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# The Deadly Ethnic Riot

Donald L. Horowitz

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS  
Berkeley . Los Angeles . London

2001

## The Calculus of Passion

A THEORY OF THE RIOT EPISODE ought to explain the occurrence of the phenomenon in general and its distinctive features: its scale, explosiveness, and apparently disproportionate character; its brutality and gore; its selectivity between groups and indiscriminateness within groups; its ability to attract participants, in spite of the apparent benefits of sitting on the sidelines; and its mix of impulsive and instrumental elements. The riot produces many more casualties than do violent protest demonstrations, lynchings, and terrorist attacks, indeed more casualties than any form of ethnic violence short of outright warfare or genocide. In their indiscriminate targeting of outgroup members, riots contrast with lynchings and with terrorist killings, which have a more focused approach, and with feuds, in which violence is trained on narrow circles of targets. Participation is also broader in riots. Those who kill in feuds hold a personal or familial grievance. Those who kill in riots act out of a more widely shared or vicarious grievance. Unlike terrorism, which is the prerogative of specialists, riots are the work of large numbers of casual participants. Riots mix impulsive and instrumental elements, but not necessarily in the same proportions as other forms of violence. Riots have a distinctive profile.

The scale and explosiveness of the riot are among its most prominent features. The violence in Rwanda (1959) was, according to Hutu participants, "*muyaga*—the wind, something that comes you know not whence, and goes you know not whither."<sup>1</sup> The wind is a powerful metaphor for the fury that appears suddenly, sweeps people up, and swiftly cuts down those in its path.<sup>2</sup> Impressing as they do even those who

1. René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 164, quoting a British missionary.

2. The same image was used in Hyderabad, India, where participants spoke of locations where "the wind is to be spread (*hava phailana*)," meaning where killings will occur. Sudhir

have seen it before, the startling intensity of the violence and its sheer brutality require specific explanation, some of which has already been provided in the analysis of atrocities. I shall provide more in this chapter.

Selectivity in targeting between groups has received sustained attention in Chapters 4 through 6, but little has been said about lack of selectivity among possible victims belonging to the target group. The riot is almost as indiscriminate within the targeted category as it is discriminate among possible target categories.<sup>3</sup> This inclusive conception of appropriate targets is matched by the broad appeal of the riot in attracting masses of participants and the high pitch of destructive enthusiasm rioters bring to the task. The riot reaches heights of disinhibition.

With these observations, we return to the overarching issues raised in Chapter 1. In earlier chapters, I answered specific questions about the riot process, targeting, participants, location, and the like. In Chapter 12, I showed that the absence of an appropriate target group or adequate precipitants or social approval, among other things, would likely thwart the emergence of a riot of significant magnitude. Each of these elements performs certain functions that make the violence possible. Some perform more than one function; social approval, for example, contributes to both impunity and justification. From these specific answers, we can piece together a causal account of the riot in general. With some additional causal elements provided along the way, we can also answer questions about the distinctive features of the riot. Then we can match our account against alternative approaches, draw some conclusions about passion and calculation in an episode that partakes of both, and, finally, speculate about why deadly ethnic riots seem to have died out in the Western world.

### CONVENING THE KILLING CROWD: A CAUSAL ACCOUNT

The deadly ethnic riot defies a great many theories and proto-theories:

1. The riot is not an unstructured frenzy, made possible by a gap in public order.
2. It is not a random shock, set off by some spark in group relations.

Kakar, *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 80.

3. I say almost as indiscriminate mainly because of the greater emphasis of crowds on male victims than on female.

3. It is not the product of a failure in social control, a deviant act for which the wider community bears no responsibility.
4. It is not the result of an escalated personal quarrel that was mishandled at the point of origin.
5. It is not an envy riot, aimed at pulling down (or confiscating property of) those who are better off.
6. It is not a cynically organized plot to gain for manipulative leaders through force what they could not gain otherwise.
7. It is not simply an effort to gain a clear policy objective or redress specific grievances.
8. It is not motivated by straightforward hatred of "difference" or "otherness." (Perceptions of similarity form part of what makes groups cohere, but difference alone is not what makes them kill. Many types of "otherness" produce, at worst, indifference.)

At times, the riot can veer toward one or another of these descriptions (some far more than others), but it is synonymous with none of them, singly or in combination. Its violence is structured, nonrandom, socially sanctioned, destructive rather than appropriative, relatively spontaneous, uncalibrated, and yet precisely focused on certain groups.

The concatenation of four underlying variables best explains the deadly ethnic riot:

1. a hostile relationship between two ethnic groups;
2. a response to events that engages the emotions of one of these collectivities, a response usually denominated as anger but perhaps more accurately rendered as arousal, rage, outrage, or wrath;<sup>4</sup>
3. a keenly felt sense of justification for killing; and
4. an assessment of the reduced risks of violence that facilitates disinhibition.

These are the indispensable elements of this form of violence to which the precipitants, targets, and various features of the social environment all contribute. A theory of the violent episode that tries to specify mechanisms requires an understanding of how these causal conditions are activated.

4. Jon Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 282, proposes *wrath* as the term expressing a wish not merely that its object suffer but that the agent experiencing the emotion must be the instrumentality that inflicts the suffering.

The riot is underpinned by hostility directed against target groups believed to possess certain threatening characteristics. Arousal is produced by an occasion deemed suitable for violence, believed to present one or more of a limited class of threats in intergroup relations; the riot is event-driven. Justification is a function of beliefs about the propriety of violence against ethnic strangers and about the transgressive conduct of those strangers. Reduced inhibitions are produced by environmental conditions and actions taken by the rioters themselves that affect the rioters' calculations of risk. These components, which I shall unpack in inverse order in the four subsections that follow, conjoin to produce the violent episode. They also help to explain some of the salient features of the riot, but a full explanation of its characteristics requires a wider range of variables that I shall introduce as we proceed.

A parsimonious syllogism:

1. If risks are few and restraints are removed, we can do as we please to our adversaries.
2. If our adversaries' actions are aggressive and dangerous to us, we are justified in taking action against them.
3. If our adversaries' actions threaten an unstable status quo in intergroup relations, they will arouse us to action against them.
4. If we entertain strong antipathy toward our adversaries, and we are apprehensive about them, their characteristics, and their presence in the polity, our method of dealing with them when conditions one through three are satisfied will consist of killing them.

Underlying each step in the syllogism that leads to violence is a distinctive set of conditions, subjective states through which the external world is assessed, that combine to produce violence. On some matters, such as risk, rioters are quite circumspect, acting only when inhibitions on acting are drastically reduced, while on others, such as the evaluation of the danger posed by the targets, they are hypervigilant, magnifying threats and producing a disproportionate quantum of violence. This odd combination of circumspection and hypervigilance is a central feature of the rioters' repertoire.

#### RISK REDUCTION AND DISINHIBITION

*A major theme of the violent enterprise is risk reduction. Angry or aroused people are not necessarily heedless of risk. An impressively wide*

range of variables affects the rioters' calculation of risk. Among these are supernatural beliefs in invulnerability, lack of credible opposing force or possible retaliation, societal condonation (confirmed by the action and inaction of the state), inadequate police deployment, and a variety of risk-averting tactical decisions taken by the rioters themselves.

The precipitant that inadvertently coordinates action by signaling the willingness of fellow group members to fight, the creation of overwhelming mass, the use of (usually bladed) weapons against unarmed civilians, and the leadership of local figures skilled in fighting all provide an initial advantage for the aggressors. (Small, unarmed crowds do not kill large numbers of victims.) Although selective targeting derives from other sources, it operates to reduce the prospect that multiple opponents will combine against the attackers. The care with which rioters go about choosing victims is also designed to avert the possibility that the attackers will accidentally kill a member of their own group. (Such a killing would, among other things, reduce intraethnic support for the violence.<sup>5</sup>) Crowds generally stay close to home, attack in locales where they have the tactical advantage, and retreat or relocate the attack when they encounter unexpected resistance. Crowds choose moments when their targets are unprotected by the police and by social and political authorities, when they have little fear of retaliation or criminal punishment, and when compunctions about killing are inoperative. As I have said, they attack strong targets at weak moments.

Not all the means employed are perfectly adapted to the goal of reducing risk. Inhibitions on violent behavior are overcome by a number of methods, some of dubious efficacy: oaths and war spells, as well as charms, religious passages, and amulets that are supposed to impart invisibility or invulnerability to those who use them. If these induce aggressors to believe they are protected in battle, they may either reduce or enhance the aggressors' chance of survival. The chance of survival will be enhanced if belief in these methods transcends group lines, as it very often does; magic is a matter on which there is generally a fair amount of interethnic consensus.<sup>6</sup> Frenzy, disinhibiting mania, and amok-like

5. Even under cover of the disorder attending the riot, individual perpetrators do not take advantage of the opportunity to kill or settle old scores against disliked members of their own group.

6. For the effects on violence of intergroup consensus about the efficacy of claims to invulnerability, see K.B. Wilson, "Cults of Violence and Counter-Violence in Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18, no. 3 (September 1992): 527-82, at pp. 575, 579.

behavior are also recognizable in riots. Their furious quality may have the effect of maximizing the advantages enjoyed by the aggressors, but it may also convince them, to their fatal detriment, that risks do not exist.<sup>7</sup> Amok, after all, is the paradigm instance of emotion-laden violence involving the utter disregard of risk, often resulting in the death of the pengamok. Collectively, however, uninhibited fury may contribute to the success of the perpetrators, provided that the targets sense that the aggressors are heedless of risk. While the fearless person may ultimately be brought down, his irrationality may well contribute to the collective effort, particularly if his apparent obliviousness to risk inspires fear and immobilizes the opponent.

When all of these efforts at risk reduction are added up, it becomes clear just how great are the precautions that rioters take. That these precautions do, in the aggregate, reduce risk is demonstrated by the lopsided casualty count, heavily in favor of the attackers. There is not a single riot considered in this book in which rioters miscalculated their own tactics and power, the intentions of the police, or the response of their targets, such that the rioters suffered more casualties than the targets did.<sup>8</sup> The multifaceted character of the precautions shows how tactically cautious rioters are and how likely it is that if risk were increased prospective rioters would be dissuaded from turning to violence. Powerful reduction of inhibition is a necessary condition for a riot.

None of this tells us yet what gratification the riot brings for the perpetrator. Nor does it mean that rioters never trade off risk reduction against other values. They do. Rioters, for example, choose relatively safe sites at which to attack, but they do not always choose the safest sites. And some rioters do die in ethnic riots. What the precautions indicate, however, is the great concern rioters exhibit for the safety of the enter-

7. To be sure, inducing rioters to take extraordinary risks by persuading them that they will be invulnerable or will have a place in paradise may be rational for the leaders, although leaders may well fear retribution by family members if someone said to be invulnerable dies while attacking. But there is no evidence that leaders initiate such transactions except when there is already a brisk market for the benefits afforded by oaths, charms, and amulets, a market created by an atmosphere ripe for killing.

8. Only one arguable exception comes to mind. In Jakarta (May 1998), the majority of those killed were not Chinese but Indonesian looters, trapped in burning shopping malls that had been set afire by other Indonesians. But the Jakarta violence was a hybrid of a deadly riot and a violent protest demonstration (as we have seen, looting is rare in deadly ethnic riots); and the Indonesian casualties were inflicted neither by Chinese nor, for the most part, by security forces trying to repress the violence. Interviews, Jakarta, August 10-14, 1998.

prise. The riot is not wholly risk-free, but it is a low-risk enterprise. Passion has its calculus.

#### RIGHTFUL VIOLENCE: JUSTIFICATION AND THE RIOTERS' ONTOLOGY

To see the riot only in terms of passion or in terms of instrumental activity makes it easy to miss the riot conceived as rightful violence. Recall from Chapter 9 how uniformly rioters act on the basis of broad social approval of the violence and how remorse is virtually never encountered after the riot. As a departure from norms, violence is greatly facilitated by a sense of justification that can bring the activity within the normative framework. We have earlier reviewed experimental studies showing that unwarranted attacks arouse more aggressive responses than warranted ones do and that the presence of approving observers induces more aggressive responses than are provided in the absence of approval. People gauge the appropriateness of their responses to provocation by reference to justification, they seek signals of justification, and they reason about justification, however cursory and faulty their reasoning may be. Justification motivates violence: it frees up otherwise inhibited participants for violence, as it simultaneously gives the upper hand in a crowd to aggressive personalities whose following would otherwise be limited. The sadism of the riot would be difficult to sustain without a belief among the crowd and beyond it that the victims deserve their fate.

It is useful to distinguish between thresholds and motifs of justification. I shall note later that the threshold for attacking ethnic antagonists is lower than it is for attacking ingroup members or members of outgroups toward whom there is indifference or only modest antipathy. But, even so, justification is required. Motifs, however, are generic; the same justifications recur in intergroup as in intragroup violence, and they are grounds for legitimating action that transcends cultures and centuries.

There are several motifs of justification employed in riots and a cognitive mechanism utilized by rioters and their supporters to bring justifying principles to bear. These justifications appear even in circumstances propitious for the rioters, providing all the more reason to credit their motivating force.

Justification typically relates to what are seen as the specific offenses of the target group that proximately produce the violence, but it can extend beyond those offenses as well. Rioters articulate justification based on the enormity of the danger they face, and this is usually cast in terms of self-defense or, less often, retribution for the targets' transgres-

sions. Either way, the threatening character of the actions of the target group justifies the violence. If we ask what allows people to kill others without feeling remorse, we see that precipitating events are interpreted as posing grave, often physical threats to those who initiate the riots. Those events convert the violence into self-defense, and self-defense is everywhere a justification for killing. The rioters commonly see themselves as repelling mass aggression from the target group, which is to say that they can easily see themselves as involved in a species of defensive warfare. It is clear from rumors of aggression and armies on the march, from pre-riot military rituals, and from traditional martial practices in the course of the riot that the attackers view themselves as participating in something akin to military operations.<sup>9</sup> If the riot is analogous to an episode in protracted warfare, killing in battle is permissible and may even become a duty.

Another view of the riot sometimes entertained by participants justifies it in punitive terms. Retribution may be present in riots,<sup>10</sup> and it is often linked to a view of violence as intended to inflict punishment for group wrongdoing that government should have inflicted but has failed to inflict.<sup>11</sup> This is a conception of the function of violence pervasive in

9. For such a conception, see Kakar, *The Colors of Violence*, p. 70. See also Tamotsu Shibutani and Kian M. Kwan, *Ethnic Stratification: A Comparative Approach* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 400-01; Jonathan Spencer, "Popular Perceptions of the Violence: A Provincial View," in James Manor, ed., *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), pp. 187-95, at p. 193; Christopher Boehm, *Blood Revenge: The Anthropology of Feuding in Montenegro and Other Tribal Societies* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1984), p. 89.

10. In addition to Delhi (1984), discussed in these terms in Chapter 3, see, e.g., Alnur B. Elebayeva, "The Osh Incident: Problems for Research," *Post-Soviet Geography* 33, no. 2 (February 1992): 78-88, at p. 83; Mark R. Beissinger, "Nationalist Violence and the State: Political Authority and Contentious Repertoires in the Former U.S.S.R.," *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 4 (July 1998): 401-22. For the distinction between retribution and revenge, see Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explorations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 366-68. Nozick claims that retribution is proportionate to the offense, whereas revenge may not be, and that the agent of retribution, unlike the agent of revenge, need have no personal tie to the victim of the wrong for which he or she exacts retribution. He also asserts that revenge involves pleasure at inflicting suffering, while retribution entails pleasure in doing justice, for retribution involves commitment to some general principles that frame the offense. On this view, insofar as the riot has a punitive dimension, it would seem to be a hybrid.

11. Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 164; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 154, 166-67; Bernard Wasserstein, "Patterns of Communal Conflict in Palestine," in Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky* (London: Peter Halban, 1988), pp. 611-28, at p. 620; Paul R. Brass, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 257.

lynchings (and not just in the United States<sup>12</sup>) and common in feuds.<sup>13</sup> The riot constitutes a form of shadow legal redress, a kind of collective lynching—but, of course, without exemption for individual targets not identified as miscreants; the whole target group is miscreant. Social approval of the violence means that superiors agree with the rioters that the target group has committed something like a collective offense. Justification then attaches easily.

However different they are in other respects, the common core of self-defense, warfare, and punishment for wrongdoing is that each killing is not considered singly but as part of an extended transaction, in which victims and perpetrators change places.<sup>14</sup> The person who kills under these circumstances is relieved of responsibility for the killing by virtue of the connection established between that killing and the conduct that precedes it. The killing is not subject to moral judgment apart from the entire sequence of events.

The riot provides an opportunity to assess how ordinary people think about events and causation. In Chapter 2, when we considered the riot as a bounded episode, we saw that the individuation of events and actions is not self-evident. That is as true for killers as it is for philosophers. Rioters do not define a riot episode as beginning sometime after the precipitant. As practicing ontologists, they do not individuate each event in the sequence; they string together chains of events. For them, the violence inflicted on the target group is indissolubly linked to the antecedent behavior of the target group, as a soldier sees today's attack as inextricably bound up with last week's attack by the opposing army, or even bound up with last year's declaration of war, and as the criminal justice system sees today's punishment as related to—indeed, unintelligible without reference to—yesterday's crime. The tight compression of the riot with precipitating events and target-group behavior in general into what rioters construe as a single transaction is essential to externalizing responsibility for the violence.<sup>15</sup> The perpetrators' failure to individuate ele-

12. See, e.g., *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), July 10, 1998, p. 12.

13. See Keith M. Brown, *Bloodfeud in Scotland, 1573–1625* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), p. 33; Boehm, *Blood Revenge*, p. 183.

14. On justification and self-defense, see Robert C. Brown, Jr., and James T. Tedeschi, "Determinants of Perceived Aggression," *Journal of Social Psychology* 100, First Half (October 1976): 77–87; on revenge, see Peter Loizos, "Intercommunal Killing in Cyprus," *Man* (n.s.) 23, no. 4 (December 1988): 639–53, at pp. 640, 648–50.

15. From this standpoint, precipitating events have three functions. They are emblematic of the danger posed by the target group and so motivate the perpetrators to action; their severity, as I said earlier, signals participants that they will not be alone when they act; and their character as breaches of the formula for living together contributes to the justification for violence.

ments in the sequence constitutes the mechanism that makes it possible to justify the killing. This is exactly the kind of linkage between provocations and criminal acts that legal systems are especially wary of, lest, by legitimizing it, they acquit defendants who are guilty of murder. Self-defense is a carefully circumscribed justification in most legal systems.<sup>16</sup> That does not, however, prevent people from interpreting their aggressive acts as acts committed in the course of self-defense. Rioters assuredly do.

Intergroup attribution studies support this cognitive view of the matter. Ingroup members commonly attribute negative outgroup behavior (including violence) to the inherent characteristics of outgroup members, such as their "bloodlust," whereas ingroup members attribute negative ingroup behavior (including violence) to external causes, such as the need to retaliate or the fear of attack from the outgroup. The ingroup's justification of violence by means of external attributions and projections is tantamount to a belief "that it is really the out-group . . . which is causing" the violence perpetrated by the ingroup.<sup>17</sup>

There is also support in attribution research for the tight linkage of one event to another. An important study of autobiographical accounts of conflict reveals a tendency for people who are provoked to anger by the conduct of others to place the most recent provocations "in a longer time frame." They "describe a series of provocations or grievances," rather than a single, discrete incident.<sup>18</sup> There is a tendency to interpret a precipitating incident not only in the light of the imputed characteristics of the target group but in the light of instances of the targets' prior conduct. Rioters' judgments of justification take account of the whole series of events, not just the most recent, according a cumulative weight to the series. As ontologists, rioters are radical unifiers; they resist the individuation of their own conduct and that of the targets as well. This cognitive propensity to act on the basis of chains of events greatly facilitates justification of the resulting violence.

16. In particular, the law typically requires that, to constitute self-defense, the defendant's conduct respond to a threat that is not merely grave but imminent—that is, temporally proximate to the defendant's response. The criminal law could scarcely function without a strong tendency to individuate the defendant's actions from those that preceded them. It is precisely this individuation that rioters reject. Cf. Donald L. Horowitz, "Justification and Excuse in the Program of the Criminal Law," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 49, no. 3 (Summer 1986): 109–26.

17. J.A. Hunter, M. Stringer, and R.P. Watson, "Intergroup Violence and Intergroup Attributions," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 30, no. 3 (September 1991): 261–66, at pp. 264, 265 (emphasis in the original).

18. Roy F. Baumeister, Arlene Stillwell, and Sara R. Wotman, "Victim and Perpetrator Accounts of Interpersonal Conduct: Autobiographical Narratives about Anger," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 59, no. 4 (October 1990): 994–1005, at p. 1001.

AROUSAL AND THE MAGNITUDE  
AND SATISFACTIONS OF VIOLENCE

The line between anger or arousal and justification is slightly elusive, for anger is greater if it is felt to be justified. Nevertheless, riot violence cannot be understood without separate consideration of the emotional state that accompanies it. That emotional state and its specific properties help explain several features of the violence, especially its magnitude and explosive character and its ability to attract participants.

The deadly ethnic riot is, indisputably, angry violence. Although individual dispositions to anger vary, anger is an emotion evoked by a stimulus external to the person who feels it. We take note of those we call "angry people," but only because the durability of this emotion in them deviates from its normally fluctuating, externally induced character. The external stimulus may be a wrong that has been committed, an affront, a thwarting, or a threat from an identifiable source. The stimulus arouses people to counter it. In this sense, anger is based, however loosely, on reason. But, as a hot response to what may be a cold threat, anger can call up an emotional repertoire far wider than is necessary to meet the demands of the moment. Visceral as it is, anger always raises the prospect of action that outruns its cause.

Such disproportionate responses characterize the deadly ethnic riot. In the first instance, the violence responds to information about danger, and it is possible to discern the outlines of purposes at the core of the violence, but the violence then goes well beyond the danger.

Behind the anger of the perpetrators lies apprehension about impending consequences. Anger, as Aristotle explained in the classic treatment of the emotions,<sup>19</sup> can ultimately be reduced to fear, especially fear of those who entertain ill will and have the capacity to inflict harm, for they must be presumed to be planning to act on their intentions. Severely divided societies are filled with feelings of wrong produced by ingroup bias and discrimination, the desire of groups to reap disproportionate shares of rewards, and the wish to place the status of ethnic strangers at sufferance and, if possible, to establish an ethnic hierarchy. When one group claims to dominate a whole state, while another merely claims equal treatment in it, both can feel wronged if the political equilibrium is not at either of the preferred points.

19. Aristotle, *The Rhetoric*, trans. Lane Cooper (New York: D. Appleton, 1932), Bk. II, § 4, pp. 107-10.

Generalized apprehension, however, is not sufficient to arouse people to violence. People seek information about the aims of their adversaries. For rioters, the precipitating event constitutes the most recent source of information about the intentions of the target group. Virtually every precipitant of a deadly ethnic riot is interpreted as a challenge to domination, an augury of subordination, a confirmation of hostile intentions, a demonstration of target-group cohesion, strength, and intransigence, or an indication that ethnic politics has become uncertain. Precipitants are the proximate behavioral manifestations of target-group inclinations, and they convey a strong sense of danger. In some cases, such as lock-in elections; the danger of political subordination is immediate; in others, such as changes in ethnic policy, the danger is merely foreshadowed by the implicit alteration in group status; while, in still others, such as strikes begun by one group and resisted by another, the danger is signified by the demand that the resisters should take orders from the ethnic strangers who are striking. Ethnic groups are on the lookout for clues, and theirs is an early-warning watch.

Why this is so is easy to discern. The human experience with alien rule has been a decidedly unhappy one. The magnitude of the possible consequences requires close attention to the symbolic meaning of actions, in rather the same way that states in the international system attend to and act preemptively to forestall grave but less-than-immediate dangers that, if permitted to be consummated, might produce a cumulative, adverse effect. To wait is to permit the balance of power to become less favorable.

None of this means, however, that the rioters' arousal is proportionate to the danger or that violence is the only apt response. The targets are imagined to be very dangerous, but they produce no mass violence before or after the riot. It is a short step from apprehension to the imputation of hostile intentions to the targets. In experimental settings, perceptions of hostile intentions on the part of others produce more aggression against them than is produced even by actual attacks by those others.<sup>20</sup> These perceptions may be inaccurate or projective, and they often involve anxiety-induced exaggerations of the dangers posed by the targets — all of which we have observed in great measure, beginning with the rumors enumerated in Chapter 3. The term *fear*, which conventionally implies realistic apprehension, may be misplaced, as I shall explain later in this

20. Gordon W. Russell and Robert L. Arms, "False Consensus Effect, Physical Aggression, Anger, and a Willingness to Escalate a Disturbance," *Aggressive Behavior* 21, no. 5 (September-October 1995): 381-86, at p. 384.

chapter, when I assess alternative approaches to ethnic violence. One of the most striking features of the riot data consists of the contrast between the risk aversion and circumspection with which rioters conduct their violent enterprise and the promiscuous evaluation of danger that leads them to violent action in the first place.

To those who analyze aggression, this comes as no surprise. Experimental studies of the phenomenon are replete with examples of variable aggressive responses to the same aversive stimuli. These responses may be more or less severe, depending on the relationship of the experimental subjects to the targets, the identity of the targets, and the emotional state of the subjects. But nothing in the laboratory quite matches the extreme hypervigilance of ethnic rioters.

The discharge of aggression is a satisfying experience. Studies of the cathartic effects of aggression are numerous. They uniformly show a decrease in arousal after aggression, whether arousal is measured behaviorally, by reduced iterations of aggression after the event, or physiologically, by declines in systolic blood pressure.<sup>21</sup> The satisfying quality of aggression explains the ability of the riot to attract participants from among those who are aroused.<sup>22</sup> The participation of rioters can hardly be explained, in fact, by any objectives beyond the violence itself. To the extent that property is implicated, destruction is the theme. Theft is decidedly secondary. Looting is usually discouraged in killing crowds, in favor of arson. Even an objective as draconian as homogenization encounters a free-rider problem, for it is assuredly an indivisible benefit. Like all the other changes in group relations that might follow ethnic violence, non-rioters, too, will enjoy it if it materializes.<sup>23</sup> Risks have been

21. See, e.g., Vladimir J. Konečni and Ebbe B. Ebbeson, "Disinhibition versus the Cathartic Effect: Artifact and Substance," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 34, no. 3 (September 1976): 352-65; Vladimir J. Konečni, "Self-Arousal, Dissipation of Anger, and Aggression," *Proceedings of the Division of Personality and Social Psychology* (American Psychological Association, mimeo., 1974); Anthony N. Doob and Lorraine E. Wood, "Catharsis and Aggression: Effects of Annoyance and Retaliation on Aggressive Behavior," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 22, no. 2 (August 1972): 156-62.

22. Even in nonlethal violent protest demonstrations, there is a certain warm feeling, even joy, engendered by the sense of a community acting without restraint. See S.D. Reicher, "The St. Paul's Riot: An Explanation of the Limits of Crowd Action in Terms of a Social Identity Model," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 14, no. 1 (January-March 1984): 1-21, at p. 16.

23. The same goes for reduction of fear. For members of the perpetrator group, if the only question is whether to support the violence, the asserted danger from the other side might constitute an adequate reason for general support. Fear of the other side, however, is insufficient to induce active participation in the violence. In fact, the more acutely realistic the fear, the more reluctant a prospective participant might be.

dramatically reduced for riot participants, but they are scarcely negligible (especially if the police are misjudged), and the most serious risk that can materialize is catastrophic: an unpleasant death. Under these conditions, the temptation to let others do the rioting should be overwhelming, unless, of course, participation is the benefit. I have argued that killing and degrading constitute a large part of the satisfaction generated by the riot. No free rider can secure these benefits.<sup>24</sup> Aggressive subjects in experiments, it will be recalled, enjoy the aggression, especially the experience of domination it provides.

Crowd composition suggests that the violence is valued for itself but that the taste for violence is not evenly distributed. If it were, others might join in with the same enthusiasm that is displayed by the fractional cohorts of young males who comprise the bulk of the participants. A central component of riot gratification presumably relates to hormonal elements that pertain to all fighting.

If the violence is an emotional response to events, it also has an exemplary character, embodied in the phrase "teach them a lesson." The perpetrators might have refrained from killing had the targets behaved in accordance with the rioters' understanding of an appropriate regime of interethnic political relations. Hence, again, the motivating importance of precipitants — they are not mere sparks. Hence, too, local precipitants usually meet with a local response, and violence generally declines in intensity as it spreads. Peace is conditioned upon tolerable political behavior by the target group, and the rioters, fearful of change, act to restore a tolerable status quo ante. Rioters are sometimes mollified when such a reversion — or, better, regression to terms even more favorable to them — takes place, as in Malaysia after 1969.

The exemplary message is consonant with that part of the perpetrators' behavior that relates to the *incidence* of violence, but not to all aspects of its *conduct*. Some specific features of the riot can be explained only by the emotional character of the episode and some additional conditions, soon to be highlighted, that are associated with its emotional features. Rioters will, if necessary, coexist with a thoroughly humbled target group that has learned its "lesson." Nevertheless, rioters generally prefer a homogeneous environment, rather than settling for the mere humiliation of the targets. Politicians use the riot after the fact and sometimes try

24. Note that the targets have their own version of the free-rider problem, and they choose to ride free. For them, safety might be obtained either by fighting back or by hiding. Overwhelmingly, they choose not to fight. Since their action would be defensive, they have no consummatory satisfaction in fighting.

to organize it in advance to send a clear message of conditional coexistence, but the behavior of the rioters renders the text of the message murky, ambiguous, hard to read, and blurred by much harsher messages, usually auguring genocide. The ferocity of the violence induces many target groups in possession of the appropriate territorial or human resources to resort to secession or other forcible means, such as the military coup, to assert themselves; and so the riot becomes dysfunctional to the goal of conditional coexistence on terms favorable to the perpetrator group. Politicians who try to use the riot for specific objectives usually find that the crowd will not act in an appropriately calibrated way.

The future-oriented, behavior-shaping, instrumental features of the riot never preempt the pleasure of the violent act. Riots may begin by being exemplary, but they end by being euphoric. Atrocities and mutilations, which might be interpreted as intended to communicate with the target group in an even more terrorizing way than can be accomplished by killing alone, are performed with such sadistic glee at the degradation and the gore that no imputation of merely instrumental motive can supplant the obvious affect of these events. Rioters do not permit male victims to escape so that they may communicate the message of the rioters' terror to others more effectively. When one family member is forced to watch the dismemberment of another and then is killed in turn, no elaborate argument is needed to conclude that, for the rioter, the pleasure is in the doing and the overdoing, rather than in any communication with other members of the target group that the violence manages to achieve.

The characteristic strength of the target group implies that the riot has utility for the group that inflicts the violence. But the violence that aims to thwart domination, particularly the violence of so-called backward groups, is suffused with affect born of humiliation. Much of the pleasure that violence brings springs from the mastery that reverses dishonor. The euphoria of the rioters derives from breaking loose and doing what needed to be done and ought to have been done sooner, from being, for once, deliberately unmeasured and out of control. That rioters behave this way even when the riot has been relatively well organized, as in Mauritius (1968) or Delhi (1984), is telling evidence of the generous measure of reactivity and impulsivity that overcomes the participants.<sup>25</sup>

In its response to affront and in its experience of "the ecstasy of mortal combat,"<sup>26</sup> the riot resembles amok and performs the same function

25. The nonlethal violence in Fiji (1987), described in Chapter 12, is the best counterexample of self-restraint deriving from organization and limited goals.

26. Henri Fauconnier, *The Soul of Malaya*, trans. Eric Sutton, 2d ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 225.

for the aggressor, redeeming him from painful restraint.<sup>27</sup> In many ways, but not in the pengamok's resignation to his own death, amok-like impulses pervade the riot;<sup>28</sup> and amok, however calculative in its methods, is the polar opposite of instrumental violence. There is no way to convert the riot into a wholly instrumental activity.

For a few riot leaders, those who excel in brutality, there is an instrumental benefit not yet identified, but it lies in intraethnic, rather than interethnic, relations. The violent criminal, according to Jack Katz, enjoys the violence: he is "in control of the meaning of the situation"; he "rules the moment"; he delights in generating "dread."<sup>29</sup> Gratuitous violence — more than the occasion demands — what Katz calls "recreational violence,"<sup>30</sup> a phrase apt for the gleeful flavor of the riot,<sup>31</sup> is good for the reputation of the practitioner of violence, for it establishes him as a person never to be trifled with.<sup>32</sup> Yet such a person is not acting only out of reputational self-interest but also out of "commitment to the transcendence of a hard will."<sup>33</sup> The man who emerges as a riot leader will become an ethnic hero as tales of his brutality spread within his group. A good example is Kiyai Salleh, whom we encountered in Chapters 3 and 7. Still, whatever the reputational rewards, the hard-willed killer — and most communities harbor such aggressive people<sup>34</sup> — will also bask in the consuming gratification that killing an enemy can provide. This, again, is a benefit that cannot be enjoyed by sitting on the sidelines.

From all of this it should be obvious that, while danger gives rise to anger, there is an overflow. A specific precipitant or series of precipitants produces a generalized response, an outpouring of impulsive behavior, more than the occasion would seem to warrant. Some part of the tendency for the violence to be so explosive and disproportionate is obvi-

27. Kakar, *The Colors of Violence*, p. 180, notes that anger is an antidote to a paralyzing anxiety deriving from a sense of persecution. For people in such a position, "violent assertion . . . is psychically mobilizing . . ."

28. For a different view, see Robert Cribb, "Problems in the Historiography of the Killings in Indonesia," in Robert Cribb, ed., *The Indonesian Killings, 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali* (Clayton, Victoria, Australia: Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, no. 21, 1990), pp. 1-43, at pp. 33-34.

29. Jack Katz, *Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), pp. 10, 135-38.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

31. See Cribb, "Problems in the Historiography of the Killings in Indonesia," p. 31, referring to "a delight in gratuitous violence . . ."

32. Katz, *Seductions of Crime*, p. 183.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

34. See, e.g., C.R. Hallpike, *Bloodshed and Vengeance in the Papuan Mountains* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 210.

ously explicable by the self-selection of rioters who especially enjoy violence. But additional features of the arousal of the crowd are involved. The surfeit of violence is due to the ability of people to store anger, to the physically threatening character of pre-riot events and relationships, and to collective effects on individual behavior.

In fashioning their response, as I have explained, rioters are disinclined to abide by a precisely bounded specification of the precipitant. Rioters are able to link precipitants to antecedent events because of mechanisms that facilitate the expression of pent-up anger all at once. We have seen that anger can grow over time and be stored and redirected, as it is in displaced aggression. There has been a good deal of theorizing about how the memory of prior aversive events can be tapped by a current event to enhance the level of anger. The mechanism is still not wholly clear,<sup>35</sup> but almost certainly it is connected to the variable tendency among people to ruminate on their grievances.<sup>36</sup> Among some, anger dissipates rapidly. But those individuals and (presumably) groups that have keen memories of earlier events and that harbor thoughts of vengeance are likely to produce outbursts disproportionate to the most recent provocations. Memories of this sort are perpetuated and amplified by their ideologization in the course of ethnic politics.

There is evidence that individuals who are provoked connect the most recent provocation to earlier provocations in a series. They recount experiencing "continued hostility" and "lasting grievances" from the earlier incidents.<sup>37</sup> Such people often stifle the expression of their anger at the earlier stages but eventually "respond to the series of provocations by expressing the accumulated anger," with a magnitude that, to them, "seems entirely appropriate to the multiple offenses."<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, those who see the last incident before the outburst as a discrete event — and this, the research reveals, includes those who do the provoking<sup>39</sup> — view the discharge of the accumulated anger as an overreaction.

35. See Leonard Berkowitz, "On the Formation and Regulation of Anger and Aggression," *American Psychologist* 45, no. 4 (April 1990): 494–503.

36. Katrina Collins and Robert Bell, "Personality and Aggression: The Dissipation-Rumination Scale," *Personality and Individual Differences* 22, no. 5 (May 1997): 751–55; Gian Vittorio Caprara, "Indicators of Aggression: The Dissipation-Rumination Scale," *Personality and Individual Differences* 7, no. 6 (November 1986): 763–69. Unfortunately, the experimental setting leads most laboratory researchers to inquire into dissipation and rumination over minutes and hours, rather than longer periods. But see note 37, below.

37. Baumeister, Stillwell, and Wotman, "Victim and Perpetrator Accounts of Interpersonal Conflict," p. 1001.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 1002.

39. *Ibid.*

The asymmetric interpretation of the precipitant by the provoker and the provoked is a key to understanding the magnitude of the violence. In divided societies, there is plenty of accumulated anger, and the riot, with the anonymity it affords, is conducive as a gateway for release. Inhibitions are exceptionally low, the environment bristles with justification, and the immediately preceding events are evocative of the whole course of relations and the issues subsisting between the antagonists. All groups, after all, have a folk history of relations with others. The evocativeness of the precipitants must be particularly influential in triggering associated memories and drawing out stored anger. As Sudhir Kakar says, the riot can be seen as another step in an intermittent, drawn-out war.<sup>40</sup>

The intensity of the violence is also connected to the specifically physical character of the relationships and events that precede it. Not all target-group characteristics involve the possibility of fighting with the targets, but several — reputation for aggression, traditional antagonism (usually manifested by earlier combat), and opposition in war — certainly do. The same is true of precipitants, several of which entail palpable demonstrations of the physical danger posed by the targets. By the time the riot begins, there is a good chance that the transaction has been conceived as a trial of physical strength against powerful antagonists.

If part of the explanation for the explosiveness of the violence lies in the psychology of anger and its storage, while another part rests with the aggressive frame in which pre-riot events are set, crowd effects also intensify the violence. At various points, I have elicited evidence that, all else equal, collectivities behave more aggressively than individuals do. In laboratories, they administer more intense shocks and advance more hostile proposals; on the streets, they engage in more vicious violence.<sup>41</sup> When conventional behavioral norms are inoperative, the practitioners of sadism and dread, who are ordinarily avoided by their communities, come into their own, and local fighters become models for emulation. The situation that provides bullies and killers newfound respect is the same situation that allows ordinary people to cast off the uncomfortable restraints that prevent them from acting on their anger. That situation also sets up a market in escalation. A participant in the Chinese Cultural Revolution turned sociologist has described the peer pressure that prevails at the moment of aggression: "[T]he one beginning the beating wants to attract public attention. After the first hit, the beatings are

40. Kakar, *The Colors of Violence*, p. 70.

41. See Michael Argyle, *The Social Psychology of Everyday Life* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 172–73. See also Chapter 3, pp. 116–17, above.

impossible to stop. Everyone needs to express their hatred to their enemies. . . . Beating someone to death usually involves more than one person, a whole group. No one dared to show any weakness in beating. . . . Sympathy during that period was unheard of."<sup>42</sup> We have no comparable testimony from ethnic riot participants, but it seems improbable in the extreme that the same crowd dynamic that magnifies violence could be inoperative. In the study of collective violence, crowds and crowd effects need to be taken seriously.

One mechanism that may support the even-greater violence of genocides but that is not present in riots consists of threats against those who are reluctant to participate. In the Rwanda genocide of 1994, for example, Hutu who refused to kill Tutsi were sometimes killed by other Hutu, and it has been suggested that the magnitude of genocidal violence is attributable, in part, to the willingness of organizers to kill ingroup members who are reluctant to be conscripted for interethnic killing.<sup>43</sup> State sponsorship of genocides makes this a logical inference. But deadly ethnic rioters do not kill ingroup members, reluctant or not. Occasionally, crowd members are taunted by bystanders to encourage them to violence, but there is no evidence of punishment of nonparticipants. Participation in the deadly riot is voluntary and authentic.

#### THE DEEP STRUCTURE OF HATRED AND THE DESTRUCTIVE ENTHUSIASM OF THE RIOT

As the riot arises out of specific situations that seem to demand a violent response, the riot is also a product of underlying antipathy. Events alone do not explain the outbreak. "You know our fashion," a Papuan leader told an anthropologist. "We look at these people; we look at them for a long time. We say they are there: good we kill them. We think of this all the time, and when our bellies get too hot, we go and kill them."<sup>44</sup> Bellies do get hot, and they get especially hot against those who are already disliked. Equally provocative actions undertaken by potential target groups against whom there is less antipathy are interpreted in less hostile terms

42. Xiaoxia Gong, "The Logic of Repressive Collective Action: A Case Study of Violence in the Chinese Cultural Revolution," forthcoming in Kam-yeec Law, ed., *Beyond a Purge and a Holocaust: The Chinese Cultural Revolution Reconsidered* (London: Macmillan, 2000), MS. p. 24.

43. David Backer and Ravi Bhavnani, "Localized Ethnic Conflict and Genocide: Accounting for Differences in Rwanda and Burundi" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, September 3-6, 1998), pp. 17, 19.

44. Hallpike, *Bloodshed and Vengeance in the Papuan Mountains*, p. 208.

by prospective perpetrators and deemed worthy of a milder response or none at all.<sup>45</sup> Intergroup antipathy is thus a necessary condition for the deadly riot. (I am not referring here, of course, only to traditional antagonism or so-called ancient hatreds, which, as I have made clear, are by no means the predominant sources of interethnic antipathy.)

Where group identities are salient, group characteristics affect the way actions are interpreted. Group membership is the lens through which ingroup members explain the behavior of outgroup members. Outgroup members are seen as having more powerful intentions to cause harm than are ingroup members, and harmful behavior by outgroup members is evaluated more negatively than is identical behavior by ingroup members.<sup>46</sup> Anger is easier to evoke when there is prior hostility and produces a more severe response than when there is not.<sup>47</sup> There are differential tendencies to retaliate for identical offensive behavior, depending on whether there is positive or negative attraction to a provoker;<sup>48</sup> and even proxies for negative attraction produce differential responses.<sup>49</sup>

The events that precede the riot are interpreted against the background of group hostility. The events are attached to a whole relationship. This has two consequences. Since the events are interpreted in group terms, there is an accompanying imputation of malevolence, and the events are taken to require a far more serious response than they would otherwise receive. The brutality of the crowd thus expresses more widely shared sentiments about what the targets deserve. Behind the crowd stands the community. Recall, again, pervasive social support for the riot and subsequent lack of remorse.

*Antipathy, hostility, and animus* are terms that denote strong opposition, antagonism, or aversion, which may shade over into *hatred*. By

45. Hatred is, as Marilyn B. Brewer has argued, the product of more than ingroup favoritism alone. Brewer, "Ingroup Identification and Intergroup Conflict: When Does Ingroup Love Become Outgroup Hate?" forthcoming in R. Ashmore, L. Jussim, and D. Wilder, eds., *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Ingroups may thus exhibit favoritism vis-à-vis many other groups without experiencing hatred toward them.

46. Sandra Schuijjer et al., "The Group-Serving Bias in Evaluating and Explaining Harmful Behavior," *Journal of Social Psychology* 134, no. 1 (February 1994): 47-53.

47. Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: A Social-Psychological Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), pp. 152-60.

48. Andrew Nesdale, Brendan Gail Rule, and Kenneth A. Hill, "The Effect of Attraction on Causal Attributions and Retaliation," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 4, no. 2 (April 1978): 231-34.

49. Russell Veitch and Anthony Piccione, "The Role of Attitude Similarity in the Attribution Process," *Social Psychology* 41, no. 2 (June 1978): 165-69.

some definitions, hatred is an enduring collection of aggressive impulses toward a person or category. Characterized by "habitual bitter feeling and accusatory thought,"<sup>50</sup> hatred, like antipathy, the milder version of the same emotion, is stubborn. Since both emotions are durable, they are available for invocation in response to acts and events as they come along. Whereas antipathy and hatred are a function of a whole course of relations, anger is produced by single events that may be interpreted singly; it can be produced even in a laboratory with subjects and instigators who have had no prior experience with each other.

A single event that might, without such prior experience, give rise to an angry response focused directly and narrowly on the instigator is, however, interpreted by the person who entertains antipathy to call up all of the dangerous proclivities imputed to the object of antipathy. The first thing that ethnic antipathy or hatred does is to take anger-producing events and convert them into the acts of the entire ethnic group. They are not merely acts of those individuals directly responsible for the events. Antipathy or hatred toward the class or category means precisely a disposition toward generalization and away from individuation of targets within the group. By focusing anger on the whole target group, antipathy makes the violence indiscriminately *ethnic*.

Antipathy (or hatred, where it exists) also contributes to the brutality and magnitude of the violence. For to interpret events through the lens of "bitter feeling and accusatory thought" is to impart to those events greater significance than would be accorded by those viewing them without that lens. Just as antipathy colors the interpretation of stimuli, attributing them to a deindividuated collectivity, so does it shape the response to stimuli, for the lives of strangers against whom there is animus are believed to be of lesser value than those of ethnic kin, perhaps even of trivial value.

The degree of antipathy is individually and temporally variable. One ingroup member may be angered by a precipitating event; another may dislike the outgroup associated with it; a third may actively hate that group. Within individuals, too, the balance among these sentiments may shift over time. Precipitating events probably shift the balance in a more hostile direction, individually and in the aggregate. (As we saw in Chapter 10, recurrent riots have the effect of increasing intergroup

50. Gordon W. Allport, "The Nature of Hatred," in Robert M. Baird and Stuart E. Rosenbaum, eds., *Bigotry, Prejudice and Hatred* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1992), pp. 31-34, at p. 31.

antipathy.) "The angry man," says Aristotle, "wishes the object of his anger to suffer in return; hatred wishes its object not to exist."<sup>51</sup> The riot entails the infliction of both suffering and destruction. In its intimations of extinction of the target group, the riot certainly expresses mass hatred.

It is important to make clear that I am not explaining aggression in a tautological way, by citing aggressive impulses, or explaining destruction by the wish to destroy. Beneath ethnic antipathy and hatred, which are dispositions awaiting occasions, lie causes in group relations. The target-group characteristics identified in Chapter 5 have a common threatening thread. The perpetrators see themselves in danger of being outdone, controlled, or victimized by the targets. That the initiator group has ceded important areas of superiority to the target group is the foundation for hostility. This sensibility informs the hostile dispositions of the initiators.

An understanding of hatred, that most understudied of emotions, facilitates the understanding of indiscriminate violence against members of the target group. Ethnic hatred consists of at least four elements: (1) a growing focus on the hated group, to the neglect of others; (2) a belief that the hated group possesses fixed characteristics and dispositions to action; (3) a compression of intragroup differences attributed to members of the hated group; and (4) a sense of repulsion toward the group and its members. Some of these elements are merely extreme versions of ethnic attitudes in general, while others are features of negative affect; but the amalgam is powerful.

Hatred concentrates the attention of whoever holds that emotion. It is, as Gordon W. Allport has said, "an enduring organization of aggressive impulses . . . a stubborn structure in the mental-emotional life of the individual."<sup>52</sup> Hatred has an obsessive aspect. I have noted that a great deal of severe conflict is associated with growing bipolarity between groups that come to view each other as opposite types. Hatred is scrupulously focused on a single (collective) object. Such a tendency contributes to what I called the economy of antipathy that accompanies violence, screening out lesser antipathies and rendering them irrelevant for the time being. Hatred and selective targeting go hand in hand.

This keenly sensed opposition is characterized by widely distributed

51. Aristotle, *The Rhetoric*, Bk. II, § 4, p. 107. Hatred is "the affect that accompanies the wish to destroy an object." Richard Galdston, "The Longest Pleasure: A Psychoanalytic Study of Hatred," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 68, no. 3 (1987): 371-78, at p. 373.

52. Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1958), p. 341.

beliefs in the reputations of groups. Those who hate believe that the object of their hatred has properties that do not change. They believe that, in a certain sense, the objects of hatred cannot help themselves, that their attributes are embedded in their nature.

Subgroup differences are perceived more keenly by members of the group said to possess them than they are by outgroup members, who assume a high degree of homogeneity among others.<sup>53</sup> To the belief that the targets are unlike the perpetrators in important ways is added the belief that all members of the target group share a common repertoire. Believing in the homogeneity of the targets, as well as in the embeddedness of the polarity, rioters are certainly not social constructivists. These beliefs underpin indiscriminate targeting within the target group. When such beliefs change, the deadly riot declines.

Finally, there is sharply negative affect, a sense of repulsion that motivates the wish that the targets no longer share the same environment. This emotion is undoubtedly a function of unflattering comparisons feared by those who experience the emotion, and it is strongly felt by groups who complain of being outdone by ethnic strangers or who sense that aggressive newcomers are taking over the environment.

These four qualities that form part of the deep structure of hatred make possible the imputation of collective guilt and, consequently, the infliction of indiscriminate violence on the targets, but they do not require either. A moment's reflection on lynching, which is also born of hatred but is not indiscriminate, makes that clear. What is required, in addition to hatred, is a collective offense by the targets. Whereas lynching is preceded by an individual offense, and by collective action the lynching crowd warns others in the offending category against its repetition, the riot is preceded by a decidedly collective offense; there are no others left to warn. This is one reason the crowd carries the violence so far: it is tempted to finish the victims off, rather than merely teach them a lesson.

An especially forceful, brutal, and lethal response is thought to be commensurate with the danger posed, not by the proximate events alone (those merely produce anger), but by the fundamental character traits of—and thus the behavior that can be expected of—the targets. Observers who think that even trivial precipitants can produce ethnic riots are nearly always wrong, but perhaps what they really mean to say is that the response to a precipitant is, to outsiders, startlingly disproportionate.

53. As this statement indicates, the perception of outgroup homogeneity is a generalized one, but it can be falsified. Those who entertain ethnic hatred find it dangerous to learn of the heterogeneity of the group that is the object of their hatred.

tionate, *when the precipitant is considered as a one-time event*. Antipathy never permits consideration of a precipitant as a one-time event. Just as the rioters do not individuate their own violent action, but tie it to the earlier actions of the targets, thus facilitating justification of the violence and inhibiting the growth of remorse, they also do not individuate the precipitant or its author but consider it to be part and parcel of the ongoing conduct of an entire ethnic group—and, as such, a further manifestation of group character and intentions. As ontologists, rioters again show themselves to be prodigious unifiers, who assiduously link together events in a single, unbounded chain and link targets in an indivisible group. They do not reason the way social scientists do, by partitioning variables, which is one reason social science has had so much trouble understanding them.

#### STRATEGIC AND RATIONALIST APPROACHES TO ETHNIC VIOLENCE

A spate of writing following the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia argues that ethnic warfare can be understood in terms of strategic dilemmas or rational action. Most of the arguments are applicable only to *highly organized civil or separatist warfare*, but some need to be assessed for their more general implications for ethnic riots.

#### SECURITY DILEMMAS AND RIOTS

One line of argument is founded on the classical security dilemma encountered in international relations. A security dilemma arises when, in a situation of anarchy, it becomes difficult to distinguish an opponent's *defensive preparations* from what may be its offensive intentions. Under these uncertain circumstances, an actor is better off launching preemptive warfare if offense is better than defense and if the actor's current military advantage would be eroded by inaction.

Some security-dilemma theorists, most notably Barry R. Posen,<sup>54</sup> who pioneered the application of the security dilemma to ethnic war, are careful to limit themselves to warfare between incipient states in the anarchic situation resulting from the collapse of Yugoslavia.<sup>55</sup> They make no spe-

54. Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 27-47.

55. For a looser sense of what is meant by anarchy, see David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Spreading Fear: The Genesis of Transnational Ethnic Conflict," in David A.

cial claims for the rationality of all aspects of the decision to go to war. On the contrary, Posen underscores that, while the record of earlier violent transactions affects the participants' views of the likelihood of attack from the other side and thus the need to strike first, interpretations of the intentions of opponents will be skewed toward the imputation of malevolence if there is a history of ethnic violence.<sup>56</sup>

Some riot episodes bear a partial resemblance to warfare that emerges from the security dilemma. Precipitants sometimes back a group into what it sees as a corner, and a few precipitants may suggest a need to strike first. This is especially true of precipitating events, such as large, disorderly processions, that themselves verge on violence or evoke violent imagery. Even so, many processions precipitate violence because they embody an affront or an unacceptable political challenge, or perhaps because they cue aggressive responses, rather than because they create a realistic fear in the initiators that they will be subject to attack if they themselves do not strike first.

Many other features of riots confound any analogy to the security dilemma. The genuine uncertainty about intentions that characterizes the security dilemma is, in the riot, overlaid by elements of projection and imagined aggressive acts. During the lull that typically follows the last precipitant, both sides do not mobilize for violence. Only the initiator group does, and so the dilemma in which neither side can assess whether the other will strike first does not exist.<sup>57</sup> The attack takes place at a moment of safety, not a moment of special danger. That safety for the rioters is typically provided by the expectation that the police will not interfere. Whereas the true security dilemma is created by international anarchy, in which self-help is a necessary strategy of preemptive defense, for rioters there is no anarchy. Rather, there is a supportive environment. Knowing this, the targets do not attack or prepare to attack, except in very unusual circumstances. Even then, their first violent steps will be overwhelmed by the initiators' violent response, facilitated by a supportive environment.<sup>58</sup>

Of course, hostile behavior on the part of the target group precedes the violence. It is not the existence of a threat that is at issue, but the spe-

Lake and Donald Rothchild, eds., *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 3-32, at p. 8.

56. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," pp. 30-31.

57. Consistent patterns of targeting over time and space also confirm the unlikelihood that either side could strike first. The same side does, again and again.

58. See, e.g., Brass, *Theft of an Idol*, pp. 214-21, on Kanpur (1992).

cific threat of violence from the targets and the depiction of that threat as presenting a security dilemma.<sup>59</sup>

#### FEAR, ANTIPATHY, AND RIOTS

More general rationalist arguments for ethnic violence, not so easily confined to international warfare, bear heavily on a larger issue that threads its way through the riot materials: whether emotions can be subsumed in reason. Rationalists have generally argued against explanations that provide an independent place for passion, suggesting instead that conflict and violence derive from the suboptimal consequences of rational action. A number of these accounts concern an emotion central to the riot—fear—and this adds to their pertinence here.

Two attributes pervade rationalist accounts of ethnic violence: a profound antipathy to antipathy as an explanatory variable and a strong role for manipulative elites as progenitors of violent action. A third, a tendency to interpret ethnic violence as the outgrowth of frictions in interpersonal relations, is present in some accounts but not others. A fourth, alternating with the third, is a view of ethnic violence as the product of collective fear, conceived as a rational response to a very significant threat; and a fifth, which follows from the fourth, is an inference that violence occurs when the risks of failing to engage in violence are great.

On several points, there are contrasts with the account rendered here. I have argued that antipathy is a necessary condition for the deadly ethnic riot. The riot is a mass phenomenon, from which leaders attempt to benefit. Intergroup, rather than interpersonal, conflicts produce ethnic violence. Fear does indeed underlie violence, but it is fear characterized by faulty reasoning and magnification of danger, rather than clear-eyed rationality and an accurate assessment of the risks of refraining from violence.

I have dealt with a number of rationalist arguments about ethnic riots—such as the view that violence flows from random shocks or from disturbances in interpersonal relations—in other chapters. But two challenges to the role of passion are worth considering separately because of

59. Neither does the riot result from other components of strategic dilemmas invoked by David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 41-75; information failure or the inability of groups to commit themselves credibly to fulfill agreements they make. That is not to say that these components may not aid in explaining other forms of ethnic violence.

their large implications for riot behavior, even if, in both cases, the focus of the accounts is on ethnic warfare. The first is a claim for the rationality of fear; the second, a claim for the rationality of atrocities.

Fear of the immediate or more distant future is a pivotal element in a number of approaches to ethnic warfare. In one carefully framed account, by Robert Bates, Rui de Figueiredo, and Barry Weingast, the ethnification of politics is the product of mass fear that the other side *may* strike first, the reinforcement of this fear by ambitious ethnic-group leaders, who convince followers of the plausibility that the other group *will* strike first, and the unintended cooperation of the other group by acting in ways that seem to confirm the fear.<sup>60</sup> Fear induces people to support even very costly violence, because the choice seems to be between becoming a victim or becoming a participant. In the former Yugoslavia, the Serbs had had experience of genocide by Croats during World War II.<sup>61</sup> When, in the early 1990s, the Croats opted for independence and for state symbols reminiscent of the Ustasha-led fascist republic of World War II, and when Serb police were dismissed and guerrilla warfare began inside Croatia, the Croats signaled the reasonableness of Serb fears, manipulated by Slobodan Milosevic, who needed the Croat issue to secure his power. According to this approach, a high degree of affect is expressed when the stakes are large (genocide involves large stakes), and so emotion follows a rational assessment by ordinary people of their situation. The improbability of genocide is not decisive, for the stakes are too high to chance it.

On this view, there is a place for fear in ethnic conflict that does not consign it to the realm of irrationality. Without imputing to proponents of this view positions they might not take—for they advance the argument for the rationality of fear in connection with warfare rather than

60. Robert H. Bates, Rui J.P. de Figueiredo, Jr., and Barry R. Weingast, "The Politics of Interpretation: Rationality, Culture, and Transition," *Politics and Society* 26, no. 2 (June 1998): 221–56, at pp. 242, 245–46; Barry R. Weingast, "Constructing Trust: The Political and Economic Roots of Ethnic and Regional Conflict," in Karol Soltan, Eric M. Uslaner, and Virginia Haufler, eds., *Institutions and Social Order* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 163–200; Rui de Figueiredo and Barry R. Weingast, "The Rationality of Fear: Political Opportunism and Ethnic Conflict" (unpublished paper, Department of Political Science, Stanford University, February 1997); Robert H. Bates and Barry R. Weingast, "Rationality and Interpretation: The Politics of Transition" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, August 31–September 3, 1995).

61. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," first proposed that groups seeking to assess the intentions of others will attempt to recall how the others behaved on a similar occasion in the past.

riots—I believe it is worth asking whether this could be a way to view the emotions of those who engage in the deadly ethnic riot.<sup>62</sup>

Before the violence, members of the perpetrator group are trying to judge the intentions of the target group. In making such judgments, rioters must assess the magnitude of the potential consequences of failing to act, and their assessments are colored by recollections of target-group behavior on previous occasions.

Sometimes riots are preceded by grave and dramatic changes in group relations—when, for example, the target group has essentially stolen the state in a coup d'état—but more often the threats are incremental and smaller in magnitude. The question of assessment is then critical, and ref-

62. Although I shall be concerned solely with the implications of the argument for ethnic riots, it is possible to sketch in outline a provisional counterargument to the case made for the rationality of fear in Yugoslavia. It might go along the following lines:

The account provided shows Milosevic inciting Serb fears and Serbs struggling to make a judgment of Croat intentions on the limited information provided by Croat signals. No claim is made that the Croats' intentions actually were genocidal—and certainly not in Serbia—only that Milosevic succeeded in making them appear merely plausibly so. Since the Croat signals were not necessarily omens of genocide, what can the interpretation of Milosevic's behavior mean except that leaders find means to convince followers to behave in a way that is not necessarily required by their interests. The causal variable then becomes manipulation rather than realistic fear.

The large-stakes argument can be turned around. If the stakes are genocide, on the one hand, or bloody warfare, on the other, is it not odd that the Serbs felt impelled to make their judgments on the basis of merely suggestive, "plausible" Croat signals across the border? Even if one grants that the Serbs did the best they could on the limited information they had, most people would regard this degree of factual uncertainty underlying the decision to engage in bloody warfare as an exercise in irrational, not rational, behavior. Indeed, an entire literature has grown up around the origins of World War I as an exercise in just this sort of misperception. See, e.g., Ole R. Holsti, *Crisis, Escalation, War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972); Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Jack S. Levy, "Misperceptions and the Causes of War," *World Politics* 36, no. 1 (October 1983): 76–99. To be sure, several studies argue for other causes of World War I as well. Jack Snyder, "Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984," *International Security* 9, no. 1 (Summer 1984): 108–46; Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9, no. 1 (Summer 1984): 58–107; Sean Lynn-Jones, "Detente and Deterrence: Anglo-German Relations, 1911–1914," *International Security* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 121–50. But these studies have not displaced the role of misperception.

However great or small the danger of genocide may have been for the Serbs in the Krajina region of Croatia, for the Serbs in Serbia—the people deciding whether to support the war—the danger of genocide was remote. Other groups, such as the Ibo or the Sri Lankan Tamils, targeted directly in repeated ethnic riots, hesitated long and hard before embarking on separatist warfare. If, indeed, the fear of genocide underlay the Serb decision to support a war in far less threatening circumstances, it is a stretch to label that fear rational.

erence to earlier events is likely. Analogy is a rich source of decision-making material in such events,<sup>63</sup> but the use of analogy is hardly flawless. People misremember past experiences and evaluate them incorrectly; they also tend to exaggerate certain extreme emotions they experienced.<sup>64</sup> Recollections are affected by events occurring after the memory was formed, and recollections are especially inaccurate under conditions of stress.<sup>65</sup> Complex analogies are especially liable to error.<sup>66</sup> Particularly powerful analogies are perilous, because they foster premature cognitive closure, obscuring distinctions between the present case and the previous one and—if the earlier event involved aggression—leading to overestimates of hostile intentions on the part of the adversary.<sup>67</sup> Overestimates of hostile intentions are a classic problem in international relations and in social psychology, where they have invariably been treated as deviations from rationality.<sup>68</sup>

These general findings about analogy surely apply to pre-riot reasoning. Earlier events most likely to be lodged in the collective memory of prospective rioters are the most traumatic ones. In assessing the significance of precipitants associated with the Chinese, for example, Malays in Kuala Lumpur (1969) could not have failed to recall the attempt of Chinese guerrillas to take control of Malaya before the British returned in 1945–46 and the Communist, largely Chinese, insurrection of 1948–60. Both of these movements were far more serious than anything that was happening in 1969, when opposition parties precipitated a riot by celebrating a marginal victory at the ballot box in a single state of the federation. And both of the earlier, hostile Chinese actions were decisively defeated, thus refuting the need for very early Malay action of a preemptive sort. The Malaysian example, scarcely atypical, is consistent with the skewing that characterizes the use of analogies, and it points to a strong bias toward overestimates of the dangers posed by the target group.<sup>69</sup>

63. Cf. Howard Schuman and Cheryl Rieger, "Historical Analogies, Generational Effects, and Attitudes toward War," *American Sociological Review* 57, no. 3 (June 1992): 315–26.

64. Daniel Kahneman, "New Challenges to the Rationality Assumption," *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 150, no. 1 (March 1994): 18–36, at pp. 27–32.

65. Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 210–11, 242.

66. John Anderson, *Cognitive Psychology and Its Implications*, 3d ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman, 1990), pp. 239–42.

67. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, pp. 218–20, 274–75.

68. *Ibid.*; Henry A. Murray, Jr., "The Effect of Fear on Estimates of the Maliciousness of Other Personalities," *Journal of Social Psychology* 4, no. 3 (August 1933): 310–29.

69. The bias of prospective rioters toward recollection of the most extreme events is another reason in support of bright-line strategies of prevention, for to avoid one serious violent episode is likely to help in avoiding subsequent episodes as well.

If the action of target groups on previous occasions colors interpretations of their current intentions, so, too, do target-group reputations. Target groups, I have shown, are sometimes selected on the basis of reputation for aggression or of traditional antipathy to the perpetrator group. This is not surprising, given experimental findings that those with a history of doing harm are more likely than others are to trigger aggressive responses.<sup>70</sup> These imputed attributes, however, are not necessarily accurate reflections of present threats. The targets' reputation for aggression is typically false for the targets collectively in the current period, for it is perfectly clear that the targets do not attack on some occasions and receive attacks on others. Rather, they are consistently subject to attack. This cannot be merely because the perpetrator group is appropriately alert to impending attacks from the targets. Even the most rational actors could hardly preempt every attack by the targets, were they inclined to attack.<sup>71</sup> And repeated preemption ought to encourage the targets whose aggressive intentions are preempted to strike sooner and with greater surprise in the next episode, lest they be struck preemptively again. Yet they do not strike at all. The targets' reputation for aggression may be accurate for the distant past, or parts of the past viewed selectively; but, as I noted in Chapter 5, some part of that reputation may reflect current ethnic differences in proclivities to violence *among individuals*, rather than propensities to intergroup violence.

Like reputation for aggression, traditional enmity may have a historical foundation. Nevertheless, the contemporary, one-sided reading of history among groups in conflict is likely to ignore strong elements of historical intergroup cooperation and to exaggerate earlier warfare, as we have seen for Sri Lanka.<sup>72</sup>

These facts all constitute profound limitations on the rationality of fear in the decision to riot. But even if depictions of the targets' previous dispositions to aggression and enmity were more accurate than they are, projection of past behavior into the present, without a careful appraisal of the current context, constitutes a recurrent cognitive tendency that is conducive to error.<sup>73</sup>

The literature on misperception of the intentions of enemies indicates

70. Russell G. Geen, *Human Aggression* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), p. 127.

71. Indeed, the perpetrators do not succeed in preempting attacks by guerrillas or terrorists drawn from the target group.

72. On selective recollection and selective forgetting, see James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 127–37.

73. See Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, pp. 266–79.



prisoners may incite the enemy to fight harder and not to surrender.) Efforts of superiors to draw the line at killing combatants, rather than civilians and prisoners, and to prevent torture and mutilation founder on sympathy for the battlefield predicament of soldiers and fear of demoralizing them by punishment for excess.<sup>78</sup> Once aggressive impulses are stimulated in soldiers, it is generally thought, they cannot be expected to draw neat lines about killing. The atrocities themselves, some of them identical to those committed in ethnic riots,<sup>79</sup> are not strategic in origin. Superiors do not like atrocities, but they sense the difficulty of stopping them. By default rather than condonation, they provide social support. Some soldiers take delight in face-to-face killing (even as many others assiduously avoid it), or see it as a form of sport, an activity that generates great pleasure and joy.<sup>80</sup>

In warfare, anger (about what the enemy has done to one's comrades) and hatred (an emotion military authorities attempt to cultivate) are present.<sup>81</sup> In addition to hatred, there are three other elements that contribute to atrocities. The enemy is paradigmatically an outgroup, the battlefield is, by definition, dedicated exclusively to fighting—if soldiers give the enemy half a chance, it is feared, the enemy will exterminate them—and there are very powerful group effects from comrades on every soldier's behavior. The battlefield turns out to be an extreme case of a disinhibited setting, in which extremes of violence can occur.

The scene of a riot is another such setting. In riot, as in war, brutal killing and mutilation reduce dangerous antagonists to utter helplessness—a transformation that would seem to animate the joy of killing in warfare and in rioting. Accounts of atrocities in war are broadly similar to accounts of those in riot, the strategic setting of warfare notwithstanding. Despite these atrocities, I shall argue below that there is much less inclination in the West toward collective killing than there was formerly.

78. See Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), pp. 373–84; Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare* (London: Granta Books, 1999), pp. 184–92; John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), pp. 49–50.

79. See, e.g., Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, pp. 15, 37–39.

80. For these themes, see Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, pp. 360–62; Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, pp. 15, 30–43, 233, 369–71. Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, p. 324, stresses the other side, the coercion required to keep soldiers in “the killing zone.”

81. Hatred and revenge are the motives stressed most by Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, pp. 362–63, 377, 382–83. Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, pp. 141–42, 151–59, 166–70, 182, acknowledging hatred, also emphasizes love for one's comrades, revenge, and the thrill of brutal killing.

### REASON AND PASSION: HYPERVIGILANCE, CIRCUMSPECTION, AND BEING OF MORE THAN ONE MIND

Given what I have said repeatedly, I scarcely need to reiterate that the riot is not a wholly irrational affair. If there were nothing to fear, there would be no occasion for collective violence. But this does not conclude the issue of how much there is to fear from the targets, what forces in the environment or in collective sentiment magnify and distort the danger, or what level of response might be appropriate. Actions may be caused by rational assessments or by emotions or by a fusion of the two. Consider the variable role of reason and emotion in three riot decisions: (1) the decision that the precipitant warrants unrestrained violence; (2) the decision to conduct the violence at times and places that entail only minimal risk to the perpetrators; and (3) the decision(s) to kill indiscriminately within the target group but scrupulously to avoid killing outside the target group.

The ultimate danger for rioters is the one I identified earlier: alien rule, with the subordination and cruelty that have historically attended it. (As the rioters make clear in the course of their violent actions, they know what alien rule can entail; their own violence exemplifies its worst excesses.) But the precipitants are usually at a considerable remove from this danger; and, even when they are proximate to it, it is far from the case that mass violence is the only way to counter it. The presence of authoritative social support for the violence implies that there would also be support for lesser measures. How, then, do the perpetrators arrive at their judgments?

At the outset, their reasoning is not defective: just as they act prudently to reduce the risks to themselves, they get the facts of the provocation right. We know this from the recurrent pattern of precipitants and from events that are habitually insufficient to provoke violence. What the perpetrators get wrong are the facts about the facts: they exaggerate the significance of the precipitants. Then, before the violence begins, they add false facts or exaggerated facts: rumors of nonexistent aggression, nonexistent armies on the march, nonexistent atrocities performed by the target group, poisoned water supplies, skirmishes reported as massacres. Rioters imagine themselves engaged in self-defense even when the physical aggressiveness of their opponents has been manufactured.

The hypervigilance of the rioters manifests itself in cognitive errors. Those errors are, presumably, reinforced by the attitudinal conformity

that accompanies ethnic antipathy and, in particular, by the widely distributed social approval that precedes riots. In these conditions, challenges to faulty reasoning in a group are uncommon. I shall return to this point in due course.

Anxiety is an emotional state impairing cognitive processes. It is conventional to distinguish anxiety from fear, depending on whether the reaction is disproportionate or not.<sup>82</sup> Danger sometimes leads to accurate and sometimes to inaccurate assessments of risk.<sup>83</sup> These assessments are affected by their social acceptability,<sup>84</sup> which suggests that, in dealings with disliked ethnic strangers, something other than realistic appraisal of risk can be expected. By providing early warning of danger, apprehensiveness has survival value, but hypervigilance is usually dysfunctional.<sup>85</sup> The hypervigilance of the rioter is anxiety-laden. Anyone who doubts this might recall the incident in Bombay (1992), when Hindu perpetrators shone searchlights out to sea in order to detect the arrival of Pakistani forces that they imagined were on the way.

The violence produced by these mental processes bursts the shackles of restraint, jeopardizing any message the rioters may have wished to send. Psychologists distinguish instrumental from impulsive violence.<sup>86</sup> Some psychologists emphasize instrumental goals in generating aggression,<sup>87</sup> others the affect that flows from frustration.<sup>88</sup> Most hold that the two motives can be separated. In deadly riots, the distinction is not com-

82. Charles Rycroft, *Anxiety and Neurosis* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968); Isaac M. Marks, *Fears, Phobias, and Rituals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

83. Terry L. Baumer, "Testing a General Model of Fear of Crime: Data from a National Sample," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 22, no. 3 (August 1985): 239-55; Kenneth F. Ferraro, *Fear of Crime: Interpreting Victimization Risk* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995).

84. Marshall D. Spiegler and Robert M. Liebert, "Some Correlates of Self-Reported Fear," *Psychological Reports* 26, no. 3 (June 1970): 691-95.

85. Michael W. Eysenck, *Anxiety: The Cognitive Perspective* (Hove, East Sussex, England: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992), pp. 4-5.

86. Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences, and Control* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 142, 149-50; Leonard Berkowitz, "Some Varieties of Human Aggression: Criminal Violence as Coercion, Rule-Following, Impression Management and Impulsive Behavior," in Anne Campbell and John J. Gibbs, eds., *Violent Transactions: The Limits of Personality* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 87-103; Leonard Berkowitz, "Some Determinants of Impulsive Aggression," *Psychological Review* 81, no. 2 (March 1974): 165-76; Russell and Arms, "False Consensus Effect, Physical Aggression, Anger, and a Willingness to Escalate a Disturbance," p. 382.

87. See, e.g., Alfred Lange and Ad van de Nes, "Frustration and Instrumentality of Aggression," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1973): 159-77.

88. See, e.g., Don Fitz, "A Renewed Look at Miller's Conflict Theory of Aggression Displacement," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 33, no. 6 (June 1976): 725-32.

pletely lost, but the motives are commingled. The perpetrators can simultaneously act on the wish to destroy and exterminate the victims, the wish to turn the tables by torturing them and treating them as playthings, the wish to break free of restraint in general and make a holiday of killing. In the expression of these wishes, any embryonic message of conditional coexistence is inevitably lost in the excess that declares coexistence on any terms, except possibly (and even then most doubtfully) utter subordination, to be beyond contemplation. As the riot fails as a proportionate, angry response to frustration, it fails as a calibrated political response to a threatened change in the status quo.

Following the duality of fear and anxiety and of instrumental and impulsive aggression, theorists of aggressive behavior have posited that aggression has a dual source: cognition or judgment and excitation or arousal. Cognition can reduce arousal and curtail hostile behavior at moderate levels of excitation, but it fails to do so at high levels, at which point impulsive aggression, with its propensity to excess, prevails.<sup>89</sup> Which brings me precisely to the point I want to emphasize here: the fusion of emotions and reason in the decision to riot and the triumph of the former over the latter in that decision.

If emotion is joined to reason, emotion will have a powerful influence on behavior. By definition, a reasoned response is measured (reasonable), whereas an emotional response is not. Emotions affect reasoned judgment, as Jon Elster has pointed out,<sup>90</sup> by fostering mistakes about the beliefs and intentions of other people, by prompting action without regard to consequences, by emphasizing short-term over long-term preferences, by distorting estimates of probability and credibility, and by excluding trade-offs between a strong emotional preference and other values held by those who experience the emotion. Rioters are inclined to several of these tendencies, to which I would add their ontological proclivities for merging events and failing to discriminate among members of the target group who are and are not responsible for the actions that provoke them. Short-lived emotions, such as anger (for the moment, leave aside the storage of anger), contends Elster, induce people to jump to conclusions. The conclusions may concern what others will do or what the actor's own wishes are. Durable emotions, such as contempt or hatred, have effects that are not so limited, for they become consuming

89. Dolf Zillmann, "Cognition-Excitation Interdependencies in Aggressive Behavior," *Aggressive Behavior* 14, no. 1 (1988): 51-64.

90. Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind*, pp. 261-62, 284-87, 298, 304-06.

passions that take over the actor's preference structure, rather than merely skew it toward short-term gratification.<sup>91</sup>

Elster also advances something approaching a spiral model of emotional actions and reactions. With considerable plausibility, he shows how the behavior of a first actor, triggering an emotion in a second, can then lead the second to a mistaken interpretation of the emotion of the first that responded to the emotion of the second, and this mistake can then lead to a mistaken view by the second of the actual motivation of the first. At each point, the emotion experienced by the second increases the malevolence imputed to the first. The escalation in malevolence is accompanied by more aggressive action-tendencies appropriate to each more severe assessment.<sup>92</sup>

We have seen something like this at work in the interpretation of precipitants, which are evaluated as challenges to group relations, then as challenges accompanied by the hostility of the target group toward the perpetrator group, and finally as challenges motivated by the desire of the targets to kill the perpetrators. Projection is the mechanism that animates the final jump from one interpretation to the next. Although projection is a mechanism with roots in psychoanalytic theory, nonpsychoanalytic versions are perfectly serviceable. If I wish to kill you, I may assume you harbor the same wish toward me, either because I believe you sense the mortal danger from me, or because I believe a wish to kill me is reasonable in the light of our uncompromising opposition, or because I know that feelings of extreme hostility tend to be reciprocated. None of these surmises necessarily makes my belief true. Against a background of antipathy or hatred, the action-tendency of which is to hurt or extinguish its object, the projection of aggressive impulses onto the targets in the course of the interpretive process is easy to understand. In a passage apposite to projection, Elster makes it clear that irrational emotions often accompany irrational beliefs. "Because our self-esteem may not allow us to harbor emotions that we cannot defend to ourselves and to others, we invent some kind of story to justify even the most irra-

91. "In brief summary," Elster says neatly, "the short-lived passions undermine the theory of the rational actor, whereas the durable ones undermining the theory of *homo economicus*." *Ibid.*, p. 306.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 261–62. Here is the clearest example: "If you buy a car that is fancier than mine, I may be envious. If I also believe that you enjoy my envy, it may turn into resentment. If I believe that you bought the car in order to make me envious, it may become murderous. In the first case, the emotion is triggered by (my belief about) your action; in the second case, by (my belief about) your emotion; in the third case, by (my belief about) the motivation behind your action." *Ibid.*, p. 262.

tional reactions."<sup>93</sup> Such a story, as Elster recognizes, can have lethal results.

Although emotion triumphs over reason in interpreting the stimuli leading to the riot decision, there is, at least figuratively, a wall that prevents the flow of emotions from jeopardizing the rioters' own security. The perpetrators do not allow their fury to spill over and induce them to make cognitive mistakes that might imperil their lives. As they go about the killing, their risk aversion is unimpaired by the hypervigilant arousal that leads them to riot and to indulge in excess and sadism along the way. Their reasoning about risk is not flawless—witness their proclivity for charms and amulets—but there is a stark contrast between their capacities in reasoning well about risk to themselves and reasoning poorly about and exaggerating the risk to the group to which they belong. Each assessment seems uncontaminated by the other.

A different mix is on display in target selection. Intensely focused hatred imputes responsibility to all members of the target group, but the arousal that characterizes the riot is nonetheless compatible with a coolly scrupulous, precise choice of targets that leaves third groups unharmed. Although the rioters command the streets, they do not succumb to temptations in the heat of the moment to victimize people outside the specified class. Fury is in command, but it does not impede meticulous categorization and careful assessment in individual cases that could fall on either side of the boundary.

In debates about rationality and emotion, composite activity of this sort has not generally been scrutinized. The coexistence of passion and calculation—their compartmentalization in one respect, their causal interaction in another—demonstrates the complexity of the episode and the variety of mental processes underlying violence. The riot is a supremely furious episode, but the survival of limited, partitioned spheres of rationality means that arousal does not quite swamp everything.

It is as if the rioters are of more than one mind. They feel impelled to act, and act without restraint, against the victimized class, but they will not bear any serious risk to do so, and they will recognize no gradation between the fury reserved for the victims and the immunity accorded everyone else. Anyone acquainted with theories of the modularity of the mind might suspect that more than one mental process was at work here.<sup>94</sup> The hypervigilance and fury of rioters resemble "prepackaged

93. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

94. For the existence of many emotional systems and their distinction from cognitive functioning, see LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain*, pp. 106, 127. For behavior as the outcome of a struggle among specialized mental modules, see Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 21, 27, 42, 396.

emotional reactions<sup>95</sup> characteristic of rapid defenses against danger under conditions of stress. Such reactions are crude, and they typically do not involve the deliberative input of the neocortex.<sup>96</sup> The decision to kill, and kill furiously, has the stamp of an impulsive decision not countermanded once made. On the other hand, the sophisticated risk assessment of the perpetrators reflects a far more deliberative process,<sup>97</sup> while the mix of fury and circumspection that characterizes rioters as they approach prospective victims, who need to be categorized before they can be attacked, has elements of both processes. Once many prospective rioters have apprehended a group danger, it seems probable that group interaction effects confirm and amplify their apprehension, effectively blocking a sober evaluation of the danger, but do not prevent them from thinking through the best plans for carrying out violence.

I make no pretense, of course, to identifying the neural systems involved in rioters' decisions. All I mean to do is mark resemblances and underscore that these features of riot behavior possess characteristics that are quite different from each other. These characteristics are connected to some standard modes by which people respond to stimuli. This behavioral complexity makes it impossible to see the deadly riot as either a wholly rational or a wholly irrational affair, and it ought to open the door to a more discerning assessment of the variable roles of reason and emotion in various aspects of complex episodes.

#### THE DECLINE OF THE DEADLY ETHNIC RIOT IN THE WEST

Ethnic cleavages can change over time,<sup>98</sup> and so can the forms of violence. It is all too easy to see both as fixed. Lynching died out in the United States, and individual amok has more or less disappeared in Southeast Asia. Why does the deadly ethnic riot also seem to have died

95. LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain*, p. 175.

96. See *ibid.*, pp. 165, 247, 285, 299, 303.

97. See *ibid.*, p. 176. Steven Pinker has called my attention to the "rich bi-directional connections" that exist between the limbic system and the frontal cortex of the brain. These, he suggests, might produce a response that is simultaneously excessive and prudent. Personal communication, June 4, 2000.

98. What seems now to be the ineluctable Sinhalese-Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka was preceded by severe conflict and violence between religious and caste groups, as well as between Sinhalese and Moors (and Sinhalese and Tamils), in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth-century United States, cleavages were sharply drawn along religious lines and between old and new immigrants, and then between those of northern European origin and those of southern and eastern European origin, as well as between whites and blacks.

out in the West? On this singularly important but unrecognized transformation, some speculations are warranted.

Deadly riots in the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had all the characteristics of such episodes: indiscriminate targeting of anyone in the victim group, mass killing and burning, and mutilation of victims.<sup>99</sup> But since the first half of the twentieth century, these episodes have been absent.<sup>100</sup> And what is true of the United States is equally true of divided societies elsewhere in North America and Western Europe. Canada, Belgium, Corsica, Catalonia, and the Basque country of Spain have not experienced deadly ethnic riots.<sup>101</sup> Of course, the Western world is by no means free of all forms of ethnic violence; witness terrorism in Spain and Northern Ireland, black protest violence of the 1960s in the United States, and Maghrébin protest violence of the 1980s in France.<sup>102</sup> Yet, from 1967 to 2000, ethnic conflict in Quebec claimed only one life; and, although anti-immigrant assaults are not uncommon in Western Europe, even mass assaults there are rarely lethal.<sup>103</sup> These striking facts demonstrate that the deadly riot need not be a permanent feature of divided societies.

Prosperity might be thought to undermine the deadly riot, but if so the connection must be most indirect. We have witnessed deadly riots in countries experiencing good times and witnessed quiescence in bad times. The United States was slow to abandon the riot, despite growing prosperity.<sup>104</sup> Prosperity alone cannot explain the decline in ethnic riot behavior. I have expressed similar skepticism in Chapter 12 about democracy

99. See Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black/White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 127-51.

100. With the partial exception of Miami (1980) and Los Angeles (1992), both of which were violent protest demonstrations mixed with killing.

101. A revealing example is provided by what followed the execution of a Spanish politician by the Basque separatist group ETA in July 1997. In Pamplona, an anti-ETA crowd attacked ETA supporters and tried to burn the offices of Herri Batasuna, a political organization affiliated to ETA. But there were no random ethnic attacks.

102. For France, see Sophie Body-Gendrot, *The Social Control of Cities? A Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 83, 216-17.

103. A rather serious episode occurred in Spain's Costa del Sol in February 2000, when Moroccans were subject to crowd attacks for three days. Hundreds were beaten, and a great deal of property was destroyed, but there were no deaths. *New York Times*, February 12, 2000, p. A3. The precipitants were three killings of Spaniards in two separate incidents — not the sort likely to produce deadly riots.

104. Maurice Pinard argues that, in the postmaterialist West, affluence is conducive to growing militancy about ethnic issues. Maurice Pinard, "The Quebec Independence Movement: A Dramatic Resurgence" (unpublished paper, Department of Sociology, McGill University, Montreal, Spring 1992), pp. 17-19.

as the other obvious explanation for the decline of deadly riots in the West.<sup>105</sup>

An important clue to the end of riots in the West is provided by its timing. In the United States, the deadly riot receded and the violent protest demonstration by the former targets took its place during World War II. Detroit (1943) was the last major antiblack riot, and Harlem (1943) was the second major black violent protest demonstration.<sup>106</sup> The violent protest demonstration is aimed at ethnic equality and, more to the point, does not require attitudes justifying killing in the way that deadly riots do.<sup>107</sup>

Important attitudinal changes were in progress in the West during the first half of the twentieth century. Following World War I, nationalism — that is, extreme manifestations of ethnic sentiment — began to be discredited; and, although ethnic sentiment revived in the 1960s and '70s, World War II delegitimized the most extreme manifestations.<sup>108</sup> Partly in response to the Detroit riot, from 1943 through 1945 more than 200 public and private organizations were established in the United States to deal with ethnic and racial issues.<sup>109</sup> This extraordinary number provides a sense of the forces being deployed for change. A “general rethinking” was under way during the war.<sup>110</sup> Immediately after World War II, there was accelerated concern about ethnic relations in the West, a concerted assault on the asserted biological foundations of ethnic hostility, and a variety of proposals to counter prejudice and reduce discrimination.<sup>111</sup> The focus was on the irrationality and unscientific character of judg-

105. Unless democracy is accompanied by specific measures to foster the reduction of ethnic conflict.

106. Harlem had experienced a violent protest in 1935. Interestingly enough, 1943 was also the year in which the Daughters of the American Revolution reversed themselves and permitted Marian Anderson, the celebrated African-American contralto, to appear before a racially mixed audience in the DAR's Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

107. In Harlem (1943), African-American opinion was divided on the justification for protest violence, let alone interpersonal killing. See Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 167 n. 25.

108. See Edward Shils, “Nation, Nationality, Nationalism and Civil Society,” *Nations and Nationalism* 1, no. 1 (March 1995): 93–118, at p. 99.

109. Louis Wirth, “The Unfinished Business of American Democracy,” *The Annals* 244 (March 1946): 1–9, at p. 6. These developments proceeded simultaneously, of course, with manifestations of ethnic distrust, perhaps most notably Jim Crow in the armed forces and the confinement of Japanese Americans.

110. Howard Schuman, Charlotte Steeh, and Lawrence Bobo, *Racial Attitudes in America*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 124. The few attitudinal measures for which survey data were available at the time show positive trends.

111. See Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996),

ments about whole groups, occasionally on prejudice as a reflection of psychological disturbance, and on the incompatibility of intolerance with the democratic creed. From this attack on the ideological underpinnings of ethnocentrism, a new orthodoxy of tolerance worked its way into public culture, especially into education, and most notably in the United States. Where, for example, in 1944, anti-Semitism increased with the social status of the respondent,<sup>112</sup> within 25 years anti-Semitism decreased with social status.<sup>113</sup> This is a mark of how elite opinion had changed and how powerful were the postwar forces favoring cosmopolitanism and tolerance.<sup>114</sup>

This is not the place to trace those attitudinal changes, and certainly not for the West as a whole, except to note that, on such matters, Western societies were in close touch with each other<sup>115</sup> and that the new tolerance was not merely rhetorical, although it may not have begun that way: the best evidence indicates it was genuine.<sup>116</sup> The results were not visible for some decades after the war, as new conceptions took hold, particularly in the schools, but they were manifested eventually across a spectrum of activity. The new tolerance furnished support for movements of ethnic equality, sometimes, ironically enough, accompanied by other forms of violence, in the United States, Canada, Northern Ireland, and Spain.

The declining legitimacy of ethnic antipathy eliminated support for the deadly ethnic riot. For if interpersonal ethnic violence is not justifiable, rioters may not gather. If they do gather, they undertake consider-

pp. 385–89. For the thinking of the period in the United States, and the (accurate) sense that a great change was about to occur, see Robert M. MacIver, *The More Perfect Union* (New York: Macmillan, 1948); Robin M. Williams, Jr., *The Reduction of Intergroup Tensions* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1947).

112. See MacIver, *The More Perfect Union*, p. 33 n. 7.

113. See Gertrude J. Selznick and Stephen Steinberg, *The Tenacity of Prejudice* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 71, 75, 83.

114. Cf. Samuel Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), pp. 107, 236. I am indebted to Paul Sniderman for this reference, for the reference in the preceding footnote, and for a helpful conversation about the sources of change in Western patterns of violence.

115. For example, an active program to utilize science to counter prejudice was launched under the auspices of UNESCO. Ethnic movements were similarly unconfined by national boundaries. The Québécois movement and the movement of Catholics in Northern Ireland were, in part, inspired by developments in the United States and borrowed some motifs from the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

116. See Paul M. Sniderman and Edward G. Carmines, *Reaching beyond Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 70. Cf. Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, *Racial Attitudes in America*, pp. 163–92. Ethnic tolerance is accompanied by political tolerance. See Paul M. Sniderman et al., “Principled Tolerance and the American Mass Public,” *British Journal of Political Science* 19, part 1 (January 1989): 25–45.

able risk, for the police cannot be counted on for indifference, the targets cannot be counted on for passivity, and public authorities cannot be counted on for impunity. Provocations may still exist, but an ideology that rejects homogeneous group characteristics makes it impossible to attribute to all target-group members indiscriminately the acts of some. Recall from Chapter 12 the language of survey respondents in Northern Ireland identifying members of other groups as ordinary people like themselves. Save perhaps for precipitants, all the conditions underlying the deadly riot have been altered by changing ethnic attitudes.

At the same time, another set of changes, with different origins, was taking place in the West: a growing aversion to mass violence in general. This change is harder to pin down, but various pieces of evidence point in its direction. Consider the results of separate surveys conducted in the United States and Canada in the 1960s. In the former, even strong anti-Semites did not advocate the use of violence against Jews; in the latter, not a single Québécois respondent among the 40 percent of respondents favoring separatism supported the use of violence for that purpose.<sup>117</sup> A sharp change in attitudes toward ethnic violence had taken place independently of changes in ethnic attitudes.

This point is made trenchantly with respect to warfare by Western armies — and then extrapolated to other forms of face-to-face killing — by John Keegan.<sup>118</sup> Keegan points out that army officers, who have a choice of whether or not to kill in battle, do so less and less. The arms they carry are increasingly ornamental and decreasingly effective, from purely ceremonial swords in the nineteenth century to walking sticks or, at most, holstered pistols in the twentieth. Similarly, coercion is often needed to keep soldiers in the killing zone. Conscientious objection is conceded even by Western states formerly hostile to it. Capital punishment has been abolished in nearly all Western states. All of this, argues Keegan, indicates that killing “is not an activity which seems to carry widespread approval.”<sup>119</sup> Indeed, he concludes, “in the aftermath of two world wars,” the West has “become suffused with a deep antipathy to violence and to conflict.”<sup>120</sup>

There is, of course, counterevidence, and atrocities are still committed in warfare. Nevertheless, much evidence exists, on and off the battlefield,

117. Selznick and Steinberg, *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, 13–15; Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, p. 173.

118. Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, pp. 314–15, 319, 320–21, 324.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

120. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

to support Keegan's view. The small fraction of infantrymen in World War II who actually fired their weapons,<sup>121</sup> the absence of civil war anywhere in the West (outside Latin America) after World War II, the preference for risk-averse aerial combat strategies after the Vietnam War, and the extent to which ethnic terrorists, in order to retain a modicum of support among members of their own group, have had to adopt rules of targeting that show great respect for civilians of the target group: all of these bespeak a popular aversion to face-to-face mass killing that is fundamentally at odds with the exigencies of the deadly ethnic riot, not to mention the atrocities that accompany it.

The conjunction of attitudes of ethnic tolerance and of antipathy to mass violence is a powerful combination of forces inimical to the deadly ethnic riot. The same maximalist path to the decline of the deadly riot is not likely to be traversed soon outside the West. Long-term change in ethnic attitudes in the West was built on individualism, supported by a strongly scientific ethos, which could be used to undermine thinking in group terms. Individualism is very much a Western product. The aversion to mass violence may have more diffuse sources, but they may be equally idiosyncratic.

There are, undoubtedly, less arduous paths to the decline of deadly riots. The conjunction of multiple conditions to produce a riot means the riot can be thwarted by change at any of several points. To the extent that fear of subordination and uncertainty about relative group status underlie the riot, this points toward a renewed appreciation of the value of political stability, which allows people to redirect their waking watchfulness about others into activities that cannot be performed while those others are a constant danger. Since the fear of change in group relations is so frequently implicated in deadly riots, the ability of governments to manage ethnic change becomes surpassingly important. This, however, is a challenge that governments have recurrently failed to meet. In many places, the wind still blows.

121. S.L.A. Marshall, *Men against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (New York: William Morrow, 1947), pp. 53–54.