endeavors are better in South Asia than in West Asia: the influence of foreign powers that might dominate the research field with their own staff and experiences is more limited; the scientific community is more established; and there are studies to build upon (Bajpai 1995). It will be interesting to see whether the (long-term) involvement of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan, or the rivalry between the United States and China, will change these parameters, or if it might instigate a new debate on the legitimacy of violence (Vicziany 2003; Singh 2007; Jalal 2008; Bhatia 2009; Tripathi 2009; Hussain 2010)

3.1.2. Violence Related to Civil War, Insurgency, Terrorism

Since the end of the Second World War, almost every country in West and South Asia (and North Africa) has been affected by insurgency, civil war, or terrorism (Beaumont 1995; Gantzel and Schwinghammer 2000; Fearon and Laitin 2003).[12] If we look at governance and forms of political domination, we find, to different degrees, that central political institutions are rather weak, governments are ineffective, political authority is weak, nationalism as a binding force is in its infancy, even the most basic human rights are violated regularly, and power is upheld by force rather than persuasion (Ayubi 1995; Chowdhury 2003; Corbridge et al. 2005; Waseem 1994). It may be disputable

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10 For example *Strategic Analysis*, published by the Institute for Strategic and Defense Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi. Of late, a number of websites have been established that compete with these journals.

See for example www.southasiaanalysis.org.
11 Here we should forget that many Western authors in this field also provide analysis with a strong political bias.

12 In West Asia (eighteen countries) only Qatar and the United Arab Emirates were not affected; in South Asia (seven countries) only Bhutan has seen no civil war.

whether a India, as democracy, fits in here, but numerous ongoing political conflicts doubtlessly take their toll on state legitimacy (Barlas 1995, Jalal 1995, A. Roy 2009). Since findings from other regions as well as theoretical contributions come to similar conclusions (Schlichte 2005; Migdal 1988; Huntington 1968), it is fair to say that, contrary to an impression created in recent debates (Hironaka 2008; Kaldor 1999; Barber 1996), intra-state warfare, terrorism, state failure, bad governance, and the like are by no means new phenomena in the Global South; rather, they have been part of an ongoing state- and nation-building process ever since independence (Kalyvas 2001; Duyvesteyn 2004; Jung 2005).

We mention these well-known facts because new studies on terrorism and state failure after September 11, 2001, explicitly or implicitly refer to West Asia and Asia (Stern 2003; Moghadam 2006; Kfir 2007; Young 2007; Rashid 2008). We want to steer clear of the notion that political violence in West and South Asia is of recent origin, has been brought in by outside intervention, or is tied to a particular set of (religious) inspirations (Tuastad 2003; Etienne 2007).[13] This is not to deny that U.S. intervention in Iraq, for instance, triggered a new wave of political violence in that country, or that religious identity played an important role in mobilizing fighters (Hatina 2005; Fisk 2006; Jalal 2008). But as a rule, intra-state warfare is a recurrent phenomenon, which is local in origin, serves many purposes, and is tied to a huge number of motivations, legitimizations, and ideologies.

For that reason, it is pointless to discuss whether the recourse to violence by opposition groups is, generally speaking, cause or effect of this state of affairs (Ayoob 1995). In the same way one could discuss endlessly whether violent opponents of oppressive regimes seek power for the common good, or simply to redistribute resources among supporters (Kalyvas 2003). Whether ethnic or religious diversity causes violence (Sahadevan 2002), or is instead its

effect (Schetter 2005) is another futile discussion. Empirical studies on armed groups show that motivations and ideologies can be very different, but the effects of organized political violence remain the same (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009). These questions cannot be answered on an abstract level, but only on a case by case basis.

So what can be said about violence in intra-state conflicts in West and South Asia? There is one well-known fact that is often taken too lightly: Intra-state violence not only involves the state as an actor; it is also directed against the state, to topple the government, to get more autonomy, or to gain independence. Here we can make a distinction, on a solid empirical basis: In West Asia, very much like in Sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America, most rebel groups aim at toppling the government, whereas insurgents in South Asia tend to be more "ambitious": the majority of civil wars there are fought for autonomy or secession, sometimes even with irredentist objectives. If we consider the historical background of the two regions under study here, these somewhat superficial empirical findings can easily be put into context.

3.1.2.1. West Asia

In West Asia, most intra-state conflicts are part and parcel of a state-formation process, in which the territories of the former Ottoman Empire are still involved (Jung 2006). The post-colonial states affected by violent conflict are very weak, with few links between state apparatus, traditional elites, and rulers on the one hand and the majority population on the other. In contrast to many other regions, there were, during Ottoman rule, few unifying anti-colonial movements that connected the different ethnic and religious groups. As a result, and again in contrast to most parts of Latin America, South-East Asia and South Asia, neither post-colonial elites nor the public sphere as a whole were well organized. To this day, nationalism is not yet the dominant ideology or form of political legitimization, and loyalties relate principally to families, clans, and

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13 The surge in studies on political violence is discussed only very selectively here. Although some new insights must be acknowledged, in particular on suicide terrorism (Dogu 2000; Atran 2004; Hafez 2006; Asad 2007; Ali and Post 2008), the bulk of

work serves rather as an introduction to the topic of intra-state warfare for a previously ill-informed Western audience (Gunaratna 2002; Rotberg 2003). Some studies even focus on terrorism's effects on Western countries, or are written from a perspective

that aims at improving Western counterinsurgency strategies, and not on the subject matter itself (Rotberg 2004; Hoffmann 2006; Mockaitis 2008).

"tribes"; occasionally, charismatic leaders, religious ideologies (Islamism), or political ideologies come into play (Ayubi 1995; Khoury and Kostiner 1990). Interestingly, nationalistic sentiment in this region seeks its fulfillment not in a particular state, but in Arab identity at large – with the notable exception of Iran, of course, where Persian nationalism is long-established and mature.

Under these circumstances, organized political violence in civil wars is primarily directed against at times isolated, at times well-guarded oppressive regimes, which basically means against a tight security apparatus that serves the interests of small (traditional) elite groups. Excluded groups use violent means to claim the most basic political and civil rights, to be in some way part of the state and claim some of its resources, often as a last resort after years of peaceful struggle. This has been a pattern in *Yemen* for a long time (1948; 1962 to 1969; 1968 to 1969; 1978 to 1982; 1986; 1994; since 2004): Here, a state apparatus captured by traditional elite groups has repetitively been attacked by upwardly mobile groups – at the beginning by those with secular, pan-Arabic and leftist leanings, more recently by those influenced by Islamist ideologies (O'Ballance 1971; Wedeen 2004; Hamidi 2009). More recent cases are Saddam Hussein's *Iraq*, where a despotic secular regime dominated by Sunni elites was attacked by Shiite opposition groups from 1991 to 1996 (Jabar 2003; Nakash 2003), and *Algeria* (since 1992), where Islamist militias took on an authoritarian bureaucratic government – and the civilian population (Hafiz 2000; Bozarslan and Jolly 1997). In these cases, Islamist opposition is often only one very vocal (and violent) segment of a larger civil society striving to contain a predatory state apparatus.

Autonomist and separatist violence is rare in West Asia; it is more or less limited to three cases. The vast majority of instances of civil war are connected with the nationalist aspirations of the *Kurdish* communities in Iraq (1945; 1961 to 1966; 1969; 1974 to 1996), Iran (1991 to 1995), and Turkey (1984 to 2001; since 2001) (Lawrence 2009; Bozarslan 2009). These non-Arab and non-Persian communities essentially strive for nation- and statehood; they represent the rare case of a process of nation- and state-building that remains in its infancy even in the twenty-first century; it

remains to be seen whether the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish territory in northern Iraq will change that. Under these circumstances, otherwise banal aspirations of freshly mobilized segments of society take on a separatist form.

The second case of separatism relates to *Lebanon*'s civil war from 1975 to 1990. In the West Asian context, Lebanon represents the exceptional case of a cultural-political mélange of distinct religiously defined communities within one state; at some point during the political mobilization process of the 1970s, however, the political arrangements behind this synthesis broke down and the respective communities claimed their own territories (Barak 2002; Picard 1997). *Israel and Palestine* stands for the last West Asian anomaly: armed resistance against foreign occupation by a neighboring country (Lesch 2008; Mishal and Sela 2000). Conflict potential is increased by two features: firstly, the occupying country is essentially a religiously defined, expanding settler colony, with little inclination for compromise on land issues; secondly, the occupied territory's indigenous population is politically disorganized.

A feature common to almost every intra-state conflict in West Asia is the involvement of international actors. Great powers like the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom have all been party to various disputes over the last century. Interventionist policies already began during the decline of Ottoman rule and the ensuing internationalization of its territories after the First World War under League of Nations trusteeship. Then, Western capital started to penetrate the emerging Gulf economies, turning the struggle for the command and control of a political economy like Saudi Arabia or Persia into a matter of international affairs (Frye 1951). After the Second World War, the tendency to treat almost any case of political violence in the "Middle East" as an international issue has been reinforced by the Arab-Israeli conflict (Singh 2003). Even during the Cold War era, when international media, international relations, and political science concentrated on superpower rivalry, intra-state conflicts in West Asia gained significant attention, in particular if and when superpowers were involved. The unprecedented media attention the Third Gulf War received and the volume of propaganda

mobilized by the warring parties, can thus be seen as the apex of a protracted internationalization of violent conflicts in the region (Debrix 2006; Atawneh 2009).

Against this background, we can see why the bulk of literature is written by international, mostly Western, academics (Bouillon 2007; Cordesman 2008; Hoffmann 2006), journalists (Tripathi 2009), and even practitioners (Scheuer 2008). Conflict and violence are often viewed from outside, focusing on the interventionist's perspective and problems (Pelletière 2007; Feith 2008). Many studies, even those from the region, focus on ways and means to find an end to the conflict, following post-conflict peace-building frameworks (Ismael and Ismael 2005; Al-Marashi and Keskin 2008), although the number of critical studies that look into interventions as problem producers rather than problem solvers is increasing (Ajami 2006; Wahab 2006; Glosemeyer 2004; Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002;). Even in this field it is not uncommon to find publications with a more explicit political (as opposed to research) agenda, especially in the Palestinian and Lebanese contexts. In addition, media and academic coverage give a distorted view of conflicts in the region: Following international news value, exceptional cases like Palestine and the Lebanon tend to get much more coverage than a protracted conflict like Yemen or a pivotal state like Egypt.

In recent years, however, we have been seeing a reorientation. Regional scholars, many of them working abroad, have found the opportunity to conduct more detailed research on inner contradictions within their societies, on patterns of violence in daily life, and on how this leads to or prolongs violent conflict (Ahram 2009; Hamidi 2009). It is fair to say that alongside well-funded research programs at international universities, international organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Crisis Group (ICG) play an important role, giving local scholars an opportunity to conduct professional and critical research. ICG reports have touched upon on many sensitive issues, like religious minorities (ICG 2005, 2010) or radical opposition movements (ICG 2008), and it has done empirical research under difficult circumstances (ICG 2007, 2009). UNDP (2003) has published an "Arab Human Development Re-

port," which was researched and written by an excellent group of Arab intellectuals. The assessment of Arab universities in UNDP's 2003 report on "Building a Knowledge Society" is worth quoting to understand why organizations like UNDP and ICG matter in the Arab world:

> One of the main features of many universities in the Arab world is their lack of autonomy, i.e., they fall under the direct control of the ruling regime. Nevertheless, universities are often the arenas for political and ideological conflict, the more so because of restrictions imposed on political participation in general and the promotion of political currents that owe allegiance to the regime. These contextual features have adverse effects on the degree of freedom allowed for education and research. (UNDP 2003, 56)

Internationalization of print and especially electronic media facilitated this development. Because of the internet, we potentially have (hidden) public debate about almost every issue in almost every country, at least among educated middle classes. Violent conflicts figure among them, in particular if and when covered by the global media (Lynch 2006; Berenger 2006). It remains to be seen whether what we have here is a nascent international civil society that could finally transform authoritarian structures and lead to better research conditions.

3.1.2.2. South Asia

In contemporary world society, South Asia is probably the region with the highest number of armed formations engaged in political violence, and the greatest variation in terms of their ideological orientation. We can make out numerous kinds of ethnic or "tribal" (sub-)nationalism, a plethora of religious fundamentalisms, and even different strands of revolutionary Marxism (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Rana 2004; Ali 1993). Most insurgencies in South Asia have been fought by national or sub-national groupings under the flag of autonomy or separatism: in *India* Kashmiris (since 1990), Sikhs (1982 to 1993), Assamese (since 1990), Nagas (1954 to 1975), Mizos (1966 to 1980, Tripuris (since 1999), Manipuris (since 2005), and Bodos (1997 to 2005); in *Pakistan* Sindhis (1986 to 1995), Muhajris (1986 to 1995), and Balochis (1973 to 1977; since 2005); in *Sri Lanka* Tamils (1983 to 2002; 2005 to 2008); and in *Bangladesh* the Bengalis for separation from Pakistan (1971) and later, internally, the ethnic groups of the

Chittagong Hill Tracts (1973 to 1993).. There are few cases in which rebels took up arms to topple the government and/or change the system of governance: the Maoist uprisings in *India* (since 1997) and *Nepal* (1999 to 2006), the insurgency of the "*Pakistani* Taliban" (since 2007), and the civil war in *Afghanistan* (since 1978) are cases in point.

It should also be noted that despite the magnitude of political violence and intra-state warfare, the subcontinent has been subject to little direct foreign intervention. In stark contrast to West Asia, the major powers in particular have not shaped the post-colonial political landscape by use of military force. It looks like a paradox: Although autonomist and separatist rebellions (in South Asia) have a bigger potential impact on the international system, since they could change the number of units, they have triggered less intervention than anti-government rebellions in West Asia. This paradox can at least partly be explained by the nature of state-formation in both regions and the capacity of post-colonial states to deter (would-be) interventionists (Ayoob 2004). It remains to be seen whether U.S. and NATO intervention in Afghanistan will change the state of affairs in the region (Tripathi 2009; Rashid 2008; Bhatia and Sedra 2008).

The best explanation at hand for a pattern of organized political violence that is so different from West Asia (and from Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, too) is the pre-colonial and colonial formation of the region and the form of decolonization. Almost the whole subcontinent inherited comparatively strong post-colonial institutions from the British Raj, some of which even had roots in the pre-colonial era (Bose and Jalal 1998). At the same time, colonial rule involuntarily brought forth strong anti-colonial national movements, although their strength differed geographically depending on the type of rule (direct vs. indirect), the degree of colonial transformation, and the type of pre-colonial structures. When the British Empire became militarily overstretched during the Second World War, the Quit India Movement was ready to capitalize on this weakness: by August 1947 the colonial era had come to an end, at least in most parts of South Asia. Although the sudden, indeed hasty, dissolution of the British Empire led initially to a huge wave of political violence, in retrospect it can be

argued that an initially violent process of state formation enabled the post-colonial elites to put their institutions to an early test and to tie large parts of the population closer to the state apparatus (Moore 1979; Harrison 1960).

As a result, state institutions are usually more viable in South Asia than in West Asia; moreover, national identity building processes had been taken further. These favorable conditions, however, brought not peace, but conflict. State power works both ways: it can provide protection, and it can uproot people (Nandy 2003). As it turned out, international boundaries in South Asia, very much like in other parts of Asia, did and do not match the settlement areas of linguistic communities; in some cases two or more post-colonial states even vie for the same territory, and its people (Lamb 1968). As state power gained more and more leverage, local and national elites competed for control over people and land, sometimes across borders. India, Pakistan and, later, Bangladesh became engulfed by rebellions of local status groups that could not be reconciled (Ali 1993; Samad 1995; Amin 1988). Uprisings of "tribal" groups in North-East India (Nagas, Mizos) (Nepram 2002; Bhūshaṇa 2004) and in western Pakistan (Balochis) (Titus 1998; Scholz 2002; Bansal 2006) are cases in point, as are Kashmiris in India (Geelani 2006; Lamb 1991) and Bengalis in pre-divided Pakistan (Sisson and Rose 1990). In all these cases, members of ethnically defined communities, mostly traditional or newly mobilized (local) elites, which had been living territorially and/or culturally at the margins of mainstream society, struggled for collective political rights vis-à-vis the state and the nation. In many cases, ethnic or sub-national consciousness had been fostered by exactly the same colonial or post-colonial state institutions that came under attack (de Silva 2001). Interestingly, federally structured India has been able to accommodate many of these claims, whereas centralized polities like Pakistan and Sri Lanka have not (Adeney 2007).

Another aspect of colonial rule that pitted communities against each other is positive or reverse discrimination. British divide and rule policies gave preference to minority groups, such as particular ethnic, religious or caste communities; under a more democratic dispensation, post-colonial governments swung support to the majority

groups, thereby indirectly discriminating against privileged minorities, some of whom took up arms. Tamils in *Sri Lanka* and Sikhs in *India* are examples (Deol 2000; Chima 2010; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1994; Winslow and Woost 2004). Arguably, closer ties between central rulers and the citizenry, and even democratic institutions are factors that increase the risk of autonomist or secessionist rebellion, because rebels do not face only the government but have to struggle against a national consensus as well, even if rebel groups receive support on the local level.

For each and every conflict there are, to be sure, many root causes that can be identified, as there are many motivations and many kinds of reasoning involved. We do not claim that colonial factors explain everything; but they do to a certain extent explain why people react in specific ways to stress and pressure. As is to be expected, religion, national and cultural pride, and inequality rank very high among the motivational factors voiced by the actors themselves (Das 1992; Tambiah 1996; Hinnells and King 2007). The case of the Naxalite (Maoist) rebellion in eastern and central parts of *India*, which currently affects almost one third of the country's territory (Misra 2002; Mehra 2000; see also Singh 1995), the thirty years of war in *Afghanistan*, and the Taliban insurgency in *Pakistan* are the reference points (Rana, Sial, and Basit 2010; Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Mir 2009; Giustozzi 2007; Dorronsoro 2005). These are, not co-incidentally, the cases where insurgents seek political power and system change rather than autonomy or separation. They are indications of a deeper crisis: in India in the less developed parts of the country, in Pakistan within the Pushtun belt in the west, and in Afghanistan on the national level. In all three cases, the legitimacy and the survival of the state is at stake, at least in the long run. That is why all three governments give top priority to these cases.[14]

International attention in the mass media, but also in international relations think tanks and university political science departments focuses on the so-called AFPAK region (Zahab and Roy 2004). The surge of terrorism-related work on Afghanistan and Pakistan over the last ten years has produced a volume of literature that is almost impossible to comprehensively review. As regards the quality of the literature, our conclusions are similar to those for terrorism-related studies in West Asia: Some studies have to be seen as introductions for previously uninformed audiences (Crews and Tarzi 2008; Jones 2009), some discuss policy problems and options for the international community (Hussain 2010; Dobbins 2008), and others have brought new insights, in particular on social organization and violence (Giustozzi 2007; Dorronsoro 2005; Esser 2004). Recent studies tend to distort the real picture by creating the impression that religiously motivated violence is the main, if not the sole source of armed conflict in the region (Gunaratna 2002). Few studies give an accurate picture of the burden South Asian societies face in terms of political violence. In fact, a democracy like India suffers greatly, and subnationalism, not religion, is the biggest source of violence in the region (Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009; Ali 1993; Das 1992).

Fortunately the South Asian academic community researching conflict and violence is stronger than in many other parts of the Global South. India, Sri Lanka and, to a lesser extent, Bangladesh have comparatively solid research infrastructures, and even in Pakistan, where militarization has a grip on politics and society, many critical studies have been undertaken (Jalal 1990; Khattak 1996; Haqqani 2005; Siddiqa 2007). There is, however, a structural problem. Research literature basically falls into three categories: First, there is a strong tradition in security studies, which is state-centered by nature and gives little attention to sociological analysis (Marwah 1995; Krishna and Chari 2001; Kumaraswamy 2004); then we have, as a counterweight, society-centered analyses (Fuller and Bénéi 2001; Misra 2002) that follow the tradition of subaltern studies historiography (Chatterjee 2009; Guha 2010). These studies have more sociological depth, disaggregate the state apparatus, and deconstruct national (security) myths (Khattak 1996; Navlakha 1997; see also Ayoob 2002). And thirdly, there are a good number of studies without any clear theoretical lean-

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14 India's central government has repeatedly declared that the Maoist rebellion is the biggest threat (Sahni and Cherian 2005). In Pakistan the same has been said by President Musharraf about the Taliban threat (Abbas 2005); the same goes without saying for Afghanistan.

ing, which just report the "facts" on current onflicts (Mir 2009; Ray 2007; Rana 2004; Banerjee 1980). This literature is extremely valuable, but largely disconnected from (mainstream) academia. Take North-East India: Here, a surge of literature, mainly done by scholars at local universities, has greatly enhanced empirical knowledge (Bhattacharjee 2006; Bhūshaṇa 2004; Das 2004; Nepram 2002; Maitra 1998), but this has gone largely unnoticed in national and international political and violence research. What is needed is an infrastructure linking up empirical, theoretical, and pragmatic approaches in and for this region.

3.1.2.3. Synopsis

Most studies on civil wars, insurgencies and terrorism are descriptive. These accounts of "what actually happened" are typically authored by scholars (Mazari 2003; Nayar 2005; Schofield 2010), journalists (Rana 2004; Coll 2005; Rashid 2008), and practitioners (Buzzell 2005; Dobbins 2008; Scheuer 2008) whose cultural (and symbolic) capital is essentially local knowledge, whether first hand or not. They rarely focus on the use of violence as such; some even take it for granted that individuals or groups will at some point use physical force. Next we have well-researched purely academic case studies, many of which are written by sociologists and social anthropologists (Dorronsoro 2005; Giustozzi 2007; Gayer and Jaffrelot 2009). These studies give a more detailed, yet limited account of actors and practices, and rather than taking the use of violence for granted, they explicitly ask why, when, and how violence was used. Then we have an increasing number of academic articles with empirical insights and a background in a specific theoretical debate (Jalkh 1996; Esser 2004; Wedeen 2004; Blom et al. 2008). They represent a new generation of theoretically guided, empirical studies on violence in its different forms. Finally, we have the very rare systematic and comprehensive designs addressing the causes and inner dynamics of violence (Rubin 1995; Ganguly 2003; Verkaaik 2004). Most studies by regional scholars fall into the first or second category and have had little influence on academic debate.

As is to be expected, interpretations and theoretical conclusions on organized political violence in West and in South Asia are deeply influenced by international debates. With regard to implicit or explicit assumptions about the causes of conflict and the motivation of parties, we can identify a pattern. Since both Kashmir and Palestine are protracted conflicts, they can be used here to identify shifts in explanation: At the beginning, both cases were portrayed as nationalist struggles for political independence (Singh 2003; Lamb 1991), then as *jihad* for an Islamic order (Swami 2008), and recently as the result of a failure of India and Israel respectively (and of the Palestinian Authority) to provide basic public goods (Abu-Amr 1994; Geelani 2006; King-Irani 2005). These variants of interpretation and legitimization clearly echo international debates in the mass media and academia, like those on national development in the 1960s (Huntington 1965; Shils 1965), on political Islam in the 1980s and since 2001 (O. Roy 2004, 1994), and on failed states in recent years (Rotberg 2003; Helman and Ratner 1992); they are evidence that international discourse agendas do influence research on political violence in West and South Asia to a great extent.

3.1.3. Repression, Militarism and Other Forms of Political Violence

For international conflicts and civil wars, we can rely on reasonably accurate and consistent information across countries and regions. This enables us to give judgments on strengths, weaknesses, and lacunae in research. This is not true with regard to other forms of violence, those without declared parties to an unmistakably identifiable conflict. Many acts of political violence in West and South Asia are not bound to a conflictive issue, but are rather part of ordinary political power struggles. We have to keep in mind that in principle, violence is a resource open to everybody (Popitz 1992). Whether physical violence may be applied as a means to political ends depends on the (informal) rules of the game (Bailey 1969). Given the nature of such political conflicts, there is no reliable data collection at hand on the magnitude and the effects on these forms of political violence. Studies in political sociology and political anthropology can enlighten us on these phenomena only on a case by case basis (Barth 1959). All we can do in this overview is to offer a fairly basic categorization of these forms of political violence and to give some empirical insights.

We propose a differentiation of three basic forms of political violence below the level of war: government repression, violent protest (including individual terrorism), and viol-

ent political infighting. *State violence* against peaceful op-position movements and activists is still one of the dominant forms of political violence in most countries of West Asia, and to a lesser extent in South Asia. Reports of human rights organizations like *Amnesty International*, *Human Rights Watch*, or *Reporters sans frontières* provide basic information on most countries. As a rule, however, these organizations do not maintain regional chapters or local offices on a systematic basis, so they generally have to rely on second-hand reporting (media, eyewitnesses). Local human rights organizations exist, again more in South Asia than in West Asia. Here the available information varies greatly according to regime type. While academic research and investigative reporting on conflicts may be easier than is commonly perceived (Romano 2006), inquiries into fun-damental human rights issues are often dangerous.

Systematic academic work on the topic is very rare. And for those who invest their time and investigate the subject, it is very difficult, given the subject matter, to avoid short-term perspectives and taking sides. There are some notable ex-ceptions on sensitive issues such as torture, in countries like Israel (Araj 2008; Falah 2008), Turkey (Göregenli 2005; Aydın 1997), and India (Pelly 2009; Asian Centre for Human Rights 2010). In addition, torture and inhumane treatment of prisoners by U.S. authorities in Guantanamo, Baghram, and elsewhere has attracted both political and academic interest (Finlay 2007; Feinman 2007). It should be noted that in countries under de-facto foreign occu-pation, like Iraq or Afghanistan, reporting and research may be facilitated by the larger number of people able to provide information, such as (foreign) journalists, aid workers, and government officials – although it is fair to as-sume that such information assembled by outsiders is more prone to false conclusions than that provided by locals.

Violent protest often leads to or results from government repression. But it can be argued that the exercise of physical violence is often a strategic tool as well, to raise the stakes of the political power game, or to provoke (international) media attention (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003). In both West and South Asia, and in both demo-cratic and authoritarian regimes, such strategic exercise of violence by the opposition is very much part of politics

(Shimray 2004; Geelani 2006; Bouckaert 2009). Blockades and political strikes that bring public life to a standstill are regularly and successfully implemented by opposition movements, in particular in a democracy like India (Chat-terjee 2004). The same applies to violent political infight-ing. In times of crisis (and thereafter), even mainstream political parties maintain front organizations, which at times intimidate and occasionally liquidate political oppo-nents (Fuller and Bénéi 2001). Note that warring parties in many intra-state wars start their line of business in such a manner. A good example is the violent politics of southern Punjab in Pakistan (Nasr 2000; Zaman 2002). Here, local political and religious leaders, organized along the lines of the established and the outsiders, founded militant sectar-ian organizations (Shiite and Sunni), which provide re-cruits for *jihadi* terrorism to this day.

To conclude, we can say that there are concepts and iso-lated comparative studies on political violence below the level of civil war (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly 2003), but there is no solid research infrastructure in West and South Asia (or North Africa) for empirical research along these lines.

3.2. Religious Violence and Communalism

We turn now to violent acts against members and parts of society committed by organizations that pursue no politi-cal goals and are, as a rule, less organized, at least on the national level. It should be kept in mind that the state is by no means the only organization in contemporary society (Ahrne 1990). In particular in the Global South, "tradi-tional" organizations like families, clans, local commu-nities, or religious communities are more important than state organs for daily life at the grass-roots level. In some recent studies, these "functional equivalents" to the mod-ern state have been portrayed as institutional alternatives where states and governments are inefficient or lack legit-imacy (Draude 2007). It should not be overlooked, how-ever, that the same functional equivalents can turn out to be dysfunctional themselves. It is quite possible that the amount of violence committed within and between those communal organizations and groups in a given society in the Global South may dwarf the violence committed by and against the state.

Religious violence and communal violence belong in that category (Juergensmeyer 2003; Hajjar 2004; Hinnells and King 2007; Selengut 2008). Again on a very basic (and indeed abstract) level, we can distinguish between three mains types of religious or communal violence: violence *within* communities and organizations, violence *between* communities and organizations (sectarian violence), and religious and communal violence in (local) political conflicts.

Let us begin with the last category. Here there is no razor-sharp delineation from the political violence discussed above. Religious violence in the strict and narrow sense is often the precursor of religiously legitimated violence in political conflicts. Or, to put it the other way around: violence among religious communities may become political. Religious violence occurs in the context of civil war, when religious leaders collaborate with political ones, or if they develop political ambitions themselves.[15] The civil wars in Lebanon (Barak 2002; ICG 2010; Picard 1997) and Algeria (Hafiz 2000) are cases in point, as are the Islamist insurgencies in Iraq (Jabar 2003), Afghanistan (Edwards 2002), Pakistan (Zahab and Roy 2004; Mir 2009), and Palestine (Bloom 2004; Robinson 2007).

Beyond these well-covered conflicts, it is more difficult to get reliable data on the extent of religious and communal violence in West and South Asia. We should note that in many Muslim majority countries violence is described and presented in a religious context. State-sponsored vigilante groups and morality police claim to "purify society of evils." Such violence may be seen in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, and other countries in the region. For example, violence against sex workers, eunuchs (hijras), and religious minorities (like the Ahmadi community in Pakistan) is considered a religious duty by some vigilante groups.

Analytically, we can identify two kinds of religious violence *among and between* communities. Although these types of violence are not strictly apolitical, it is fair to say that state power is neither an issue nor a party here. One is *sectarian-*

ism. This is about power struggles between competing sects within a single religion, in particular Sunnis and Shias. These struggles occur all over West and South Asia (Al-Marashi and Keskin 2008; Nasr 2000). This kind of violent struggle is not trivial. It requires that individuals, or rather families, have a religious choice. For that reason, this kind of violence typically occurs in urban and suburban settings, and not in rural ones. In the case of South Asia there is also fierce competition between different strands of Sunni Islam, namely Deabandi and Barelvi Islam, and between the orthodox "Islam of the book" and popular Sufi Islam (Lassen and Skyhawk 2008). Here again we find outbreaks of violence mostly in urban and semi-urban settings. Literature on this kind of religious violence is sparse and unsystematic.

Another South Asian peculiarity is communalist violence between Hindu and Muslim communities (Shani 2007; Sen 2007; Engineer 2010; Chandra 2008). This sort of violence is more "political," because it affects the very social fabric of a multicultural and multi-religious society like India. At the same time, since the division of British India into India and Pakistan is based on religious ("communalist") criteria, it affects relations between India and its neighbor. Lately, (Islamic) terrorism and communalist violence by Hindu extremists have become serious challenges to the social order. That is why communalist violence, although following a similar logic, is more political than other forms of religious violence.

The literature on religious and communalist violence in West and South Asia is scattered. The question when and how religious activism turns violent is not well researched. On a more abstract level, however, there is a broad and long-standing range of literature and research on the link between religion and violence. After September 11, 2001, interest has increased considerably, and focuses even more on the link between Islam or Islamist radicalism and violence.

We might differentiate three main trends here: (a) research which is critical in regard to religion generally, raising the

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15 It is often difficult, to be sure, to separate political and non-political, in this case religious, motivations. At the same time, the autonomy and inner logic of the religious sphere in West and South Asian societies cannot not be denied (Zaman 2002; Roy 2004). We should be careful with assumptions here. To struggle for recognition and power in the religious field can be meaningful in itself, and it can make sense to use violent means.

point that religion has or can have a strong link to violence (Avalos 2005); (b) research which assumes or discusses an especially strong affinity to violence in *monotheistic* religions (in contrast to others), generally because of their relative lack of pluralism (Assmann 2009); and (c) an approach which concentrates its focus on Islam and Islamism and their link to violence (O. Roy 2004; Kepel 2003). In all of these categories, many scholars take the opposite viewpoint, and portray religions as inherently peaceful or stress their potential for peace (Appleby 2000), and in several cases the authors combine several approaches (Juergensmeyer 2003, 1992).

3.3. Youth Violence

Youth violence as a separate category is applicable mainly if and when young people, mostly young men, dissociate at least to a degree from their family, set up their own groups or organizations, and engage in violence. In contrast to societies in Latin America or Sub-Saharan Africa (let alone Europe), it seems that in West and South Asia this has not been very much the case, at least until recently.

Youth violence has not been very high on the agenda, although a few contributions do exist, including on school violence, football hooliganism, and vandalism (Gerler 2008). Possibly, academic attention in these regions has been absorbed by the more spectacular kinds of violence, like insurgencies, civil wars, terrorism, and the like; or it may be the case that the violence of youth gangs seen in many other regions has somehow been absorbed into the more politicized forms of violence. Student organizations in South Asia may be mentioned here, having played an important role in the initial phases of civil wars in North-East India and Sri Lanka. There may be a cultural reason as well, which is the extent to which youths are still controlled by the family in Asian countries. Therefore, youth gangs, so important in some other parts of the world, are less relevant here – probably because youth with an inclination to violent acts have often been integrated into political or political-religious groups, and rarely act in isolation.

The cases of India and Pakistan are of interest here. Since the 1970s young men have been systematically recruited by mainstream political parties, in order to boost their "muscle power" in extra-parliamentary struggles and street fights. It should be noted that this phenomenon is tied to democratic competition. In some local arenas, such as the megacities Mumbai and Karachi, young men for a time became the dominant political players, racketeers controlling entire districts, even cities (Verkaaik 2004; Eckert 2003). It is perhaps no coincidence that this happened in two cities great inward migration (Laitin 2009).

3.4. Domestic and Gendered Violence

The main problem in West South Asian societies is that interpersonal violence is inaccurately documented. Domestic violence, generally against women and children is obviously not specific to West and South Asia, but takes place in all countries though in varying degrees. So-called "honor-killings" (Nanes 2003; Faqir 2001) are definitely more specific to West and South Asian countries, compared to Europe or Latin America.[16] These categories of violence can also take culturally or regionally specific forms, or they can be "justified" in specific ways. For example, sometimes violence against women is explained or justified in ethnic or other forms of cultural distinctiveness, framing the roles of women in societies. "Tribal" coes of conduct or religiously framed local traditions of inequality are good examples.

Violence in social relationships (e.g. parent-child, teacher-student, and employer-employee) is also common. Such types of violence may even be tolerated if the perpetrator can claim that it was "justified and necessary for the welfare of the victim." "Tribal" feuds, sectarian violence, and racial and ethnic conflicts are all occurrences of daily life.

In contrast to the few works on youth violence, the topic of violence against women (and to a much lesser degree against children) has not been overlooked. The volume is much smaller than in connection with terrorism or civil wars, but it is still a relevant field of research. The dramatic

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16 It should, however, be noted that honor killings normally happen in tribal areas, and in the case of Iran are mainly specific to the south-east provinces (near the border with Iraq) and rarely occur in the cities.

rise in the proportion of females in higher education in recent years in many countries in the region, particularly in Iran, and the consolidation of women's activities for equal rights may play a significant role in drawing the attention of scholars towards domestic and gender violence (Nojomi, Agaee, and Eslami 2007; Johnson and Kuttab 2001; Jamal 2001; Haj-Yahia 2002; Clark et al. 2008; Boy and Kulczycki 2008; Aliverdinia and Pridemore 2009). Publications on violent child abuse are less developed, but some articles can still be found (Mikhail 2002; Al-Motwa 2008). Another topic concerns the fate of women in civil wars (Pandey 2006; Afshar 2003).

4. Conclusion

Obviously, this brief overview cannot cover the whole field of violence-related research. Among the topics omitted here are the psychological results of violence suffered either as a direct victim or witness (Punamäki et al. 2008; Montgomery 2008). Also, there has been no mention of criminal violence, very little about historical examples and historical violence research, or about violence and perceptions concerning violence and media, nor the re-shaping of societies by experiences of major violence and insecurity, or the discussion of violence in the military context, to name but a few relevant topics.

Our main aim has been to give a structural overview centered on political violence. Here the literature is quite rich, but often focused on phenomena that impact on Western actors or interests, like terrorism and (counter)-insurgency. Some contributions are politically charged or culturally biased. The assumption or insinuation that religion (Islam or Islamism) is a major *cause* of violence in the West or South Asia, while treating Christianity as of less relevance in regard to Western violence is a case in point. Political violence is the most persistent and the most complex prob-

lem in both West and South Asia. The process of creating congruent state, territory, and population is still under way in most societies here. Political transformations like those underway in West Asia after the "Arab Spring" of 2011 are likely to accentuate the challenges that lie ahead. We can also expect the political differences to be articulated in numerous cultural forms, in particular religious. Sadly, research on "religious" forms of violence is often dominated by the international debates with little regard to the realities on the ground. Some studies give an impression that monolithic religions more likely to inculcate violent behavior in their followers than the other religions. However there are few studies providing in-depth analysis of the causes of political violence beyond the religious and ideological explanations.

It is highly desirable for scholars from West and South Asia and North Africa to play a more important and active role in violence research, in both its political and personal dimensions. There is some reason for optimism, because in recent years, some universities in West and South Asia and North Africa have increased their connectivity and global out-reach. There could be credible research on different types of violence in local languages, especially Arabic, Persian, Hindi, and Urdu. It would be helpful if abstracts at least were translated into English language and made available in the relevant research databases. Some Turkish universities have already started translating local research into English and putting it on research databases for academic consumption. Intelligent and efficient use of technology can be helpful in increasing global accessibility of their indigenous research and can reduce the isolation of universities by an exchange of ideas and perspectives with the international scientific community, but it is not enough. What we need is an exchange of researchers, research experiences, and ideas.

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