1 Practices, Roles, Colonialism and Decolonisation

Rethinking Postcolonial Separatist Wars

The outbreak of postcolonial violence and the rise of liberation movements in the peripheries of the new states may not have caught the postcolonial governments entirely by surprise. After all, these countries emerged out of violence and contestation. This contestation did not disappear when the colonies gained their independence. Different groups within the newly or soon-to-be independent states debated the nature of relations with the imperial metropole, the character of the new state, the distribution of wealth and the division of power. Ethnic, religious or national groups that believed the new state failed to represent their identity and aspirations were already among the more vocal contestants of the new order. Iraq, Iran and Turkey had already experienced a series of uprisings among the Kurdish communities in their territories during the first decades of their existence, in parallel to the development of their new governments.[1] In Sudan as well, talks about unification and the processes leading to the formation of the new state witnessed the growing concerns among Southerners who became conscious of their weakness vis-à-vis the Arab elites in the North.[2]

[1] Examples of such uprisings are plentiful; notable examples include the Sheikh Said rebellion and the Dersim uprising in Turkey, the foundation of the separatist Mahabad Republic in Iraq in 1945–6 and the revolts led by Skeikh Mahmud Barzanji in Iraq. For different accounts of these revolts, see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion 1880–1925* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Nicole Watts, 'Relocating Dersim: Turkish State-Building and Kurdish Resistance, 1931–1938', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23, 1 (2000), pp. 5–30; Farideh Koohi-Kamali, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran: Pastoral Nationalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), especially the chapter on the Republic of Mahabad, pp. 89–125; Saad Eskander, 'Britain's Policy in Southern Kurdistan: The Formation and the Termination of the First Kurdish Government, 1918–1919', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27, 2 (2000), pp. 139–63.

[2] I discuss this episode in greater detail in the following chapters, as it overlaps to a far greater extent chronologically with the eruption of the separatist war in Sudan. But for an interesting preliminary discussion on the rise of the call of federalism among Southerners, see Douglas H. Johnson, *Federalism in the History of South Sudanese Political Thought* (London: Rift Valley Institute, 2014), pp. 6–14.

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The reasons and triggers for the outbreak of separatist violence and secessionist movements have been covered widely in the literature. Previous works have identified a variety of potential reasons for such phenomena in the postcolonial space. They have ranged from the now mostly disparaged focus on primordial ethno-religious hatreds and the hypothesis that different groups are bound to perpetually fight[3] to theories about elites' appetite for control over resources and the distribution of income.[4] The purpose of this book, nevertheless, is not to integrate this broader debate on whether 'greed' or 'grievances' breed conflict.[5] Rather than exploring the causes for the birth of separatist violence in the postcolonial world, this book seeks to shed light on the evolution of these conflicts and the reasons and logic behind the methods, tactics and strategies that both sides to the conflict, incumbents and rebels, employed in these conflicts. Here is the place to reiterate the central argument of this book: postcolonial separatist wars, between postcolonial governments and insurgents, have often seen the resurgence of patterns and practices of previous liberation wars between European empires and anti-colonial rebels in the colonies.

Hence, these conflicts can often be understood as second-generation anti-colonial conflicts. Both sides to the conflict adopted perceptions, ideas, policies, strategies and practices that their predecessors had used during the first generation of anti-colonial liberation wars. The Iraqi and Sudanese authorities, much like other postcolonial governments, adopted colonial methods of control and oppression towards the rebellious populations in the peripheries and counter-insurgency tactics when violence escalated into full-scale conflicts. In a mirror image, the liberation movements, with the Kurdish and Southern Sudanese as prime examples, resorted to describing their wars as anti-colonial, and their adversaries as their colonisers and oppressors. This discourse became the foundation for their public diplomacy. Associating their struggles with the global anti-colonial movement, they shamed their enemies, their supporters

[3] Alexis Heraclides, 'Ethnicity, Secessionist Conflict and the International Society: Towards Normative Paradigm Shift', *Nations and Nationalism* 3, 4 (1997), pp. 493–520; Joane Nagel, 'The Conditions of Ethnic Separatism: The Kurds in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq', *Ethnicity* 7, 3 (1980), pp. 279–97; Donald L. Horowitz, 'Patterns of Ethnic Separatism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, 2 (1981), pp. 165–95; Anthony D. Smith, 'Towards a Theory of Ethnic Separatism', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, 1 (1979), pp. 21–37.

[4] William N. Sloan, 'Ethnicity or Imperialism? A Review Article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, 1 (1979), pp. 113; David Keen, *The Benefits of Famine: A Political Economy of Famine and Relief in Southwestern Sudan, 1983–1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Collier and Hoeffler, 'The Political Economy'.

[5] For a review of the greed vs grievances debate, see David Keen, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War', *International Affairs* 88, 4 (2012), pp. 757–77.

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and the international community for their failure to meet their standards and commitments in a postcolonial world order. Concurrently, they also turned to adopting the fighting strategies employed by many of the first-generation anti-colonial movements, mainly that of guerrilla fighting.

Both incumbents and rebels absorbed these practices and policies through interaction and engagement with their counterparts of the previous generations. One may argue that this kind of conduct on both sides was no more than a superficial imitation of previous successful campaigns or path dependence of previous developments, with both parties unable to abandon existing institutions and envision new ways to operate. In this regard, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler have argued that 'Secessionist movements present themselves to the global public as analogues of colonial liberation movements: long-established identities are denied rights of self-determination by quasi-imperial authorities. Self-determination is presented as the solution to the challenge of peaceful coexistence between distinct peoples.'[6] This public diplomacy strategy, according to Collier and Hoeffler, is that 'The global public not only accepts this message but reinforces it: both Hollywood and diasporas relay it back to populations in developing countries.'[7] In other words, Collier and Hoeffler maintain that postcolonial liberation movements have made strategic use of the colonial liberation label to gain legitimacy for their cause.

This narrowing down of the conduct of the belligerents to a utilitarian imitation of previous conflicts ignores the processes through which the actors in question have been exposed to these ideas and strategies. It misses the significance of the ways in which these actors perceived themselves and their situation. It neglects the importance of interaction between the first and second generations of liberation movements in their search for countering international hegemony, instead focusing more on how liberation movements have sought to court international (primarily Western) public opinion. And, perhaps most importantly, it risks failing to grasp the reasons for, and the point at which, the strategies of both sides to such conflicts may change. If indeed, for instance, the liberation movements' presentation of their conflict was merely a superficial attempt to gain international support for their claims, we could not fully explain the shift that happened in the 1990s among several of these movements – including the Kurdish and Southern Sudanese ones – from concentrating mostly on armed insurgency to other forms of contesting central power, such as capacity and institution building.

[6] Collier and Hoeffler, 'The Political Economy', p. 37. [7] Ibid.

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A better understanding of the way incumbents and rebels have operated in postcolonial separatist wars, their choices of how to communicate their causes, their responses to the other side's actions and even their fighting tactics necessitates an analysis of the background of these actors and the circumstances of their birth. Neither postcolonial governments nor separatist liberation movements were formed in a void. Both were products of the struggles that led to the withdrawal of European empires and the formation of the new states. Postcolonial elites on the one side and the founders of postcolonial liberation movements on the other witnessed the manner in which their predecessors strove to secure their goals – either to suppress the rebellions and maintain their rule over their colonies when it came to the European empires or to rid themselves of the yoke of oppressive colonial rule. And they witnessed these processes not only as outsiders. They were often integral to the colonial systems or the anti-colonial liberation movements. Postcolonial elites had periods of extensive exposure to the colonial authorities and their methods of governance and oppression. They were victims of but also participants in the colonial administrations, as police officers, soldiers, administrators and students.[8] Similarly, the emerging liberation activists were close observers or even members of previous liberation movements. In what can be seen as a pre-emptive response to Collier and Hoeffler's suggestion, Robert Malley, in his analysis of liberation ideology in the midst of the Algerian Civil War, contended the following:

> Third Worldism was more than political doctrine; it was all-encompassing ideology that permeated fields of intellectual knowledge and militant activism. It was authoritative, not in the sense of ever being the exclusive ideological referent, but in that it provided the instruments by which to legitimate and discredit, to measure success and decree failure.[9]

Although Malley's Third Worldism is a broad concept, anti-colonialism plays a crucial role in its definition.[10] The future liberation movements in the postcolonial world were very much exposed to this element of Third Worldism. Both liberationists and incumbents, then, were integral to the processes leading to its emergence.

[8] I elaborate on this point later in the chapter and in the Iraqi and Sudanese context in Chapter 3, which focuses on postcolonial governments' responses to separatist challenges.

[9] Robert Malley, *The Call from Algeria: Third Worldism, Revolution, and the Turn to Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 2.

[10] In his critical analysis of the concept, Alina Sajed maintains that 'Third Worldism can be understood by reference to the framework of European colonialism, the manner in which colonized intellectuals responded to and engaged with the colonial experience, and in relation to the formation of anticolonial thought and subsequent nationalist political agendas.' Sajed, 'Re-remembering Third Worldism: An Affirmative Critique of National Liberation in Algeria', *Middle East Critique* 28, 3 (2019), p. 244.

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Of course, the argument here is by no means that ideas, practices and self-perceptions are the only factors that have shaped the trajectory of separatist conflicts. Access to resources, foreign interventions, domestic and international legitimacy, geography, ecology and the availability of information are but a few of the variables that have been identified as affecting the outbreak of conflicts, their nature and their outcomes.[11] These factors have definitely played a role in the conflicts in Iraq and Sudan.[12] But whereas studies of postcolonial conflicts have identified the relevance of these factors as variables shaping violence, little attention has been paid to other factors that are relevant to explaining these wars, namely practices, roles, identities and international norms of recognition. This book aims to set the framework within which these factors are relevant. The manner in which the actors involved in the conflicts, whether the governments or the rebels, perceive themselves, their goals and their situation; the fashion in which they understand what it takes to achieve these goals; and the tools available to them, all lead to the way in which they end up approaching the conflict and the other factors that shape the evolution of these conflicts. The fact that postcolonial governments were ruled throughout the first decades of their existence by elites that emerged out of institutions constructed by colonial predecessors was bound to shape their outlook of on conflicts and their resolution. Similarly, that the postcolonial liberation movements were born in an environment that had been dominated by previous strife against an external oppressor meant that their most immediately available model was that of anti-colonial liberation struggle. Certainly, if we can consider a potential counterfactual, alternative models may have also been in existence. For instance, the history of secessionist movements in the twentieth century also witnessed peaceful or non-violent movements.[13] Similarly, the striking parallels between the

[11] Amalendu Misra, *Politics of Civil Wars: Conflict, Intervention and Resolution* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013); Adam Lockyer, 'Foreign Intervention and Warfare in Civil Wars', *Review of International Studies* 37, 5 (2011), pp. 2337–64; Michael L. Ross, 'How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases', *International Organization* 58, 1 (2004), pp. 35–67; Philippe Le Billon, 'The Political Ecology of War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflicts', *Political Geography* 20, 5 (2001), pp. 561–84; Barbara F. Walter, 'Information, Uncertainty, and the Decision to Secede', *International Organization* 60, 1 (2006), pp. 105–35; Michael Hechter, 'The Dynamics of Secession', *Acta Sociologica* 35, 3 (1992), pp. 267–83.

[12] Bryan R. Gibson, *Sold Out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2016); Poggo, *The First Sudanese*; Yotam Gidron, '"One People, One Struggle": Anya-Nya Propaganda and the Israeli Mossad in Southern Sudan, 1969–1971', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 12, 3 (2018), pp. 428–53; Yaniv Voller, 'Kurdish Oil Politics in Iraq: Contested Sovereignty and Unilateralism', *Middle East Policy* 20, 1 (2013), pp. 68–82.

[13] Ryan Griffiths, 'Secession and the Invisible Hand of the International System', *Review of International Studies* 40, 3 (2014), pp. 559–81. In fact, as this book well demonstrates,

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postcolonial governments' and their colonial predecessors' methods of pacifying rebels cannot be seen as coincidental.

The tendency to overlook this transformation of the postcolonial actors – of the incumbents into (at least quasi-) colonial administrators and of the separatists into anti-colonial liberation activists – is closely linked with the way colonialism, anti-colonialism and decolonisation are perceived in the literature. To an extent, the first-generation national liberation movement members turned postcolonial elites have achieved a great victory in the debate over the definitions of colonialism, imperialism and decolonisation. This definition has narrowed colonialism and imperialism down to the European occupation and exploitation of Asian, African and Middle Eastern people – and those in the Americas in previous centuries. Consequently, it has also narrowed the term 'decolonisation' to the response of the colonised subjects to the European presence. However, the resort of postcolonial governments to colonial practices and the turn of postcolonial separatist movements into anti-colonial discourses and practices put this understanding into question. Recent works have begun questioning this traditional reading of colonialism and decolonisation, and this questioning is intertwined with the alternative (or rather supplementary) approach to postcolonial violence that this book advances. The following section, then, elaborates on this suggestion of rethinking colonialism and decolonisation.

Postcolonial Separatist Wars and the Challenges to Decolonisation

The task of challenging existing perceptions of colonialism, anti-colonialism and decolonisation may seem overly ambitious at first sight. After all, these interpretations were established during decades of discussions and contestation and to an extent have become a consensus. Yet, this book highlights the critique of this consensus by those who have felt excluded from shaping the new order that the demise of European colonialism had created. When the Iraqi Kurdish, Southern Sudanese and other movements began presenting themselves as anti-colonial movements fighting against a reincarnation of colonialism,[14] they did not

under changing circumstances, liberation movements, including the ones in Iraqi Kurdistan and Southern Sudan, have embraced new methods, such as state and capacity building.

[14] Here a distinction must be made between these movements' idea of traditional colonialism being practiced by new actors and the idea of neo-colonialism, namely a reality 'where the former colonial or dominant power continues to wield exaggerated influence even after decolonization and the establishment of an indigenous regime'. Juan R. I. Cole, *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's 'Urabi Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 3.

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simply challenge their governments/adversaries. They questioned the whole definition of colonialism and decolonisation. By challenging these institutions, they also disputed the existing international order and the norms about who is entitled to legitimacy and recognition as members of the international society of states. Thus, the second-generation liberation movements adopted the dual nature of the first-generation liberation movements, seeking to change not only the domestic order imposed on them following the withdrawal of European powers but also the international order that legitimised their predicament. Therefore, they sustained one of the basic features of liberation ideologies, namely advancing that 'internal change alone is not a sufficient condition for independence'.[15] The postcolonial governments, by turning to use practices that characterised colonial rule, centring not only on the use of crude force but also on identity politics and the fracturing of the community fighting for self-determination, ended up strengthening the rebels' case about the prevalence of old colonialism practiced by new actors.

The contemporary understanding and study of colonialism and decolonisation is so ubiquitous that it might seem redundant to describe it. Nevertheless, for the purpose of clarity, the literature in all fields has generally treated colonialism and imperialism, and subsequently decolonisation, as a series of events, confined in time and space, that have ended altogether in the second part of the twentieth century. *Colonialism* here refers to the occupation and exploitation of one territory by another, often through the sending of settlers from the colonial metropole. The literature in the field has accepted this broad understanding of colonialism, at least in theory. In practice, much of the key scholarship on colonialism has confined it almost exclusively to the European powers and their incursions, occupation and exploitation of overseas territories in the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Thus, Juan Cole associates the practice of colonialism, in contrast with *colonies*, with European expansionism when he states that 'in the Middle East in particular, colonies often existed before colonialism'.[16] Even those who have offered a broader definition of colonialism that was not confined to particular actors ended up discussing colonialism as associated primarily with European expansionism. Ania Loomba, although presenting colonialism and imperialism as institutions with long historical roots, qualified this statement in that 'European travels ushered in new and different kinds of colonial practices which altered the whole globe in a way that these other colonialisms did not.'[17]

[15] Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades*, p. 42. [16] Ibid.
[17] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 1998), p. 9. George Steinmetz, for instance, defined colonialism as 'the annexation of a territory by people with ties to a foreign state who perceive the conquered population as culturally

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If colonialism and imperialism have been narrowed down in the literature mainly to the discussion of European expansionism, then decolonisation has been mainly limited to the rise of Asian, African and Middle Eastern peoples against the yoke of European rule. Prasenjit Duara, for example, describes decolonisation as a process that took place in 'Asia and Africa from the early years of the twentieth century until the 1960s'.[18] Raymond Betts has labelled decolonisation as 'a clutch of fitful activities and events, played out in conference rooms, acted out in protests mounted in city streets, fought over in jungles and mountains'. According to Betts, Britain's return of Hong Kong to China made it 'certain ... [that] in the political sense of the word, decolonization is over and done with'.[19] David Strang has referred to decolonisation as an event taking place between 1870 and 1987, in which '130 colonial dependencies of Western states became recognized independent states or were fully incorporated as parts of sovereign states during the twentieth century'.[20] Brian Urquhart, the former Undersecretary-General of the United Nations, suggested that 'decolonization was virtually completed within thirty years [of its inception]'.[21]

This seeming consensus around the meaning of colonialism and decolonisation is not coincidental. It reflects the triumph of the first generation of liberation movements in limiting the definition of colonialism and imperialism to European practices and hence preventing other forms of exploitation from being challenged on the same grounds. I elaborate on this in more detail in Chapter 2, examining the environment in which postcolonial violence emerged, but this point deserves some attention at this stage. Throughout the consolidation of the global first-generation anti-colonial movement, especially in important milestones, such as the 1955 Bandung Conference and in sessions and discussions at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), leaders of the anti-colonial movement generally rejected the labelling of non-Western European powers as colonialist or imperialist. One example is the objection among anti-colonial leaders to equate Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe and Central Asia with European colonialism, in spite of ardent demands by

distant and inferior. Annexation is followed by efforts to appropriate the resources of the colony and to dominate its inhabitants in an ongoing way, that is, by a state apparatus'. In Steinmetz, '"The Devil's Handwriting": Precolonial Discourse, Ethnographic Acuity, and Cross-Identification in German Colonialism', *Comparative Study of Society & History* 30, 1 (2003), p. 42. Yet, in the same work he discussed mainly 'European colonizers' and colonialism as 'European colonial despotism'.

[18] Duara, 'Introduction', p. 1. [19] Betts, *Decolonization*, p. 1.

[20] David Strang, 'From Dependency to Sovereignty: An Event History Analysis of Decolonization 1870–1987', *American Sociological Review* 55, 6 (1990), p. 846.

[21] Urquhart, *Decolonization and World Peace*, p. 2.

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members of the movement, such as Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the Philippines and Pakistan.[22] In later discussions, leaders of what had by then transformed into the Third World played a significant part in sustaining the ideas of territorial integrity at the expense of the right to self-determination of indigenous people. Newly liberated African states in particular feared for their survival amid European pressures. Hence, they supported the introduction of principles and legal tools that aimed to pre-empt any challenge to postcolonial boundaries. Their fear of border changes eventually manifested in the *uti possidetis* principle and the UNGA Resolution 1514 (Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples).[23] This narrowing of the concept of colonialism, in theory and practice, has meant for indigenous people, such as the Kurds in Iraq and Black African communities in Southern Sudan, their right to self-determination and statehood. At the first stages of the process, though, these groups were overall less conscious of this future development. It only struck them when they began to make their demands for their right to self-determination. And it is in this sense that the demands made by the Kurds, Southern Sudanese and others have come to challenge conceptions of colonialism and decolonisation.

Although these movements contested (through action) the international order and norms of recognition and statehood, it is only in recent years that scholarship in the social sciences has come to question the exclusive association of modern colonialism and decolonisation with European powers. First signs for the critical thinking on colonialism and decolonisation appeared in the 1960s–1970s, with the scholarship on *internal colonialism* in the fields of sociology and development. This body of work advanced the idea that the inequalities, exploitation, discrimination and uneven development that characterised the relations between European colonial metropoles and their colonies existed not only in overseas empires but also within states, between the centre and the periphery and between majorities and minorities. Michael Hechter, in one of the foundational works in this literature, sketched the process leading to internal colonialism:

> The spatially uneven wave of modernization over state territory creates relatively advanced and less advanced groups. As a consequence of this initial fortuitous advantage, there is crystallization of the unequal distribution of resources and power between the two groups. The superordinate group, or core, seeks to

[22] Mary Knatchbull Keynes, 'The Bandung Conference', *International Relations* 1, 8 (1957), pp. 366–7; Lisandro E. Claudio, 'The Anti-Communist Third World: Carlos Romulo and the Other Bandung', *Southeast Asian Studies* 4, 1 (2015), pp. 125–56.

[23] Mark Pearcey, *The Exclusions of Civilization: Indigenous Peoples in the Story of International Society* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 97–115.

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stabilize and monopolize its advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalization of the existing stratification system. It attempts to regulate the allocation of social roles such that those roles commonly defined as having high prestige are reserved for its members.[24]

This body of work has concerned racial and ethnic inequalities caused by intentionally unequal development policies.[25] Much of the attention in this literature was paid to North America and Western Europe.[26] Because of their focus on economic and developmental inequalities and grievances, these works mostly detached the concept of colonialism from its spatial aspect and the relevance of territory for both the rulers and the rebels. Consequently, they overlooked the interplay between so-called external and internal colonialism and did not develop a comprehensive theory of resistance to internal colonialism. Moreover, the early literature on internal colonialism may have questioned the paradigm of colonialism; nevertheless, it has done so exogenously, overlooking the actors and their conceptions and outlook of colonialism, anti-colonialism, liberation and sovereignty.

More work in this direction has taken place in recent decades. New studies in the 1990s and early 2000s have identified the influences of former colonial institutions on the actions of postcolonial government and of the first-generation anti-colonial movements and their strategies in the new liberation movements.[27] In her study of Egyptian presence and efforts to establish control over Sudan during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Eve Troutt Powell maintains that such presence should be understood as a different form of colonialism. Such colonialism, Troutt Powell asserts, was unique in that it was practiced by an elite which was itself subjected to colonial rule. The Egyptian elite came to treat the local Sudanese population in the same way it was treated by British colonisers,

[24] Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536–1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 9.

[25] John R. Chávez, 'Aliens in Their Native Lands: The Persistence of Internal Colonial Theory', *Journal of World History* 22, 4 (2011), pp. 785–809.

[26] Robert Blauner, 'Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt', *Social Problems* 16, 4 (1969), pp. 393–408; Kenneth McRoberts, 'Internal Colonialism: The Case of Quebec', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, 3 (1979), pp. 293–318; Ramón A. Gutiérrez, 'Internal Colonialism: An American Theory of Race', *Du Bois Review* 1, 2 (2004), pp. 281–95; Damien Short, 'Reconciliation and the Problem of Internal Colonialism', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26, 3 (2005), pp. 267–82; Charles Pinderhughes, 'Toward a New Theory of Internal Colonialism', *Socialism and Democracy* 25, 1 (2011), pp. 235–56.

[27] Alexis Heraclides briefly described Southern Sudan in his 1987 paper as an internal colony fitting into Hechter's definition of the concept. Heraclides, 'Janus or Sisyphus? The Southern Problem of the Sudan', *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25, 2 (1987), p. 217. However, Heraclides did not elaborate on the empirical implications of this theory.

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namely belittling Sudanese independent identity, exploiting the country's natural resources and engaging in slavery (though its role in slave trading had predated the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium).[28] Awet Weldemichael has portrayed what he defines as Third World colonialism and liberation strategies. Investigating the cases of Ethiopia's occupation of Eritrea and Indonesia's rule over East Timor, Weldemichael has highlighted the exploitative and racist nature of Ethiopian and Indonesian rule over their colonies. As he puts it, 'in pursuit of their own national interest, or those of small ruling elite, important African and Asian powers implemented policies toward weaker entities that were no less colonial and sought no less imperially grandiose than Europe's'.[29] The liberation strategies of the Eritreans and East Timorese, according to Weldemichael, were a response to what they saw as their colonisation by these imperialist powers. An edited volume by Dittmar Schorkowitz et al. has urged students of colonialism to dissociate it from overseas occupation and pay attention to what they have defined as internal and continental colonialism.[30]

In a more recent critique of the scope of decolonisation in the literature, Jonathan Crossen demonstrates how ideas developed by the anti-colonial movement shaped the policies of Canadian Indigenous international organisations operating in Canada. Crossen, in his historical account of the internationalisation of Indigenous activism, underlines the interaction between indigenous people from Canada with African liberation activists through their travel to the African former colonies and meeting with their leaders. It was these meetings, Crossen contends, which drove the Indigenous people to view themselves as subjected to internal colonialism.[31] Taking a different perspective and focusing on the actions of postcolonial elites, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni maintains that gaining a comprehensive understanding of the scale of decolonisation requires a 'border gnosis', which 'privileges a reading and interpretation of the modern world system from the ex-colonised people's position'.[32] Ndlovu-Gatsheni's perspective criticises the conceptualisation of

[28] Troutt Powell, *A Different Shade*. Douglas Johnson, a prominent historian of South Sudan, also described the reality in the Condominium as that of dual colonialism. See Johnson, *South Sudan*, pp. 99–115. Nevertheless, Johnson does not develop this idea to engage with the theoretical framework of colonialism.

[29] Weldemichael, *Third World Colonialism*, p. 2.

[30] Dittmar Schorkowitz, John R. Chávez and Ingo W. Schröder (eds.), *Shifting Forms of Continental Colonialism: Unfinished Struggles and Tensions* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[31] Jonathan Crossen, 'Another Wave of Anti-Colonialism: The Origins of Indigenous Internationalism', *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d'histoire* 52, 3 (2017), pp. 533–59.

[32] Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Fiftieth Anniversary of Decolonisation in Africa: A Moment of Celebration or Critical Reflection?' *Third World Quarterly* 33, 1 (2012), p. 73. The

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colonialism by African elites, stressing that the withdrawal of European empires from their colonial possessions did not mean liberation for the colonial subjects. The colonies, Ndlovu-Gatsheni notes, have remained subjected to neo-colonial exploitation. At best, they were emancipated in the liberal sense of the word.[33] Still, Ndlovu-Gatsheni's idea is relevant to this book, as he underlines the nature of the postcolonial state in Africa as a 'tool of domination'. This tendency towards domination eventually alienated elites that had felt excluded from state institutions. Although addressing secessionist elites only briefly, Ndlovu-Gatsheni identifies the postcolonial elites' eagerness to preserve colonial institutions for their interest of dominating the new states. This perception, in turn, has ended up driving these elites to see themselves as colonised again, this time by their governments.

These accounts have identified the fluid nature of colonialism and decolonisation. They point out colonialism and anti-colonialism as international developments that are not necessarily confined in time and space. More importantly, they have looked at the postcolonial liberation wars from the perspective of the liberation movements themselves. Nevertheless, they leave more room to theorise about the intergenerational connections and exchanges and the aspects of continuity between the campaign against European colonialism that had taken place in the first half of the twentieth century and the postcolonial separatist wars that emerged in the second half of that century. Even more so, while focusing mostly on the exploitation and violence that the postcolonial governments practiced, these accounts did not problematise enough the nature of decolonisation. The need to expand our reading of decolonisation was captured by the historians of colonialism Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson, who have noted the following:

> Less theorized than its cousins imperialism and colonialism, decolonization is widely framed as a relatively discrete process. Yet ... decolonization's conceptual and chronological boundaries have long been, and remain, decidedly fuzzy. One thing that unites recent if somewhat diffuse scholarship on the 'end of empire' is the tendency to increase its geographical and temporal span .... Indeed, whereas past scholarship once presented decolonization as neatly packaged and compartmentalized by empire, region, and period, we broaden

concept of border gnosis is taken from Walter Mignolo's work. Mignolo stresses that 'Border gnoseology is a critical reflection on knowledge production from both the interior borders of the modern/colonial world system (imperial conflicts, hegemonic languages, directionality of translations, etc.) and its exterior borders (imperial conflicts with cultures being colonized, as well as the subsequent stages of independence or decolonization)'. Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 33.

[33] Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Fiftieth Anniversary of Decolonisation', p. 75.

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decolonization's conceptual, geographical, and temporal boundaries in ways that force us to rethink what decolonization actually was.[34]

Part of the solution to this gap in theorising about decolonisation, according to Thomas and Thompson, is to historicise this process, namely to resist 'the temptation to read history backwards, starting from the known endpoint of empire to assemble the causal factors that inexorably brought about colonial collapse'.[35] Instead, they suggest that 'In order to understand what decolonization is, we need to lay bare the various processes involved. Together these processes were to question the legitimacy of an entrenched order of empires and to pave the way for a new order of nation-states to take its place.'[36] Thomas and Thompson, then, recognise as well the need rethink decolonisation (and, implicitly, colonialism). Albeit that, their reference to decolonisation as a 'process' and the resort to historiographical methods end up overlooking the notion of second-generation liberation struggles, and the impact that the anti-colonial struggle against European imperialism had on postcolonial violence. Even if Thomas and Thompson call for a more inclusive approach to these processes, it relies on exploring it as a chronological process.

In questioning the traditional conceptualisation of decolonisation, this book suggests a new approach to studying colonialism and decolonisation. This line of research does not necessarily contradict the findings of previous works but complements them. The book argues that colonialism and decolonisation could be better understood if we also treat them as sets of practices and roles. These sets of practices and roles were readily available to the actors engaged in the separatist conflicts that broke out in the postcolonial states, shaping the self-perceptions, discourse and strategies of these actors.

Beyond Path Dependence: Practices, Roles and Postcolonial Violence

Broadly speaking, one of the key themes of this book is that of continuity from the first generation of liberation struggles to the second generation and its implications for the contours of postcolonial separatist violence. Admittedly, the idea that change, as significant as it may be, does not inevitably mean a complete cut with the past is by no means new to the study of international politics and history, and certainly not to the study of

[34] Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson, 'Rethinking Decolonization: A New Research Agenda for the Twenty-First Century', in Thomas and Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 3.
[35] Ibid., p. 6. [36] Ibid., pp. 6–7.

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empires, their collapse and legacies. Karen Barkey has argued as follows in her study of the post–Ottoman and Habsburgian environments:

> The collapse of an empire leaves several legacies for the political entities that develop in its aftermath. Among these are social and economic structures, state institutions of a certain nature and strength, a particular set of elites, demographics, and an overall political cultural legacy. Unless an empire is destroyed through revolution, much of its social structure is reproduced in the post-imperial context.[37]

Other studies of postcolonial states have sought to trace the survival, impact and transformations of colonial legacies in former colonies. Already in 1978, Cynthia Enloe identified imperial bureaucratic legacies as affecting racial and ethnic policies in Africa and Latin America.[38] In two of the most influential studies of colonial legacies and postcolonial states, Mahmood Mamdani has highlighted the survival of the so-called customary tribal courts that the colonial authorities formed in the colonies[39] and the different citizenship categories designed by the colonial authorities.[40] Tracing the process through which these colonial institutions endured in postcolonial settings, Mamdani has been able to explain ethnic, rural-urban, and tribal dynamics in former colonies.

Aspects of continuity have been traced not only to the states but also to the postcolonial liberation movements and their conduct. Amid the tendency in the literature on international relations in Africa to pay close attention to either domestic sources of violence or exogenous intervention during the Cold War, Philip Roessler and Harry Verhoeven, in their study of the events leading to the eruption of Africa's Great War in 1996, have sought to 're-establish the centrality of liberation ideology, liberation conflicts and liberation movements – in short, liberation politics – to the study of the international relations of Africa'.[41] The African liberation movements that struggled against European colonialism, according to Roessler and Verhoeven, advanced ideologies that served as the foundation for both postcolonial African states and pan-Africanism. Their legacy, therefore, is

[37] Karen Barkey, 'Thinking about Consequences of Empire', in Barkey and Mark Von Hagen (eds.), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), p. 101.
[38] Cynthia H. Enloe, 'Ethnicity, Bureaucracy and State-Building in Africa and Latin America', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1, 3 (1978), pp. 336–51.
[39] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[40] Mahmood Mamdani, 'Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, 4 (2001), pp. 651–64.
[41] Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades*, p. 15.

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'critical to explaining patterns of political change and conflict, especially internationalized civil war, in post–Second World War Africa'.[42] Jonathan Fisher has documented the intense interaction between different generations of liberation fighters. He shows how, through these interactions, revolutionary rebels in the 1980s in Uganda, Rwanda, Eritrea and Ethiopia adopted identities, practices and strategies that were developed by pan-African anti-colonial rebels in previous decades.[43] William Reno, too, tracks the changes in rebel strategies to socialisation and engagement between different generations of rebels. Reno views the formation of educational institutions in Africa as the main forum for the intergenerational exchanges of ideas and the rise of reformist and liberation movements in the 1970s and 1980s.[44] Through such interactions, rebels of all ideological backgrounds were exposed to ideas coming from abroad – especially anti-imperialist ideologies. Given the different motivations guiding the rebels and their leadership, 'Rebels therefore evolve and develop in ways that reflect how these leaders establish links with followers and how they collect and then manage resources.'[45]

These works further underscore the relevance of path dependence to studying postcolonial states and politics. Indeed, as noted earlier, any discussion of continuity and change in these states following independence is bound to bring up the question of path dependence. The survival of colonial institutions and the impact of colonial legacies on the newly independent states have gained extensive attention from historians, sociologists and developmental economists studying the political and socio-economic realities in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.[46] These works have mostly focused on economic development and the emergence (or lack thereof) of democratic institutions.[47] Conflict studies have received relatively little attention in this field, but recent works have identified the significance of colonial institutions for understanding the outbreak of violence. Shivaji Mukherjee, in his work on the role of colonial institutions in affecting the unfolding of Maoist insurgency in India, has stressed that 'to be able to understand the deeper causes of conflict, we need to

[42] Ibid., pp. 28–9. [43] Fisher, *East Africa after Liberation*.
[44] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*. [45] Ibid., p. 34.
[46] Alexander De Juan and Jan Henryk Pierskalla, 'The Comparative Politics of Colonialism and Its Legacies: An Introduction', *Politics & Society* 45, 2 (2017), pp. 159–72.
[47] Matthew Lange, 'Developmental Crises: A Comparative-Historical Analysis of State-Building in Colonial Botswana and Malaysia', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47, 1 (2009), pp. 1–27; Gita Subrahmanyam, 'Ruling Continuities: Colonial Rule, Social Forces and Path Dependence in British India and Africa'. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 44, 1 (2006), pp. 84–117; Kristin Eck, 'The Origins of Policing Institutions: Legacies of Colonial Insurgency', *Journal of Peace Research* 55, 2 (2018), pp. 147–60.

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look back to historical institutions that often determine and influence the subnational variation of these more proximate causes of insurgency'.[48]

One of the fundamental questions debated by path dependence theorists (and their opponents) is that of costs to change: could it be that both parties to the conflict, governments and rebels, continue to pursue the policies and practices of their predecessors because this is the least costly option? The idea underlying these questions is that 'institutions persist as long as either a majority of individuals and groups or particularly influential elites see the costs of leaving the equilibrium as higher as the potential benefits'.[49] Following this logic, one may assume that the incumbents in Iraq and Sudan resorted to colonial practices and methods of suppression because these institutions had already existed and had been used by the colonial authorities. Experimenting in abandoning or revising these institutions and practices would have been too costly for governments already struggling to stabilise their countries and economies. Failure to defeat the rebels could have cost the lives of soldiers, risked alienating their supporters and made them appear weak to domestic and foreign rivals. In a similar vein, one may suggest that for postcolonial separatist rebels, the legacies of liberation wars against European colonialism and the success of armed resistance rendered alternative modes of action underexplored and riskier.

This book does not dismiss the explanatory power of path dependence. However, it adopts a far more nuanced interpretation and usage of it. Path dependence is not simply the idea that history matters. James Mahoney, setting an agenda for historical sociologists, has warned that path dependence is not merely about tracing 'outcomes back to temporally remote causes'.[50] Rather, 'path dependence characterizes specifically those historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties'.[51] Mahoney broadly distinguishes between self-reinforcing and reactive sequences. *Self-reinforcing sequences* are processes in which 'initial steps in a particular direction induce further movement in the same direction such that over time it becomes difficult or impossible to reverse direction'.[52] In contrast, in *reactive sequences*, 'inertia involves reaction and counterreaction mechanisms that give an event chain an

[48] Shivaji Mukherjee, 'Colonial Origins of Maoist Insurgency in India: Historical Institutions and Civil War', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62, 10 (2018), pp. 2232–74.
[49] De Juan and Pierskalla, 'The Comparative Politics', p. 164.
[50] James Mahoney, 'Path Dependence in Historical Sociology', *Theory and Society* 29, 4 (2000), p. 507.
[51] Ibid., p. 508. [52] Ibid., p. 512.

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"inherent logic" in which one event "naturally" leads to another event'.[53] In such sequences of events, various dynamics, or 'breakpoints', eventually affect the final outcomes of processes.[54]

Applying Mahoney's approach, the book challenges the perception of developments of postcolonial legacies, particularly when it comes to conflict, as a linear process in which the nature of violence is predetermined. Such an assumption risks overlooking the heated debates among postcolonial elites about the realities of the new states, the sociopolitical and cultural experiments taking place in many of them, and the changes in the experiences of many of these states. Both Iraq and Sudan demonstrate that cost-benefit calculations are insufficient in explaining the resurgence of colonial methods of control and counter-insurgency in former colonies. The Iraqi and Sudanese incumbents, throughout the first years of independence, wished to revise colonial practices, eradicate old institutions and apply new visions on the path to modernisation. Like many of their contemporaries in newly independent states, officials, intellectuals, civil servants and military and police officers had taken measures to abolish colonial legacies and especially eradicate the categorisation and classification of the population that served the interests of colonial authorities. A good example for this revision of colonial policies is the attempted Arabisation project that took place in both countries (which in Sudan also involved an emphasis on Islamisation). The motivation for these policies was that a divided nation and the prevalence of parochial identities are colonial strategies, aiming to hamper social and political cohesion.[55] Revisions of colonial methods and policies had taken place in the fields of security, policing and even counter-insurgency. In Sudan, the police command invested efforts in transforming itself, including in the periphery, as an attempt to shed off its association with colonial rule.[56] In Iraq, too, the Hashemite monarchy sought to relinquish British reliance on tribal policing and militias in the periphery,[57] also as part of its modernisation endeavours.

[53] Ibid., p. 511. [54] Ibid., p. 529.

[55] I discuss these campaigns of Arabisation and Sudanisation in Chapter 3. An important point, though, is that this campaign of transforming the identity of non-Arab and (in the case of Sudan) non-Muslim minorities also entailed an element of civilising mission, which resembled the notion echoed by the European empires. But at least at the declarative level, these policies were introduced to induce unity in the new states.

[56] William James Berridge, 'Under the Shadow of the Regime: The Contradictions of Policing in Sudan, c.1924–1989', unpublished PhD dissertation, Durham University, 2011.

[57] Ariel I. Ahram, *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 57.

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These policies did not necessarily aim to better the lives of non-Arab minorities. In many ways, they eventually contributed to the deterioration into violence. Nevertheless, they did diverge from colonial policies and tried, at least for some time, to present different visions of governance and social contracts. And they indicate that postcolonial ruling elites did not pursue colonial policies out of hand. There were attempts to consider their implications and find alternatives. Yet, when the crises they were facing intensified, the governments in question ended up resorting to familiar patterns, which they had absorbed from their colonial predecessors. Focusing on colonial institutional legacies is insufficient for grasping the nature of the postcolonial states. Most significantly, the existing literature has generally tended to pay less attention to the mechanisms that enabled colonial institutions and practices to have survived. The postcolonial governments that were born out of the struggle against European colonialism did not see themselves as continuing these same colonial legacies and institutions. Their *raison d'être* was abolishing these institutions. Enloe, in her analysis of the persistence of colonial divide-and-rule policies as part of postcolonial states' counter-insurgency efforts, recognised the weakness of applying path dependence instinctively to explaining such policies, noting that 'It would be a mistake to portray the uses of ethnic divide and rule in contemporary African countries as merely colonial leftovers. It is more accurate to see ethnicity as an active ingredient in numerous state-building efforts.'[58]

A similar point can be made with regards to postcolonial insurgents. The notion that rebels demanding the right to self-determination embraced certain practices, policies and strategies merely because of their prevalence in previous decades overlooks the existence of alternate strategies and options. Both the first- and second-generation anti-colonial struggles had violent and non-violent trends. The Convention People's Party, led by Kwame Nkrumah, who would serve as an important inspiration for Southern Sudanese leaders, carried out a mostly non-violent struggle against British rule in the Gold Coast. This campaign, influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of resistance,[59] was heavily criticised by other liberation activists in the country.[60] Even in Algeria, a symbol of armed resistance to colonial rule, the struggle against French imperialism had witnessed episodes of non-violent protest. These acts of resistance

[58] Enloe, 'Ethnicity, Bureaucracy', p. 345.
[59] Evan White, 'Kwame Nkrumah: Cold War Modernity, Pan-African Ideology and the Geopolitics of Development', *Geopolitics* 8, 2 (2003), pp. 99–124.
[60] Jeffrey S. Ahlman, 'The Algerian Question in Nkrumah's Ghana, 1958–1960: Debating "Violence" and "Nonviolence" in African Decolonization', *Africa Today* 57, 2 (2010), pp. 67–84.

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involved mass emigration, boycotting and rejection of French educational institutions associated with the civilising mission.[61] In fact, even the choice of the separatist path cannot be taken for granted. At least until the 1990s,[62] most of the conflicts in former colonies were reformist, to use Reno's categorisation of rebel movements, rather than separatist, seeking to overthrow oppressive regimes and increase their communities' role in policymaking.[63] As detailed in Chapter 4, even the forefathers of the Iraqi Kurdish and Southern Sudanese liberation movements had initially striven for accommodation with and integration into the new states. Thus, in the case of the postcolonial liberation movements, too, path dependence must be qualified and used carefully.

It is here that paying attention to practices and roles and viewing colonialism and decolonisation as sets of practices becomes handy. One of the first to advance in this direction is Jonathan Fisher, in his study of the rise of revolutionary movements in East Africa. Fisher makes a sharp observation of the nature of post-liberation governments and is one of the first to capture the complex nature of colonial legacies. As Fisher observes, 'While most revolutionary movements-turned-governments portray themselves as representing a fundamental break with past modes of governance and diplomacy, few are exogenous to the pre-liberation states and political cultures they came to overthrow.' Consequently, when examining liberation movements-turned-governments, Fisher cautions us 'not to overlook the durability and resilience of ideas and practices of statehood even within polities where their physical architectures were decimated'.[64] Fisher's work is on movements that emerged in the 1980s, and while they have used the language of liberation, they probably fall more neatly into the category of reformist movements. Furthermore, building on Fisher's findings, the importance of practices and ideas and subsequently self-perceptions and roles can explain not only post-liberation governments but also those challenging them and the dynamics between these belligerents.

[61] Malika Rahal, 'Algeria: Nonviolent Resistance against French Colonialism, 1830s–1950s', in Maciej J. Bartkowski (ed.), *Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013), pp. 107–23.

[62] Monty Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr have identified in their survey of armed conflicts in the 1990s an upward trend in self-determination conflicts in Asia and Africa. Marshall and Gurr, *Peace and Conflict 2003: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy* (College Park: University of Maryland, Center for International Development and Conflict Management, 2003), p. 32.

[63] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*. Reformist movements seeking to overthrow dictatorial, single-party rulers, in Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Rwanda also used the discourse of liberation. Nonetheless, liberation in these cases referred primarily to liberating the system from corrupt leaders allied with imperialist powers. Fisher, *East Africa After Liberation*, p. 2.

[64] Fisher, *East Africa after Liberation*, pp. 13–14.

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That international politics, much like domestic politics, social life and other human activities, involves a myriad of practices, formal and informal, has gained a growing interest in the International Relations literature. Barry Barnes has described the meaning of practice in social life as 'socially recognized forms of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly'.[65] Based on this definition, Barnes has urged students of society and politics to always 'ask what disposes people to enact the practices they do, how and when they do; and their aims, their lived experience and their inherited knowledge will surely figure amongst the factors of interest here'.[66] Students of international politics, too, have adhered to this call, moving to argue that 'actors are driven less by abstract forces – such as the national interest, preferences, and social norms – than by practical imperatives, habits, and embodied dispositions'.[67] Seeking to mitigate the growing importance that the field was giving to discourse and language in the early 2000s,[68] with the budding prevalence of constructivist theories, International Relations scholars have moved to emphasise the place of practices in international interactions. Emmanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot have defined practices in international politics as 'patterned actions that are embedded in particular organized contexts and, as such, are articulated into specific types of action and are socially developed through learning and training'.[69] If action is 'specific and located in time', practices 'are general classes of action which, although situated in a social context, are not limited to any specific enacting'.[70] Practices do not stand on their own. Actors' policies and decisions cannot be explained solely based on the practices they observe; it is in combination with other factors such as 'intersubjective structures, material forces, etc.' that practices are crucial for generating transformations in social life.[71] Driving as well to a similar conclusion, Ted Hopf has stressed that the attention to practice, or habits, in international politics does not mean that 'consequentialism and appropriateness are absent'; rather, the proposition in incorporating practice into the scholarship is that 'there are domains of world politics, especially areas

[65] Barry Barnes, 'Practice as Collective Action', in Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike von Savigny (eds.), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2001), p. 27.
[66] Ibid., pp. 29–30.
[67] David McCourt, 'Practice Theory and Relationalism as the New Constructivism', *International Studies Quarterly* 60, 4 (2016), p. 475.
[68] E.g. Crawford, *Argument and Change*; Thomas Risse, '"Let's Argue!": Communicative Action in World Politics', *International Organization* 54, 1 (2000), pp. 1–39.
[69] Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, 'International Practices: Introduction and Framework', in Adler and Pouliot (eds.), *International Practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 6.
[70] Ibid. [71] Ibid., p. 18.

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of long-term relationships of cooperation and conflict, where we should expect habit, and not instrumental or normative rationality, to apply'.[72]

The importance of practice has been identified in various international interactions.[73] And it is also persuasive in highlighting the events following the collapse of European empires, the formation of independent states and the ensuing violence that broke out in some of these states. Both colonial rule and anti-colonial resistance could be understood as practices. Colonial authorities constantly faced changing circumstances and perceptions of threat. And they regularly came up with new strategies or ways to cope with the pressure coming from below. Their measures, as the book elaborates in the following chapters, included a repertoire of actions of different degrees of violence: co-option of the leaders of native opposition movements; forced demographic changes, including ethnic cleansing of native populations and the resettlement of other, loyalist communities in their place; dividing the local population by manipulating socio-economic cleavages and parochial identities (tribal, sectarian or ethnic); and crude violence, at the extreme cases leading even to genocide. These policies were not always institutionalised; the European empires, chiefly at their later stages, emphasised their contribution to the building and modernisation of their colonies. But oppression and exploitation were inseparable from daily lives in the colonial empires. This is hardly surprising for anyone familiar with the history of colonialism. The persistence of these responses in the postcolonial environment, on the other hand, has not been widely discussed and theorised. Similarly, the responses of the colonised to colonial subjugation evolved in reaction to these forms of domination. They spread among various groups, eventually gaining consensus as these movements began to coordinate their actions at the global level, in conferences, meetings and through economic and political cooperation.

[72] Ted Hopf, 'The Logic of Habit in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 16, 4 (2010), p. 540.

[73] Karine Côté-Boucher, Federica Infantino and Mark B. Salter, 'Border Security as Practice: An Agenda for Research', *Security Dialogue* 45, 3 (2014), pp. 195–208; Nora El Qadim, 'Postcolonial Challenges to Migration Control: French-Moroccan Cooperation Practices on Forced Returns', *Security Dialogue* 45, 3 (2014), pp. 242–61; Erik Voeten, 'The Practice of Political Manipulation', in Adler and Pouliot, *International Practices*, pp. 255–79; Finn Stepputat, 'Knowledge Production in the Security-Development Nexus: An Ethnographic Reflection', *Security Dialogue* 43, 5 (2012), pp. 439–55; Ted Hopf, *Reconstructing the Cold War: The Early Years, 1945–1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Vincent Pouliot, *International Security in Practice: The Politics of NATO–Russia Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Iver B. Neumann, 'To Be a Diplomat', *International Studies Perspectives* 6, 1 (2005), pp. 72–93.

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Practices, however, much as norms and ideas, 'do not float freely'.[74] They are learned and absorbed through interaction between actors, always in relation to the context and circumstances of the interaction. Pouliot, in his study of the development of security communities, namely regions where the risk of large-scale violence becomes unlikely, contends that 'most of what people do, in world politics as in any other social field, does not derive from conscious deliberation or thoughtful reflection .... Instead, practices are the result of inarticulate, practical knowledge that makes what is to be done appear "self-evident" or commonsensical.'[75] When actors communicate and interact with others at the international level, they do not only observe unfolding events; they also learn about the historical background and processes leading to these events. The process of learning is often implicit. Actors do not partake in formal training on international practices. In an observation about international diplomacy, Pouliot stresses that most diplomats 'never got trained in the formal schemes of international law'. Most of the time they 'simply replicate, in and through practice, the done things in the international society (or else they may face social or political sanctions). In fact, most of the complex workings of the diplomatic practice rest on a stock of practical knowledge that is tacitly learnt.'[76] As in most social fields, practices are naturalised through such processes because 'people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives'.[77] Erik Voeten notes that 'The focus on practice is especially useful because of its attention to background knowledge, because it weaves together discursive and material worlds and, most importantly, because it stresses that there are patterns of rhetoric and actions that create path dependency.'[78] Being a 'naturalised social force', practice 'authorises its own stories of what things should be like, thereby entrenching its authority. The practice speaks: "this is how we have always done things around here."'[79]

74 Thomas Risse-Kappen, 'Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War', *International Organization* 48, 2 (1994), pp. 185–214.
75 Vincent Pouliot, 'The Logic of Practicality: A Theory of Practice of Security Communities', *International Organization* 62, 2 (2008), p. 258.
76 Pouliot, 'The Logic of Practicality', p. 272.
77 Margaret R. Somers, 'The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach', *Theory and Society* 23, 5 (1994), p. 614.
78 Voeten, 'The Practice', p. 256.
79 Iver B. Neumann, 'Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn: The Case of Diplomacy', *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 31, 3 (2002), p. 636.

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In the case of the postcolonial separatist conflicts, intergenerational interaction was the setting in which both postcolonial governments and liberation movements absorbed ideas, norms and practices that eventually shaped the conflicts. The political elites in the newly independent states as well as the future leaders of the liberation movements that were to spring up in these states, were embedded in the international system of the first half of the twentieth century. Postcolonial rulers were the victims of European colonial oppression. But simultaneously, many of them were, at one time or another, part of the colonial systems, working in the colonial bureaucracy (in junior positions), serving in the colonial police or gaining their education at colonial schools and in the imperial metropoles. In turn, the leaders of postcolonial liberation movements closely witnessed the actions of their predecessors fighting against European imperialism. On many occasions, certainly in the case of the Kurds in Iraq, they took part in these efforts, along with their Arab compatriots. Both parties witnessed how the colonial empires responded to challenges in the colonies. They also observed the ways in which the colonial subjects resisted occupation and the strategies they developed to counter colonial oppression. For these participants in the postcolonial liberation wars, both colonial rule and anti-colonial resistance were background knowledge, or 'the inarticulate know-how from which reflexive and intentional deliberation becomes possible'.[80] They included practices that both of these categories of actors came to see as the natural response to resistance in the periphery (in the case of the postcolonial governments) or to 'foreign' occupation (in the case of the postcolonial liberation movements).

These practices naturally transformed throughout the transition from one generation to the other. It was not only the changing nature of the actors (i.e. the former colonised now turned colonisers) that affected the transformation. The changing local and international context, technological improvements, new means of communication and other factors inspired these changes. Theories of practice anticipate these transformations. When actors embrace practices, they necessarily adjust them, as well as to them:

> As the new practice is being adopted, two things happen. First, this new practice is made to fit in with other already established practices through omissions, additions and creations. These alterations are large enough to allow for the insertion of the new practice into the new domain, but not so large that they rupture the social tie to the authorising domain and effectively disable the new practice's service as conduit. Secondly, as the new practice is institutionalised in the sense of becoming a regular aspect of the social, it is also naturalised.[81]

[80] Pouliot, International Security in Practice, p. 11.
[81] Neumann, 'Returning Practice', p. 636.

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Actors, then, adopt and develop practices that they locate at the international level. These practices, nonetheless, are not disconnected from the ways in which actors perceive themselves and their place in international politics. Here, role conceptions in international politics become relevant. Roles, in all social fields, are sets of expectations and social categories that different actors have of themselves and others. They encompass beliefs, norms, understandings and, of course, practices in denoting how actors perceive self and other. In international politics, roles are shaped by 'the policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state and of the functions, if any, their state should perform ... [and] their "image" of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment'.[82] These roles are 'constituted by ego and alter expectations regarding the purpose of an actor in an organized group'.[83] They are proscribed by existing members of the system and are then performed by other actors, after a process of socialisation and interaction.[84] Because they are based on actors' perceptions of their environment's expectations, roles provide reasons, goals and justifications for actions. If practices and habits play a significant part in constituting and shaping decisions, commitments and rules, role perceptions in international politics rely on the existence of practices. Cameron Thies and Leslie Wehner have identified this point and the interconnectedness between roles and practices. Thies and Wehner suggest that bridging practice and role theories could benefit the study of international politics, in that examining how actors locate roles in the system means that they embrace practices not only through self-reflection but also through consideration of how others see them and expect them to operate based on the roles they assume and the circumstances under which they operate.[85] More importantly, focusing on roles compels students of practice to pay attention not only to daily occurrences but also to major global events.[86]

Role conceptions, too, have been pointed out as outcomes of interaction, socialisation and learning. Socialisation between actors enables them to witness what members of the system expect from others.[87] These

[82] Kal J. Holsti, 'National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy', *International Studies Quarterly* 14, 3 (1970), pp. 245–6.
[83] Vít Beneš and Sebastian Harnisch, 'Role Theory in Symbolic Interactionism: Czech Republic, Germany and the EU', *Cooperation and Conflict* 50, 1 (2015), p. 148.
[84] Holsti, 'National Role Conceptions', pp. 239–40.
[85] Cameron G. Thies and Leslie E. Wehner, 'The Role of Role Theory in International Political Economy', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, 6 (2019), pp. 720–1.
[86] Ibid., p. 721.
[87] Sebastian Harnisch, 'Conceptualizing in the Minefield: Role Theory and Foreign Policy Learning', *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, 1 (2012), pp. 47–69.

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expectations, nevertheless, are not 'thick rules and norms of conduct'.[88] Actors, especially if new to the system, are likely to interpret them through cues and demands from other actors or socialisers. This interpretation and the process through which actors identify which roles they choose to play in a given context reflect role location. Role location is affected by several factors, including role expectations, role cues and role demands. The expectations refer to the rights, privileges and duties assigned by members of the system to others, while cues are the signals that actors give others about their actions and behaviour in the social system.[89] And since systems or societies are usually asymmetrical, novices in the system are likely to seek for cues from actors they find more powerful or significant than themselves.[90] Once locating a role, actors will seek to behave in ways that reaffirm their identity.

Focusing on role in international politics, then, means accepting 'the assumption that the actor's mind-set is "theory-driven," i.e. that foreign policy-makers in general have a need to organize perceptions into a meaningful guide for behavior'.[91] Students of roles have traditionally associated them with state actors, such as a great power, leader or a reliable (faithful) ally.[92] Nonetheless, the spectrum of roles is quite broad. For example, and related to the subject of this research, Ryan Beasley and Juliet Kaarbo, when discussing 'pre-socialisation, suggest that sovereignty itself is a role conception. Actors that aspire to gain international sovereignty, namely to become fully recognised members of the state system, look for members of the system, whether states or international organisations, to give them cues and present their expectations of novices to the system. Once receiving these cues, these novices will seek to implement at least some of them.[93] The sovereign role has changed throughout time and has involved different cues and expectations, which has enabled both novices and existing actors to

[88] Cameron G. Thies, 'International Socialization Processes vs. Israeli National Role Conceptions: Can Role Theory Integrate IR Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis?' *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, 1 (2012), p. 26.

[89] Naomi Bailin Wish, 'Foreign Policy Makers and Their National Role Conceptions', *International Studies Quarterly* 24, 4 (1980), p. 534.

[90] Leslie Wehner and Cameron Thies 'Role Theory, Narratives, and Interpretation: The Domestic Contestation of Roles', *International Studies Review* 16, 3 (2014), p. 419.

[91] Lisbeth Aggestam, 'Role Theory and European Foreign Policy', in Ole Elgström and Michael Smith (eds.), *The European Union's Roles in International Politics* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2006), p. 13.

[92] David M. McCourt, 'Role-Playing and Identity Affirmation in International Politics: Britain's Reinvasion of the Falklands, 1982', *Review of International Studies* 37, 4 (2011), p. 1600.

[93] Ryan K. Beasley and Juliet Kaarbo, 'Casting for a Sovereign Role: Socialising an Aspirant State in the Scottish Independence Referendum', *European Journal of International Relations* 24, 1 (2018), pp. 8–32.

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debate the meaning of the sovereign role and, hence, the practices associated with it.[94]

This application of role conceptions to state and non-state actors and the existence of what Beasley and Kaarbo identify as the sovereignty-role nexus, which enables debates over the definition of the sovereign role, means that role location can also be applied to actors such as postcolonial states and liberation movements. Both these categories of actors were novices in the system, looking to find their place and grasp what other actors expect of them if they wish to achieve their goals and legitimise their policies and behaviour. And in both cases, these actors looked up to existing members of the system to interpret their expectations about legitimate policies and practices associated with their roles. In the case of second-generation liberation movements, it is easier to point out the process of role location and perception. After all, many of these movements, including those of the Kurds and the Southern Sudanese, have referred to themselves in their interaction with the international community as anti-colonial movements fighting for freedom from colonialism, now practiced by their central governments. In other words, these liberation movements ended up locating the role of an anti-colonial liberation movement in international politics. For them, this role conception has entailed, beyond grand policy moves, daily practices of struggle at all levels: shaming (of their governments and international community), arguing, advocacy, recruitment and modes of resistances, insurgency or others.

However, we can also argue that the postcolonial states ended up locating a role conception – that of the sovereign state. Somewhat ironically, this conception inevitably relied on the model left by the colonial state. Unlike the postcolonial liberation movements, the postcolonial governments never claimed to have assumed the role of the *colonial state*. Again, the colonised subjects turned postcolonial state leaders aspired to represent everything that contrasted with the European colonial states. They constantly self-reflected and were in search of a new identity. They may have diverged from colonial legacies in certain fields; but when their state-building project was challenged and endangered from within, they resorted to the colonial model. Suppression of the demands for the right to self-determination was one of the most fundamental aims and undergirding principles of the colonial administrations. Having been exposed to such practices daily, the postcolonial elites' turn to them requires greater attention. Facing the threat of the use of violence and the contestation of their sovereignty, postcolonial incumbents had to

[94] Ibid., pp. 12–13.

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ascertain their sovereign role based on the model offered by their predecessors, the colonial states. And this role too included norms, beliefs and regular practices of suppressing dissent in the periphery and counter-insurgency: from routine punitive campaigns, torture, divide-and-rule and more. And much like the postcolonial liberation movements, the postcolonial states, still novices themselves to the system, looked up to the others, the 'alters' to use the discourse of role theorists, to make sense of their 'ego's' actions in international politics and through that to also legitimise them to themselves and others.

To put it shortly, then, what is offered in the rest of the book is a suggestion to re-conceptualise colonialism and decolonisation and also treat them as sets of practices that have been picked up by the new actors entering into the state system in the period after the collapse of the European empires. These sets of practices, which became relevant in cases of postcolonial separatist conflicts, were part of broader role conceptions that the postcolonial states and liberation movements located in the system. The importance of this conclusion, and of understanding postcolonial separatist violence as second-generation anti-colonial wars, lies not only in explaining how these practices survived and shaped future conflicts. It is also useful for explaining shifts in the tactics and policies of the actors in the question. Roles, Vít Beneš and Sebastian Harnisch note, 'vary considerably across time, policy realms and institutional settings'.[95] Circumstances, audiences and expectations constantly change. In some cases, role-seeking actors may find that they need to play different roles when facing different audiences, which can create *role conflicts*.[96] But in other cases, they may compel them to rethink and reshape their roles.[97]

Taking this framework into account can explain why the second-generation anti-colonial movements were willing to rethink their definition, position and practices of liberation, even when the structural threat, namely the violent oppression of the separatist movements, remained unchanged. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many self-determination movements began revisiting their tactics and conventions. While armed campaigns did not necessarily vanish, liberation movements also diverted their attention to other forms of resistance and challenges to central powers. Among these new strategies were institution and governance

[95] Beneš and Harnisch, 'Role Theory', p. 148.

[96] Michael Barnett uses the case of the Arab states post-independence to illustrate this point. The postcolonial Arab states faced expectations to play the pan-Arab role, striving to form a unified Arab state on the one hand; on the other, however, they also sought to play the role of the sovereign state, seeking to rebuff pressure towards unity. See Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[97] Aggestam, 'Role Theory', pp. 22–3.

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building. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia rendered old liberation strategies less relevant, at least when carried out in isolation of other strategies. With governance, capacity and institutions becoming the backbone of international recognition, at least in theory,[98] liberation movements turned to governance capacity and state-building as new practices of liberation.[99] As Chapter 5 of this book demonstrates, this was also the case in Iraqi Kurdistan and, to a lesser extent, in Southern Sudan.[100] One may argue, then, that these postcolonial liberation movements, even if remaining liberation movements as such, embraced a new role. Trying to locate it on Beasley and Kaarbo's sovereignty-role nexus, we can argue that this role conception shifted from that of anti-colonial movements to that of a state-in-the-making (or an aspirant state, to use Beasley and Kaarbo's terminology). This shift in role conception entailed changes in the practices of liberation, once again inspired by the understanding of these movements about the most legitimate way to frame and achieve their goals. Admittedly, these developments were not independent of geopolitical circumstances, namely the weakening of the Ba'th regime following the 1991 Gulf War or of the Sudanese government following the 1989 military coup. Without the breakdown of the power of the central regimes, it would have been far more difficult, even impossible, for the rebels to invest their limited resources in institution building. Still, the opportunity in itself cannot explain the importance of such transformations as those of the Kurds and Southern Sudanese, who up until then had engaged mostly in guerrilla fighting, with government and institution building. Nor could it explain the incorporation of these efforts into these movements' foreign policy and advocacy efforts.

This overview of the place of roles and practices in the study of international politics is indeed a short one, and perhaps it does not do

[98] Nina Caspersen, 'The Pursuit of International Recognition after Kosovo', *Global Governance* 21, 3 (2015), pp. 393–412.

[99] This has stood at the heart of studying so-called de facto or unrecognised states. See Caspersen, 'The Pursuit'; Yaniv Voller, 'Contested Sovereignty as an Opportunity: Understanding Democratic Transitions in Unrecognized States', *Democratization* 22, 4 (2015), pp. 610–30; Adrian Florea, 'De Facto States: Survival and Disappearance (1945–2011)', *International Studies Quarterly* 61, 2 (2017), pp. 337–51; Kristin M. Bakke, Andrew M. Linke, John O'Loughlin and Gerard Total, 'Dynamics of State-Building after War: External-Internal Relations in Eurasian *de facto* States', *Political Geography* 63, 1 (2018), pp. 159–73; Eiki Berg and Kristel Vits, 'Quest for Survival and Recognition: Insights into the Foreign Policy Endeavours of the Post-Soviet de facto States', *Ethnopolitics* 17, 4 (2018), pp. 390–407.

[100] Voller, 'Contested Sovereignty as an Opportunity'; Zachariah Cherian Mampilly, *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life during War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 129–66.

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justice to the vast body of literature on these themes. Nonetheless, it serves to demonstrate the utility of these approaches in challenging conventions about postcolonial separatist conflicts and better explaining the strategies that actors have taken to achieve their aims. Approaching separatist wars in postcolonial states as second-generation liberation struggles means that colonialism and decolonisation can also be understood as role conceptions, containing beliefs, ideas, norms and maybe most importantly sets of practices that can be transferred between different generations and be used by them, not without adjustments, to achieve their goals. This approach in turn, which means looking at colonialism and decolonisation from the vantage points of the actors involved rather than from the structure level, enables us to avoid simplification of the actors and their intentions. The contextualisation and historicisation of colonial practices reveal that the violence employed by the postcolonial state was not random, but inherent to the formation of these states. And it allows a more thorough perspective into the communication between the liberation movements and their audiences, beyond narrowing it down as ad hoc responses to pressures by their adversaries. Such a framework, which has been applied increasingly to cases of conflict and diplomacy around the globe, is yet to be systematically used to explain postcolonial separatist wars. Jonathan Fisher has noted in his 2020 work on ideas and African liberation wars that 'The shape and operation of such resistance or socialisation processes is particularly under-explored in studies which focus on the impact of identity-based phenomena on contemporary African state relations.'[101] His conclusion can also be easily directed at cases in the Middle East and Asia. And this book follows Fisher's path in addressing this need for a better understanding of postcolonial conflicts – and especially separatist ones.

Methodologically, too, role and practice approaches to the study of international politics offer a trajectory that fits well with a work such as this that sits at the intersection of history, politics and global affairs. Identifying roles, their location and the practices associated with them necessitates the use of an interpretivist approach, which concentrates on inferring the meanings that actors assign to their actions and beliefs within specific historical circumstances, when facing dilemmas at the international level. The reason is that 'identity-affirmation through role-playing is inherently an interpretive and practical process, involving choice and deliberation'.[102] Hence, role theorists generally encourage historicism,

[101] Fisher, 'East Africa after Liberation', p. 15.
[102] McCourt, 'Role-playing and Identity', p. 1601.

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since they assume that 'agency always occurs against a particular historical background that influences it .... People are not autonomous, so their agency is always situated against an inherited web of beliefs and practices.'[103] Narratives, process tracings and a historical analysis have been critical for tracing roles and pointing out practices.[104] This correlates with James Mahoney's emphasis on the importance of narratives in exploring path dependencies, especially in reactive sequences that involve multiple steps. Using a narrative account, Mahoney suggests, enables the breakdown of these steps, 'through which an initial breakpoint leads to a final outcome'.[105] The ways in which actors present and justify their actions reflect the process through which they internalise role conceptions and embrace the practices associated with them. The availability of new primary sources, which provide an insight into the background, discourses and justification for the policymaking processes of both governments and rebels, affords the use of this methodology in the study of postcolonial separatist wars.

Using practice and role theories to challenging colonialism and decolonisation and improving our understanding of postcolonial violence raises an important question, which needs to be addressed. Practices and roles are not confined to a specific set of actors. They are free for everyone to embrace. In the context of this book, the practices that emerged during the first-generation liberation wars were available to all actors in the international system. These were not only postcolonial separatists or the governments fighting them that had been exposed to them. The strategies, methods and identities emanating from the anticolonial campaign during the first half of the twentieth century have inspired numerous other actors in its second half. In a sense, trying to identify an actor, either incumbents or rebels, not exposed to these elements, for the sake of a comparative analysis for instance, may prove futile. As Erez Manela vividly illustrates, the global movement against European imperialism reached and deeply affected millions of people in all corners of the world early into its appearance, especially in the aftermath of the First World War.[106] As the movement expanded and its ideology evolved, so did its influence spread to even the remotest parts of the globe, acquiring supporters in the periphery as much as in the

[103] Mark Bevir, Oliver Daddow and Ian Hall, 'Introduction: Interpreting British Foreign Policy', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 15, 2 (2013), p. 167.
[104] Thies and Wehner, 'The Role', p. 721; Ian Hall, 'The Promise and Perils of Interpretivism in Australian International Relations', *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 73, 3 (2014), pp. 308–9.
[105] Mahoney, 'Path Dependence', p. 531.
[106] Erez Manela, The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

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imperial metropoles.[107] Similarly, even when they were waning and losing their influence and legitimacy, imperial governments still exerted an immense influence on other governments, serving as models of governance and sources of knowledge and imitation.

At this point, therefore, one may raise important questions: If practices and role conceptions have been widely available, what distinguishes postcolonial separatist conflicts from other civil wars? Why should we isolate them and classify these particular conflicts as second-generation anti-colonialism? Are there significant differences in the ways in which actors have adopted the available practices? Indeed, there are ample examples for actors in non-separatist contexts adopting the ideas, strategies, justifications and discourses that they located in the first-generation anti-colonial wars. Revolutionary or reformist movements, seeking to overthrow corrupt and tyrannical regimes and replace them with more just systems have often described their campaigns as ones of 'liberating' their countries. These movements, vying to take over the capitals and establish the new regimes, have linked their adversaries with imperialism by branding them as 'neo-colonial', underlining their contacts with exploitative foreign powers.[108] Roessler and Verhoeven have noted in relation to such movements in East Africa that 'the Pan-Africanist liberation project would also be adopted by a subsequent generation of dissidents who felt their countries needed a second independence from the national bourgeoisie that Fanon warned about and that continued the extractive, repressive and exclusionary practices of their colonial predecessors'.[109] These movements and others have used guerrilla tactics against their targets, which they absorbed directly from the veterans of the anti-imperialist struggle. In international gatherings, with Chinese or Soviet instructors or in university classrooms, rebels of various convictions have been exposed to and absorbed practices of fighting imperialist armies and developing their ideology and diplomacy.[110]

Similarly, colonial methods of control and oppression have not been the preserve of those governments emerging out of colonialism or those struggling against separatism. Incumbents in various contexts have sought for solutions to their political conundrums in the imperialist past. In some cases, architects of counter-insurgency operations have brainstormed with colonial officers about their experiences in quashing uprisings. There is an abundance of examples, and it is striking to note that even American officers, when designing their initial steps in Vietnam,

[107] Crawford, *Argument and Change*. [108] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, p. 119.
[109] Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades*, pp. 38–9.
[110] Fisher, *East Africa after Liberation*; Woldemariam, *Insurgent Fragmentation*.

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had consulted with French officers and writings about their experiences in Indochina and Algeria.[111] The regimes in Iraq, Sudan and other countries facing the threat of secession have been notorious for their brutality, but they are by no means the exception. Governments in numerous countries embroiled in civil wars have used tactics involving ethnic cleansing, genocide, divide-and-rule and identity manipulation by enhancing parochial identities.

Yet, although different actors have picked and applied the lessons of the anti-colonial liberation wars from the first half of the twentieth century, it is the postcolonial separatist conflicts that have recreated many of the dynamics that had characterised the wars against European imperialism and could therefore be understood as second-generation liberation wars. First and foremost, unlike reformist or revolutionary movements, fighting 'to capture the capital city of their country and install themselves as the new government',[112] the postcolonial separatists have fought from the periphery against a remote government, which the rebels have considered to be not only alien but also seeking to eradicate their unique identity and exploit their natural resources. Subsequently, the postcolonial element of ethno-religious identity has played a far more conspicuous role in separatist wars than in revolutionary ones. Revolutionary reformist movements have traditionally avoided framing their demands in terms of ethno-religious identities. Rather, they have tended to advance inclusive ideologies, appealing to broad segments of society. In reality, of course, many of these revolutionary movements have relied on a kinship group or have allied with other such groups against those dominating the country. Thus, in Ethiopia, Tigrayan, Oromo and Eritrean rebels, along with groups representing other smaller communities, allied at times against the Marxist Derg regime.[113] In theory, though, their rebellions were broad and sought to include segments of most communities. Separatist movements, in turn, have operated on behalf of a distinct identity group to be liberated from the control of another. Some of these groups may have been larger or more diverse than others. But ethnic (or religious) kinship has been the key to reading separatist movements.

This tendency has made identity the basis of many insurgency and counter-insurgency strategies. Reformist movements were able to attract

[111] Douglas Porch, 'David Galula and the Revival of COIN in the US Military', in Celeste Ward Gventer, David Martin Jones and M. L. R. Smith (eds.), *The New Counter-insurgency Era in Critical Perspective* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 173–97.
[112] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, p. 16.
[113] Woldemariam, *Insurgent Fragmentation*, pp. 185–208.

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support from other political groups, by promising an inclusive vision for the future of the state.[114] Even in Southern Sudan, when the South Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which emerged in the 1980s following the renewal of the civil war, was initially advancing a reformist agenda, it was able to build ties and include groups from the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile. Nonetheless, advancing a separatist agenda has deterred other groups, especially ones advancing political reforms, from joining with the separatists. In both Iraq and Sudan, the Communist parties, albeit sympathetic to the plights of the minorities, rejected their demands for independence and even allied with the central governments against the rebels. The centrality of identity to the conflict has also played into the hands of the incumbents in these second-generation liberation wars. Postcolonial governments have relied extensively on identity to undermine the rebels. This has meant appealing to the sentiments and fears of their own constituencies. But it has also meant the reliance on constant attempts to manipulate the identities of the rebel constituencies and undermine their loyalty to the rebel cause. Much like their colonial predecessors, the regimes have turned to undermining the legitimacy and cohesion of the insurgents by attempting to atomise the rebel constituency and strengthening parochial identities. The incumbents have also invested great efforts in encouraging what Stathis Kalyvas has defined as 'ethnic defection', namely the shifting of support of segments of the rebel constituency to the government side.[115] In both Iraq and Sudan, the changing incumbents saw a need not only to secure the support of their constituents (Muslim Arabs) but also to undermine the legitimacy of the insurgents by dividing their constituency and encouraging the defection of at least some segments of that constituency to their side. Again, one could trace the uses of similar strategies in non-separatist conflicts, but they are conspicuous in postcolonial separatist conflicts.

The international dimension also renders the framework of second-generation liberation movements relevant to focusing on distinguishing them from other civil wars. To be sure, attracting the attention of

[114] Here again, there have been some notable exceptions. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) allied with the Tigray People's Liberation Front in the war to overthrow the Derg regime in Ethiopia. But even in this case, the partnership was based on the EPLF's commitment to Ethiopia's territorial integrity after Eritrea's independence – a demand that EPLF in fact advanced out of fear for the potential rise of separatist sentiments among the different ethnic groups in Eritrea. John Young, *Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray People's Liberation Front, 1975–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 152–9.

[115] Stathis N. Kalyvas, 'Ethnic Defection in Civil War', *Comparative Political Studies* 41, 8 (2008), pp. 1043–68.

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international audiences has been crucial for most rebel movements, including reformist and revolutionary ones. Nevertheless, these movements have faced far less resistance to their demands. Especially in the Cold War bipolar order, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements, as gruesome as their actions might be, could rely on the support of one of the superpowers and their allies by branding themselves pro- or anti-Communist/Western.[116] The revolutionary movements that formed in East Africa in the 1980s and 1990s, in the era preceding Africa's Great War, found allies among one another and in other neighbouring countries.[117] In contrast, separatist movements have traditionally encountered antipathy and even outright hostility from international audiences. As such, the postcolonial separatist movements have had an incentive to develop international diplomacy addressing international norms of recognition and adopting a role resonating with the international community's expectations.

The length of separatist conflicts as well generally distinguishes them from other civil wars, making them worthy of analysis. Separatist or secessionist wars, with a strong ethnic element, are on average lengthier than other domestic conflicts.[118] This feature of separatist conflicts has been traced to the international community's reluctance to intervene in such conflicts, even for the sake of mediation, and because even the rebels' most basic grievances are usually not met.[119] The conflicts in Iraq and Sudan are cases in point, each lasting (intermittently at least) about three decades. Because of their longevity, these conflicts have evolved through different stages and phases, turning them into useful laboratories for grasping changes in international norms, role conceptions and practices of liberation and counter-insurgency. William Reno has observed in his study of rebel movements in Africa that 'the behavior and organization of rebels and state forces reflect changes in the wider political context in which they fight'.[120] The endurance of these conflicts has meant that they have gone through an evolutionary process. Therefore, they enable us to observe the manner in which they have located and adapted to new roles and practices. The Kurdish and Southern Sudanese movements, as explored further in the book, shifted some of their energy and

[116] Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion*, p. 32.
[117] Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades*.
[118] James D. Fearon, 'Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer than Others?' *Journal of Peace Research* 41, 3 (2004), p. 288.
[119] Alexis Heraclides, 'The Ending of Unending Conflicts: Separatist Wars', *Millennium: Journal of International Affairs* 26, 3 (1997), pp. 679–707.
[120] Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, p. 4.

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resources to state-building at the expense of armed insurgency in the early 1990s. This shift in policy took place in response to changing understandings about recognition, legitimacy and liberation. Here again, the comparison with the first anti-colonial liberation movements is relevant, as many of them had engaged in struggles that lasted for decades. And in these cases, too, the movements often revised their strategies, switching from one form of resistance to another.

In short, while we can identify the endurance of practices from the first-generation liberation wars in various conflicts and in use by a range of actors, there are traits that distinguish postcolonial separatist conflicts from others. The intersection of the roles and practices of liberation and counter-liberation policies, inspired by the first-generation liberation wars, sets these conflicts apart from other postcolonial civil wars. These differences are crucial for exploring and understanding separatist conflicts in former colonies, as in the cases of Iraq and Sudan. And it is on this note that the book moves to examine the conflicts in Iraqi Kurdistan and Southern Sudan.

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