

Geographies of Lethal and Non- Lethal Violence

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Introduction

The World Health Organization defines violence as: “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (*World 5*). From a medical perspective, when individuals or groups engage in lethal and non-lethal violence against each other, their actions fundamentally undermine the foundational edict upon which the entire institution and practice of medicine is based: *primum non nocere* (first, do no harm). Whereas the practice of medicine actively works to relieve suffering and prolong life, the proximate effects of violence can be nothing but physical and psychological harm, or at worst, death. When seen from the perspective of geography, insofar as the discipline is concerned with the way in which multiple spatial scales—from local to global—intersect and interact, violence is an ideal phenomenon to study. Its global pattern of distribution, its existence at multiple scales of human organization such as interpersonal, household, intergroup, and international, and finally its conspicuous absence at various scales in various places historically and currently, ensures that violence is ripe for deep and exhaustive geographic study. The very fact that all violent acts must happen somewhere (at some place), and furthermore that the actors must somehow come into contact with each other in order to inflict them means that violence is inherently tied to geography. Moreover, the perpetrators and victims of violence are geographically situated—inhabiting a particular place and living in particular social conditions. At this risk of advocating a super-organic determinist explanation of the origins and causes of interhuman violence, it is my contention that localized situated

violence (domestic violence, youth violence, etc.), must be viewed vis-à-vis large scale legitimized violence that occurs contemporaneously or immediately prior in order to be fully understood. This cross-scale influence of large-scale violence on small scale violence is part of the larger web of social influences on the occurrence of interpersonal violence.

Biological origins of violence?

Again, there is great risk involved in advocating such a thesis because it appears to exclude the role of individual human agency in propagating lethal and non-lethal violence independently of the structures imposed on it. But even human agency is problematic when it comes to violence. To understand why this is, it is necessary to delve into the biologically embodied reality of being human. There is a long history of inquiry and assumption about the biological underpinnings of violent human behavior; specifically, it has been assumed that biology predisposes humans to acts of violence. Such violent urges, it is argued, arise from the human “instincts” to hunt for prey, to compete for mates and resources, and other explanations linked to gender. In other words, violence is somehow hard-wired into the human condition, thereby coloring all seemingly independent agency as well as stifling all well-meaning peace-promoting social structures. This view is rooted in both a Hobbesian understanding of the purpose of state formation—namely, to be protected from bloody anarchy of the proverbial ‘state of nature’ where life was “solitary, nasty, poor, brutish, and short”—and Social Darwinism—the view that ‘survival of the fittest’ is the norm of social relations that derives from our animal evolutionary origins. Both of these views are deemed patently false according to a document written in 1986 by a group of prominent international

scientists in the areas of ethology, biological anthropology, psychology and psychiatry, sociology, neuroscience, behavioral genetics, neurophysiology, and biochemistry. The scientists convened at the 6th International Colloquium on Brain and Aggression in Seville, Spain. These scientists endorsed a statement consisting of the following five propositions:

It is scientifically incorrect to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors...it is scientifically incorrect to say that war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature...it is scientifically incorrect to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behavior more than for other kinds of behavior...it is scientifically incorrect to say that humans have a “violent brain”...it is scientifically incorrect to say that war is caused by “instinct” or any single motivation.

This statement, which essentially frees human agency from any biological predisposition to violence or warfare, was met with some skepticism in the scientific community of sociobiology. Yet David Barash, one sociobiologist and ethologist who bemoans the dogmatic tone of the statement and published findings about gender predispositions to aggression that countered some of the premises of the Seville statement (Adams), still maintains that there is no human biological disposition to either warfare *or* peace (Barash, personal correspondence).

An additional consideration that is worth mentioning on this question of the biological origins of violence is the recognition by various psychologists in the last decade of the adverse psychological impacts (that may soon be elevated to the level of a psychiatric disorder) perpetrators’ face as a long-term consequence of killing other humans or training to do so. This is especially pronounced when these individuals return to ordinary society away from the environment where killing was encouraged and practiced (Grossman). Lieutenant Colonel David Grossman points out that “war is an

environment that will psychologically debilitate 98 per cent of all who participate in it for any length of time. And the 2 percent who are not driven insane by war appear to have already been insane—aggressive psychopaths—before coming to the battlefield” (Grossman 50). This effect has been called by one author “perpetration induced traumatic stress” (MacNair). The conclusion to be reached from these findings is that, in the vast majority of cases, great effort is required to train humans to kill and significant psychological duress results from its execution. Thus, it becomes even more improbable that lethal violence is biologically ingrained.

I will take this finding as my point of departure. If it is the case that violence is not biologically determined, then we have to come to the conclusion that violence arises from the interplay of human agency with social and cultural influences. In order to tease out how prominent a role structure versus agency plays, it will be helpful to turn now to empirical findings on the extent, distribution, nature, and context of human violence. Specific questions to consider include: how widespread are violence and nonviolence, historically and currently? What types of contexts are prone to create violence and what contexts are not?

Historical extent of lethal violence

The most violent act that can be committed is to willfully kill another human being against their wishes (although it could be argued that gruesome tortures and rapes that leave victims alive may be up there too). Another way to state this is that death is the most severe consequence of violent acts. I argue then that lethal violence makes the most significant contribution to any historical accounting of the extent of violence. How many humans have actively engaged in lethal violence and how many have died as a result?

Glenn Paige in *Nonkilling Global Political Science* makes a calculation based on conservative estimates of deaths by democide and war deaths in battle in all of recorded history to 1987. These estimates were made by peace researcher Rudolph J. Rummel, author of *Death by Government*. “Perhaps as many as four hundred million people might be counted victims of historical political killing, not including homicides”. This figure also does not include civilian deaths in war, most notably the 62 million civilian victims of war from 1900-1995 (Paige 16). With Rummel’s figures, Paige proceeds to calculate approximately how many humans have engaged in acts of lethal violence:

One estimate of total human lives from 1 million BCE to 2000 CE is 91,100,000,000 people...If we inflate Rummel’s war and democide deaths to half a billion, assume erroneously that each was killed by a single killer, and arbitrarily multiply by six to account for homicides, we might imagine as many as 3,000,000,000 killers since 1,000 BCE. (Figures from 1 million BCE are lacking). But even this crude and inflated estimate of killings would suggest that *at least ninety-five percent of humans have not killed*. (Paige 26-7, Emphasis added)

Paige now believes that perhaps <1% or even 0.01% of humans who have ever lived have been “killers” (personal correspondence). So these figures and calculations underscore the point that few humans engage in lethal violence and few are killed by violence. It should be noted that these numbers do not include structural violence, a topic I will visit shortly.

Direct violence vs. structural violence

Direct violence-related deaths may only make a small contribution to all-cause mortality in the broad sweep of human history. In 1999, WHO issued a report *Removing Obstacles to Healthy Development* in which it found that malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS have claimed six times as many lives in the past fifty years as civilian and military casualties from all wars over the same period of time. However, what this fact obscures

is that the misery, destabilization, and general havoc wrought by the violence of the wars in the last fifty years have significantly contributed to our inability to control the spread of these major infectious diseases. Moreover, if we expand our definition of violence beyond “direct” forms and look to indirect forms of violence that stem from social structural arrangements that promote deprivation, we can say that a certain type of violence—structural violence—is committed upon those deprived of life-saving and life-prolonging treatments. This notion of structural violence, first outlined by Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung, is not direct violence due to bullets or fists, but instead is related to deprivation and exploitation that is social and institutional in origin. Structural violence deprives many of basic life necessities and millions die annually as a result. Deaths from infectious diseases are only the beginning. Annually, about 25 million die from hunger, and in the year 2000, about 842 million were chronically hungry worldwide according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Structural violence is insidious and often multifactorial in origin. It is violence committed through neglect and coercion rather than actual physical force.

I argue that when engaging in a comprehensive study of violence, it is useful to focus on direct violence rather than structural violence. Although different in means, both structural violence and direct violence achieve the same grizzly ends, and both embody disregard, expendability, and devaluation of human life. From an ethical standpoint, both of these types of violence must be eradicated. Structural violence is passive, and direct violence is active. When direct violence is actively exercised in a world where structural violence is passively pre-existing, ongoing, and widespread, that structural violence becomes a ‘lesser of two evils’, perhaps even a softer and more

tolerable form of violence. However, if active violence is never considered legitimate, then forms of structural violence will be magnified and scrutinized. This is not to say that prevention efforts should not simultaneously continue for both types of violence. I am simply arguing that passive violence is far less tolerable and far more visible when active violence is deemed universally unacceptable and never legitimate.

There are practical reasons as well for focusing on direct violence as opposed to structural violence. It is difficult to peg down one particular agent or set of agents as the instigators of structural violence whereas in direct violence perpetrators are easily definable and located. Structural violence is far broader and far-reaching in scope than direct violence as it is embedded in the very organizing structures of societies and international relations. Many more people are victims of structural violence than direct violence. Consider some of its instantiations: everything from denial of health care to inaccessibility of food to exploitative labor practices. While the individual perpetrators responsible for structural violence are hard (or impossible) to specifically identify as responsibility oftentimes lies with economic and state institutional policies, and while the ways that structural violence is exercised are numerous, direct violence is far simpler in these regards. Understanding the causes of direct violence will shed light on the causes of the far more prevalent structural violence. Later we will see that structural violence is causally linked to direct violence.

Direct violence in focus

The steps to understanding direct violence would be first to define a typology of direct violence, second to determine the relative and absolute extent of each type of violence, and third to create an explanatory model. WHO divides direct violence into

self-directed, interpersonal, and collective. Self-directed violence includes self-abuse and suicidal behavior. Interpersonal violence can be divided based on the relationship between perpetrator and victim: family/partner or community violence. Family/partner violence can be further subdivided into child, partner, and elder violence. Community violence can be divided into violence directed towards acquaintances and that directed towards strangers. Finally, collective violence is violence is committed by larger groups of individuals or states. This type of violence can be subdivided by the reasons that motivate the violence: social, political, or economic. Into this broad category, violence such as hate crimes committed by groups (social motivation) or violence committed for economic gain would be included. All three types of violence—self-directed, interpersonal, and collective—can be of multiple natures: physical, sexual (not for self-directed), psychological, and/or deprivation/neglect.

The absolute and relative extent of violence is difficult to precisely measure. Lethal violence is far easier to estimate as much of non-lethal violence goes unreported, undetected, and untreated. However, estimates of violence-related mortality can give us a “tip of the iceberg” insight into the full extent of direct violence generally. The WHO report on violence and health estimates that, in the year 2000, 1,659,000 deaths globally could be attributed to violence. Of these, 520,000 were due to homicide, 815,000 were due to suicide, and 310,000 were war-related. War-related deaths were 18.6% of total violent deaths that year, while suicide and homicide represented 49.1% and 31.1% respectively. There is significant gender and regional variation in these figures. Over 60% of all suicides that year occurred in males, and 77% of all homicides were male victims. Even though more there were more suicides than homicides globally, in the

WHO regions of Africa and Region of Americas, homicide rates were nearly three times suicide rates. However, in all other major regions, with the exception of the Eastern Mediterranean Region where the rates are nearly equal, a completely opposite relative suicide to homicide ratio was measured. In European and South-East Asia regions, suicides rates are more than twice as high as homicide rates. In the Western Pacific Region, suicides are nearly six times higher than homicide rates. Finally, it should be noted that war-related deaths in the current era are difficult to accurately measure because of ongoing lethally violent conflicts all over the world. According to globalsecurity.org, at the end of 2003, “there were 15 major wars under way, with at least 20 ‘lesser’ conflicts ongoing.” The Global Burden of Disease Study predicts that by 2020 war will be one of the top ten causes of disability-adjusted life-years lost. Nevertheless, the WHO statistics serve as the reminder that most lethal violence does not occur in war zones.

An ecological model

An explanatory model that can account for the roots of violence and that allows for the tremendous regional and demographic variations in its incidence is needed. For this, I will briefly describe an ecological model that can account for multiple influences at multiple environmental scales that interact in complex ways to produce violence. To build this model, we will consider individual and contextual factors (*World 12-13, 220-2*).

Individual. The most basic level of an ecological model for violence would be the individual level. Here would go biological and personal history factors that could influence violent behavior or violence-accepting behavior. Factors to consider include: level of educational attainment, psychological predispositions to impulsivity, and previous history of aggression and abuse. Past history matters because, for example,

children who are victims of child abuse and neglect are more likely to be arrested for violent crimes in later life. Although I argued previously that humans are not biologically programmed to commit violence, some individuals may be more predisposed than others to do so.

Relationships. The next level of influence in an ecological model, moving outward from the individual, is at the level of interpersonal relationships. Here proximal social relationships with intimate partners, peers, and family members are considered for their influences on violence. For example, if young people are in peer groups that condone and engage in violence, their likelihood of engaging in violence is increased.

Community. This level of the model considers the community contexts in which social relationships are embedded and played out. Neighborhoods characterized by a high degree of residential mobility, heterogeneity, poverty, high population density, and social isolation have all been associated with increased levels of violence. For example, social epidemiologist Kawachi cites meta-analysis of several studies showing that poverty is consistently related to violent crime ($r=0.44$), and this correlation is strengthened with increasingly smaller units of geographic aggregation (Berkman 79). Another example of community influences on violence is given in the WHO report. The percentage of adolescent males in secondary schools who report involvement in physical fighting in the past year ranges from 22.0% in Sweden, 44.0% in the United States, and 76.0% in Jerusalem, Israel (*World 11*). The relatively high statistic from Jerusalem may belie a community standard that accepts (and even condones?) violent fighting among boys. This may be related to the mandatory military conscription of all teenagers in Israel after secondary school, with the more violent assignments given to males. This

could be an example of higher level societal factors being expressed at the community level to influence violence. Several similar correlations have been shown with other community-level variables. One can begin to see that at this level of the ecological model, the effects of structural violence on promoting direct violence begin to come into focus. More will be apparent at the next level.

Societal. This final level of the ecological model for direct violence examines factors on at the societal levels that promote violence. Examples here include factors that create a climate of acceptability for violence, societal engagement in collective violence, and societal conditions that promote social and economic inequalities. At this level, the effects of structural violence on direct violence are most apparent. There are several ways in which climates of acceptability for violence can be fostered. These include cultural norms that promote violence as a means of conflict resolution, especially in males, cultures in which male domination over women and children is expected, religious/cultural practices that condone killing of human beings as punishment for crimes committed, prevailing attitudes that recognize suicide as a personal-choice issue rather than an act of violence, and finally social norms that legitimize organized violence against other societies.

Two examples of pairs of communities in which societal cultural norms over and above all other factors determine degree of violence interpersonally and collectively come from comparison of two Mexican Zapotec villages and two indigenous forest-dwelling peoples. Paige references a comparative study done by Douglas Fry published in 1994 of two nearby Mexican villages, La Paz and San Andrés, which both have very similar socioeconomic, material, and structural characteristics yet markedly different

rates of homicide. In La Paz, homicide is rare (3.4 per 100,000), and inhabitants see themselves as peaceful, respectful, and cooperative. In San Andrés, the homicide rate is nearly 6 times higher (18.1 per 100,000) and there, according to Fry, there is a “widely held countervailing belief or value system that condones violence” (39). The high homicide rate is accompanied by frequent public brawls, physical punishment of children, lack of respect for women, etc. The second example of markedly opposite cultural norms producing violence in society comes from a comparison of the Semai and Waorani peoples, a study first done by anthropologists Clayton and Carole Robarchek. The Semai are an indigenous population of approximately 15,000 who live in the tropical rainforest on the Malay peninsula. The Waorani are also an indigenous people with a population between 1000-2000 that live in the rainforest of Eastern Ecuador (Gregor 189-211). Both of these societies are hunting and horticulturally-based, live in similar ecological settings to which they have technologically adapted in similar ways, and have remarkably similar systems of social organization (Silverberg 190). However, the Semai people are one of the most peaceful people known and the Waorani, until the early 1960s, were considered the most violent society known. For the Semai, homicide is virtually nonexistent, husbands do not engage in domestic violence, and physical violence of any kind is extremely rare. The Waorani, on the other hand, have a long history of violence. They traditionally have engaged in numerous deadly raids between feuding kinship groups. Witchcraft accusations also have precipitated lethal hostilities. According to one calculation done in the 1970s, 60% of adult deaths in the five generations preceding were due to warfare. Here we see again two very similar societies in terms of material and structure, yet with markedly different cultural contexts leading to vastly different rates of

violence and nonviolence. An interesting and important footnote to this comparison is that in the period of one generation, the Waorani reduced their homicide rate by more than 16-fold after a cultural shift was initiated by two women missionaries and two returning Waorani women. The missionaries both had close companions who had been killed by the Waorani, and the two Waorani women had fled years prior to live with a more peaceful people. The women were able to bring lessons from their own life experiences and succeeded in nonviolently transforming the Waorani's violent culture.

Another way that societal factors can contribute to violence-promotion is when prevailing societal norms allow for legitimization of violence or when prominent leaders of societies call for organized violence. When societies (or nations) engage in such organized acts of legitimized violence, there is evidence that this leads to increased acts of interpersonal violence—specifically lethal violence—amongst the members of the societies whose militaries are engaged in violent conflict or in those societies otherwise effected by the conflict. This may occur though the mechanism of relaxation of cultural inhibitions against killing. A study carried out by Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner reported in their book *Violence and Crime in Cross-National Perspective* provides strong evidence for this phenomenon. The authors analyzed a large data set consisting of crime data from 110 nations and 44 major international cities between 1900 and 1970 to find out whether homicide rates increased in warring countries immediately after wars. They found:

Most of the combatant nations in the study experienced substantial postwar increases in their rates of homicide. These increases did not occur among a control group of noncombatant nations. The increases were pervasive and occurred after both large and small wars, with several types of homicide indicators, in victorious as well as defeated nations, in nations with improved postwar economies and nations with worsened economies, among both men and

women offenders, and among several age groups. Postwar increases were most frequent among nations with large numbers of combat deaths...The one model that appears to be fully consistent with the evidence is the legitimization of violence model, which suggests that the presence of authorized or sanctioned killing during war has a residual effect on the level of homicide in peacetime society. (96)

Another Israel-based study showed that intimate partner femicide increased significantly in 1991 during the Persian Gulf War. The rate increased by 19.3% that year compared to 1990, and while all other types of homicide decreased from 1990 to 1991, the proportion of intimate partner femicides out of all homicides increased by 36% (Landau 80). The authors of this study argue that heightened stress at the national-macro is the cause of this spike. So the stress of nations at war and the relaxation of cultural norms with regards to killing during war may both be mechanisms through which societal-level violence influences interpersonal violence.

The third major way that societal factors contribute to violence is through structural violence. It is because structural violence produces and/or ultimately sustains vast political, social, and economic inequalities that it is such a major factor in precipitating direct violence. Two maps from Project Plowshares demonstrate this effect well. The organization created one map (see map 1 in Appendix) that overlays the percentage of countries' populations that are undernourished (which might also be a measure of population hunger) with the occurrence of armed conflicts. They found that the more undernourished a population, the more likely it is to have experienced armed conflict between 1992-2001. Specifically, 61% of the countries in the group that had >35% country-wide undernourishment had experienced at least one armed conflict, and only 15% of the countries with <4% undernourishment had experienced an armed conflict between the years 1992-2001 (see table on map). In a second map, Project Plowshares looked at the relationship between development and history of armed conflict

between the years 1993-2002. The development metric used is the UN Human Development Index (HDI), an aggregate measure that combines life expectancy at birth, adult literacy and school enrollment rates, and GDP per capita. The UN Development Program (UNDP), who created this measure, say that these country-level indicators are proxy measures for the degree to which people have the ability to lead long, healthy lives, to acquire knowledge, and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Not surprisingly, amongst those countries in the bottom third of HDI ranking, 48% were engaged in at least one armed conflict in the past decade whereas only 12% of the countries in the top half of the HDI rankings were engaged in at least one armed conflict in that same period (see map 2 in Appendix). Other societal risk factors that promote violence are rapidly changing demographic characteristics, political instability, and struggles over control of natural resources. Finally, the level of weapons technology in a society determines the extent of destruction and deaths that a society is capable of creating when engaged in violent conflicts.

This ecological model of violence links structural violence with direct violence and provides a multilevel explanation for the origins of violence. Although humans are not born with the biological propensity to kill, we see through the ecological model how multiple structural factors, from large-scale to small-scale, can multiply together to incline some humans or groups of humans to engage in lethal violence.

Geographic distancing and violence

The incredible amount of mass killing in the 20th and early 21st centuries during wartime in highly organized and technologically sophisticated fashions relies on a small number of humans' abilities to command and control elaborate and highly lethal

weaponry. My argument is that the humans who control the firing of such weapons must distance themselves from the human reality of the slaughter they are about to commit. This distancing is aided by technology, furthered by a process of ‘othering’ ‘the enemy’, and aided by submission to authority. Evidence supporting this theory can be drawn from the testimony of soldiers and commanders who have orchestrated or directly participated in human killing.

First-person shooting simulators have increasingly been used in the training of soldiers to ready them for combat. These types of technology reduce human beings to “targets”—collections of pixels on miniature viewing screens. The technology serves as a mediator between the operator and the human targets. After training, the fictional targets become substituted with real ones. But from the perspective of the human operating the targeting technology, the quality of the experience is essentially unchanged. This is how technology is able to distance one from the actual ‘humanity’ of the targets at which one is shooting. Filmmaker Michael Moore in his documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* interviewed US soldiers who talked about listening to music by the band *Bloodhound Gang* over their tank’s internal speakers while they used weapons targeting systems to shoot Iraqis. Confinement in the tank with the music blasting while operating the first-person shooting technology served to distance the soldiers further from the humans outside. This same basic set-up is present in aerial bombing when those distanced by a great altitude are able to drop fire-bombs or nuclear bombs on targets below. In these scenarios, thousands (or hundreds of thousands) of humans are reduced to a small point that is targeted. The other key feature of technologically sophisticated weaponry is that it serves as a powerful force-multiplier for the weapon operator. The technology multiples

and magnifies the small efforts exerted in stroking keys or pressing buttons. This same effect of force multiplication is experienced when driving a car. The force of depressing the pedal is multiplied thousands of times over by the car engine. Both types of technology (cars and weapons) serve to maximize the distance separation between the operator of the force-multiplier who is able to wield power greatly disproportionate to the limits of his body and the far less powerful human “on the ground.”

Another way of distancing oneself from those one is killing is by ‘othering’ them. This is a process of dehumanization that distances ones enemies from oneself. The humans one is prepared to kill are seen and understood in very one-dimensional ways. Language used to refer to the enemies includes: ‘they are pure evil’, ‘they are terrorists’, or even simply ‘they aren’t human.’ With such language, we can distance ourselves from the humanity of our enemies and perform the highly rational calculations needed to maximize killing them. This tone comes across in statements made in an interview of Robert McNamara in Errol Morris’s documentary *The Fog of War*. McNamara was the US Secretary of Defense under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. He was involved in planning the firebombing of Tokyo during WWII which left ~100,000 dead overnight and the incendiary bombing of 66 other Japanese cities in which 50-90% of the civilian populations were killed. McNamara recalls: “I analyzed bombing operations, and how to make them more efficient. I.E. not more efficient in the sense of killing more, but more efficient in the sense of weakening the adversary”. The hundreds of thousands of humans who are killed are conflated with the dehumanized, amorphous concept of “adversary”. Killing is not occurring, just “weakening” of the adversary. To

McNamara's credit, he does admit in hindsight that the atrocities he and his team committed were "war crimes."

Because most people rarely visit the far corners of the globe (and even if they do), they create mental or conceptual geographies that sets all geographically distant places in some relationship with their present place of inhabitation. These conceptual maps can further serve to distance those who are being killed in overseas wars. Inhabitants of other countries may be seen as occupying territory that is not theirs. Much of this has to do with using nationalist visions of the world which privileges the use of imaginary lines of political geography as a way of viewing the world. Conflating humans with political and national identifiers also serves as a distancing tool.

A final method of distancing from others' humanity occurs when submission to authority (or submission to the legitimacy of authority) demands it. This kind of distancing, in its extreme form, may help to account for mass slaughters that are far more face-to-face than the highly technological killing mentioned above. However, there are far more psychological factors at work in these types of atrocities...

A word about nonviolence

With all this talk of violence, perhaps a word or two about nonviolence is needed. The origins of nonviolence and nonkilling can be accounted for through an ecological model similar to the one above for violence. Glenn Paige in *Global Nonkilling Political Science* lays out a scheme that amounts to a survey of the history and modern extent of nonviolence, or what he calls nonkilling. Here are a few highlights from Paige's excellent book: nonkilling precepts are found in all the spiritual faiths of the world; in all societies murder is disapproved, at least forty-seven peaceful societies can be identified

(Amish, Anabaptists, Quakers, Jains, etc.); as of April 2000 seventy-three of 195 countries and territories have abolished the death penalty for all crimes, 23 countries retain the death penalty but have not used in 10+ years; twelve of the 50 US states plus DC have abolished the death penalty; twenty-seven countries do not have standing armies; at least 18 dependent territories or geographical regions are demilitarized by agreement with their home countries; among countries with armies, forty-seven recognize conscientious objection to serve (during the Vietnam War, Paige points out that more individuals conscientiously objected to serve than the number of individuals who were actually drafted); and multiple educational, political, and economic institutions exist that promote nonkilling principles. Paige's list goes on. It should be noted, though, that even such an exhaustive enumeration will likely not capture the totality of nonviolence. Nonviolent and nonkilling acts occur continuously in numerous ways in uncountable numbers of self-behaviors, interpersonal relationships, and collective relationships on a daily basis throughout the world.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to bring geographic thinking to bear on the origins of violence. Using data from the 2002 WHO *World Report on Violence and Health* and other sources, I sought to give a historical and contemporary accounting of the extent of violence and lethal violence. Integrating multiple scales allowed me to deepen and broaden the ecological model of violence presented in the WHO report by, for example, incorporating structural violence into the model. Finally, I argued that geographic distancing plays a key role in providing a critical distance between the perpetrators and victims of violence that serves to dehumanize victims thereby making it easier for

perpetrators to inflict excessive violence. I imagine that geographic distancing of some form or another is partly to blame for the tolerance and persistence of structural violence as well. Structural violence occurring in far-off developing countries is literally geographically distanced from the mind's eye of an ordinary observer in the comparably developed Western world. Similarly, within a country, structural violence that occurs in poor neighborhoods and communities geographically distanced from the affluent ones keeps it just out of the mind's eye of residents of the latter communities. At a deeper level, the powerful forces that create and sustain structural violence exert their power (be it governmental, economic, or social) geographically over the regions inhabited by victims of structural violence. Insofar as individuals in much less structurally violent areas unknowingly participate in propagating or further strengthening the powers responsible for structural violence afar, geographic distancing is to blame for the lack of awareness. I believe that the possibility of overcoming geographic distancing through concepts such as the global village is real, and the strong, enduring presence of nonviolent human activities and institutions everywhere gives me hope.

Appendix:

Map 1: World Hunger and Armed Conflict

Map 2: Human Development and Armed Conflict

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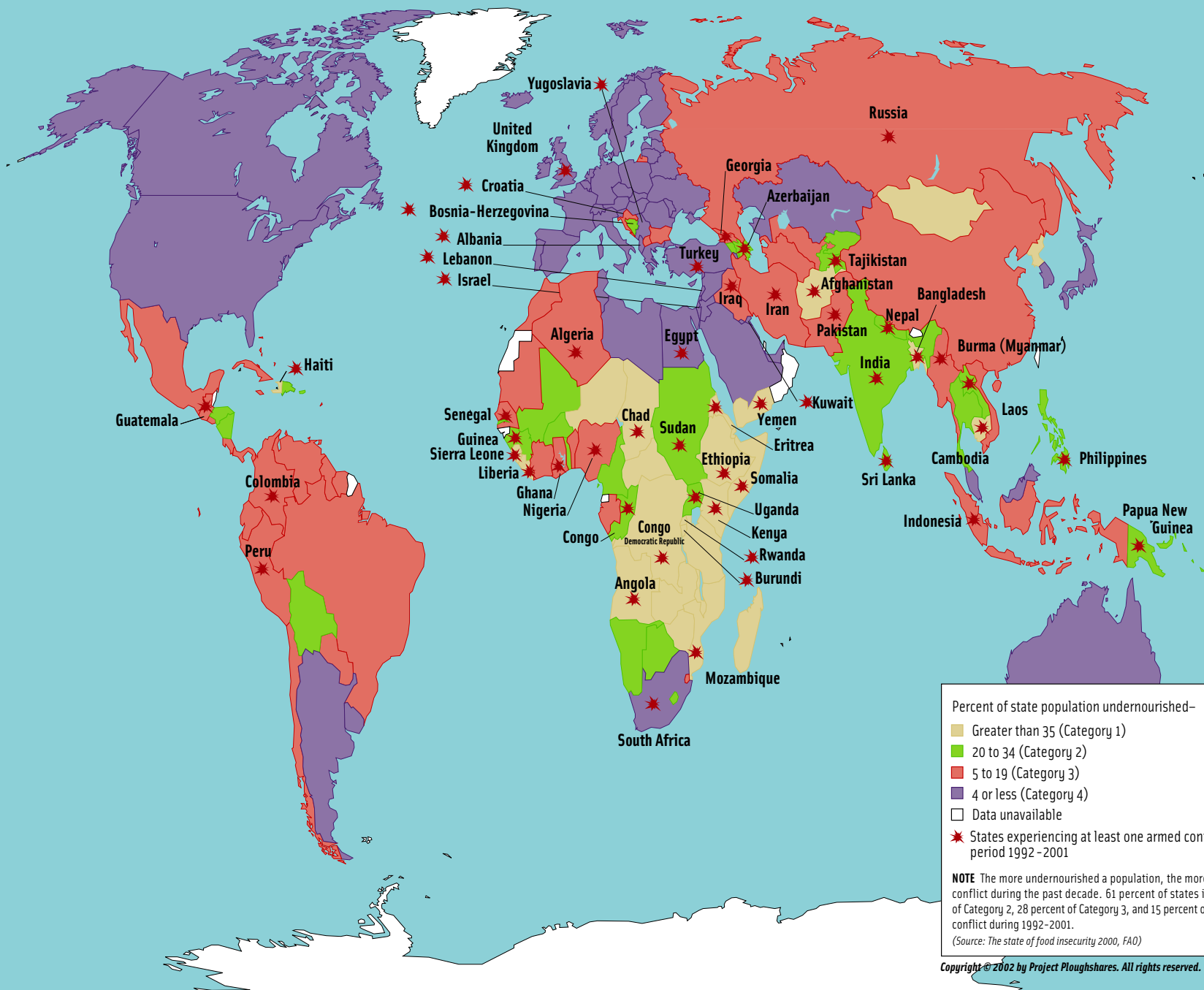
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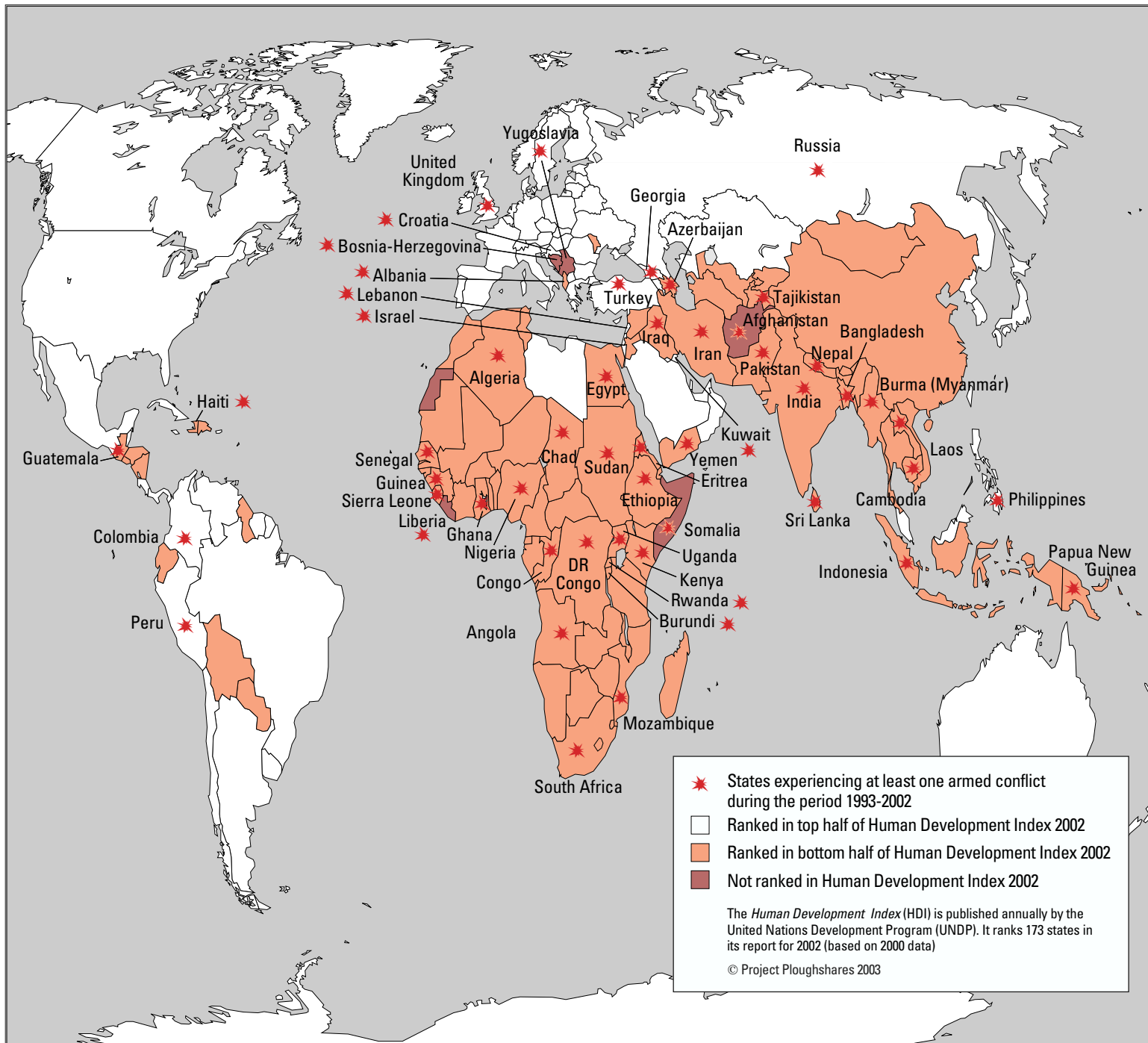
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World Hunger and Armed Conflict





Human Development and Armed Conflict

Twelve percent of the states ranked in the top half of the *UN Human Development Index (HDI) 2002* experienced armed conflicts during the ten-year period 1993-2002; 43 percent of the states in the bottom half of the HDI listing were at war during the same period.

For states in the bottom third of the HDI ranking, there was almost an even chance (48 percent) that they were at war in the past decade.