

Fourth World Faultlines and the Remaking of 'Inter-national' Boundaries

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"The sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States within the established international system, and the principle of self-determination for peoples, both of great value and importance, must not be permitted to work against each other in the period ahead"¹

The words of United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali describe one of the fundamental challenges to the world's existing political geography: the resurgent self-determination of nations. Eritrea, Slovakia, Armenia, and the Federated States of Micronesia are just a few examples of some 127 new states that have emerged with recognised international boundaries and United Nations membership in the post-World War II period.

Obviously new land is not being created. Instead states are fragmenting into smaller states, nation-states, and other political structures. When the breaking point comes, states often disintegrate along the faultlines of old nations: geographic areas of nationalist-based tensions. In the light of the resurgence of the role played by self-identifying nations in the destruction and (re)construction of *international state* boundaries, it is argued that mapped analysis of nation faultlines (*inter-national* boundaries) can help improve our theoretical understanding of state collapse, aid making informed predictions, and suggest tools for conflict resolution.

Fourth World Geography

Nations once occupied are not necessarily conquered nor assimilated and can persist for centuries beneath the boundaries of states. Many of the world's newest states and nation-states are actually reemergent nations. Table 1 offers eighteen examples of European nations that endured the rise and fall of states to become independent this century. Latvia, for example, lost its independence to the Teutonic Knights in 1242, only to recover it again over 700 years later with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the sixth occupying state.

The term coming into common usage for such submerged nations is 'Fourth World nations'. 'Nation' refers to a self-identifying people with claims to a common cultural homeland while 'Fourth World' refers to the lack of international recognition. The term 'state' should not be confused with the term 'nation' as it refers to a populated area within internationally recognised boundaries under the sovereign authority of some form of combined civilian and military bureaucracy. Since there are less than twenty nation-states or states composed of only one nation (see Table 2), most states are multinational. There are between 6,000 and 9,000 nations within 191 recognised states (Table 3)

Fourth World geography can be attributed to a history of state expansion. Nations have long been the building blocks of states. They are also the faultlines along which states break apart. Any Fourth World nation which endures with an organised and identifiable struggle to achieve a more sovereign status (autonomy or independence) establishes *faultlines*, the boundaries along which states may break-up (two or more states emerge from one state) or break-down (various arrangements for territorial autonomy). For instance, the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 saw fifteen nations emerge from a single state, of which five define the borders of the 'New Europe' (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova).

Break-down can be illustrated by Figure 1 contrasting Spain's 1492 Kingdoms with the post-Franco construction of seventeen Autonomous Communities. In 1085, the Castilians, upon retaking Toledo from the Moors, declared their goal of uniting all of Iberia under one Catholic King. This territorial goal was achieved by 1492 and was followed by almost 500 years of continuous efforts to *Castilianise* all the nations (same language, same customs, same laws). This 'nation-building' policy failed despite monumental efforts that ranged from ethnocide to genocide. For decades the boundaries of the old kingdoms were not even alluded to on maps of a united 'Spain'. Shortly after Franco's death in 1975 the Autonomous Communities finally emerged with a remarkable correspondence to the

Fourth World faultlines. Thus, both the historical geography of breakup and breakdown illustrate that the geopolitical pressures asserted by Fourth World nations are significant enough to map and analyse, yet few efforts have been made in this direction.

Table 1. Former European 'Fourth World Nations' Achieving Independence in the Twentieth Century

<i>Nation</i>	<i>Former State Occupiers</i>	<i>Year Occupied</i>	<i>Year Independent (prior years)</i>
Norway	Denmark, Sweden	1397	1905
Finland	Sweden, Russia	1362	1917
Iceland	Norwegians, Denmark	1262	1944
Ireland	England, Britain, UK	1169	1922
Malta	Phoenicia, Carthagina, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Arabia, Normans, Swabia, House of Anjou, Aragon, Knights of St John, France, Britain	c.1000 BC	1964
Cyprus	Assyria, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Arabia, France, England, Crusaders, Venice, Ottoman Empire, Britain	c.1000 BC	1964
Estonia	Denmark, Teutonic Knights, Sweden, Poland, Russia, USSR	1219	1991 (1920–1940)
Latvia	Teutonic Knights, Sweden, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, USSR	1242	1991 (1918–1940)
Lithuania	Poland, Russia, USSR	1386	1991 (1921–1940)
Poland	Prussia, Austria, Russia, Germany	1795	1918
Belarus	Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Poland, Russia, USSR	1392	1991 (1918)
Ukraine	Mongolian Empire, Lithuania–Poland, Muscovite Russia, USSR	1237	1991 (1917)
Georgia	Mongolian Empire, Ottoman Empire, Russia, USSR	1236	1991 (1918–1921)
Armenia	Persia, Macedonia, Rome, Arabia, Byzantium, Seljuk Turks, Mongolian Empire, Turkey, Russia, USSR	1070	1991 (1918)
Albania	Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Normans, Venice, Ottoman Empire	625 BC	1912
Croatia	Frankish Empire, Byzantium, Magyars, Ottoman Empire, Austro–Hungarian Empire, Hungary, Yugoslavia	768	1992 (1941–1944)
Slovenia	Frankish Empire, Byzantium, Holy Roman Empire, Austro–Hungarian Empire, Italy, Yugoslavia	745	1992
Slovakia	Magyars, Austro–Hungarian Empire, Czechoslovakia	1001	1993 (1939–1944)

Table 2. Nation–States of the World

Nation–States	Date Recognised
Iceland	1944
Ireland	1922
Monaco	1297
Andorra	1278
Luxembourg	1839
Liechtenstein	1866
San Marino	350
Malta	1964
Poland	1921
Hungary	1920
Slovenia	1992
Yemen	1918
Tonga	1970
Western Samoa	1962
Marshall Islands	1986
Tuvalu	1978
Seychelles	1976
Lesotho	1966

Table 3. Distribution of Fourth World Nations

Region	Estimated Number of Nations
Arctic	350
North America	550
Middle America and Caribbean	145
South America	485
Europe	120
Caucasus and Crimea	50
Central Asia	250
Southwest Asia and North Africa	250
South Asia	800
South East Asia	1500
East Asia	300
Sub–Saharan Africa	1500
Oceania	1200
Total Estimate:	6000–9000

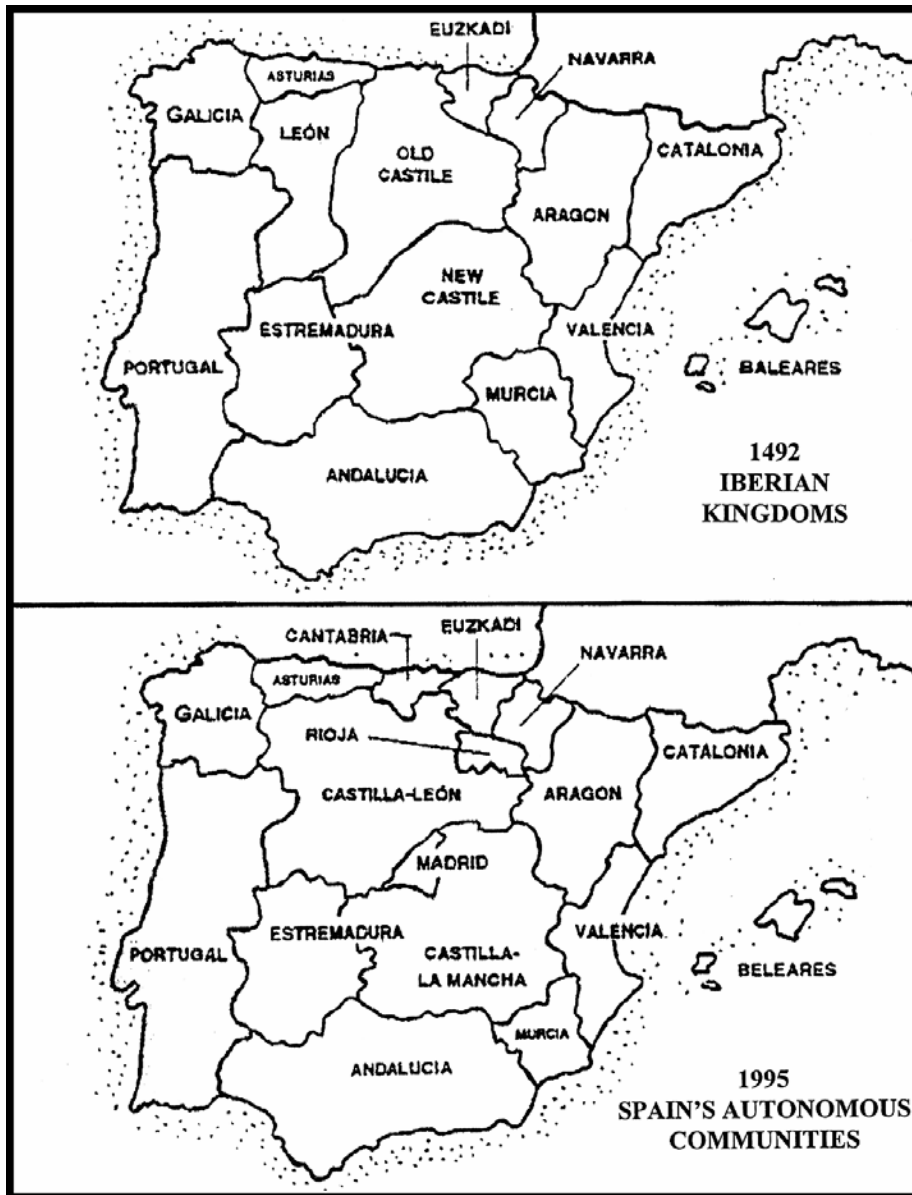
A Shortage of Studies

The shortage of studies from a Fourth World perspective is not surprising. First, this is a new avenue of academic analysis. The ‘Fourth World’ term was developed during the 1970s as a result of intense indigenous activism, greater sensitivity to human rights, and the growing influence of nongovernmental organisations (NGO’s) in galvanising world opinion on the self–determination of peoples. The World Council of Indigenous Peoples was formed in 1975, and this council became the first of eleven NGO’s representing indigenous peoples to receive consultative status at the UN by 1987 (Wilmer, 1993: 3).

In addition, the UN Sub–Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities called for the study of the problems of indigenous peoples,² and in 1982 the UN Commission on Human Rights created a Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (which meets yearly). Nowhere have the issues of autonomy, self–management, and self–determination been brought more sharply into focus than here, and in 1991 the Group agreed on drafting a set of principles to be incorporated into a proposed international convention. The gap between indigenous peoples and the international state system – especially the United Nations – has gradually narrowed; ‘unrepresented’,³ ‘Fourth World’ nations have now moved from the realms of domestic jurisdiction onto international agendas.

Secondly, until the break–up of the Soviet Union alerted the world to the enormous geopolitical force of these nations, studies normally focused on the ‘evolution’ of states and the ‘rise of civilisation’. Seldom addressed was the overwhelming history of state failure (Yoffee, 1988: 1). Ninety percent or more of all states that have so far existed ended in collapse.⁴ The few explanations that attended to this concentrated on large empires (e.g., Rome) and often suggested one or two principal factors in explanation (plagues, disease, corruption, climate, overtaxation, poor military strategy). Tainter (1988) has attempted a more systematic examination of the general internal contradictions within the expansionist state and only Griggs (1993) has specifically addressed the general role of Fourth World nations in state collapse. The need for more theoretical development has been noted on several occasions by political geographers.⁵

Figure 1. *An Illustration of the Endurance of Fourth World Nations*



Thirdly, there have been problems in explaining and defining 'nations' and 'nationalism'.⁶ It is argued that the categories belonging to the paradigm of 'ethnicity' – used far too long as an explanation for nationalism – have associations that are incorrect in describing nationalist assertions such as ties by common ancestry, minority membership, and no legitimate claims to territory (Griggs, 1994: 259). The application of the term ethnic group to nationalist claims also conflates two different geographical processes: immigration to a place and territorial annexation by an expansionist state or nation.

The term 'minority' is also poorly defined⁷ – in some states Fourth World nations might be a majority (e.g., Peru, Bolivia) and within their own boundaries many Fourth World nations are the majority (e.g., Kurdistan, Québec). The categories 'indigenous', 'tribal' and 'aboriginal' also have associations that limit 'nationalism' both historically and geographically, while use of the term 'culture' is seen as too broad – a 'nation' can be a 'culture' in that "*it shares a common culture in relationship to a common landscape*" (Griggs, 1992: 3), but a 'culture' can just as legitimately be simply the shared linguistic or religious characteristics of a group. There are also similarities between a nation and the more general category of a 'people' (which Boutros-Ghali referred to earlier) in that they are both self-defined, but a 'people' lacks the tie to a territory that is a prerequisite for 'nationhood'.

Fourthly, nationalism has long been described in pejorative terms: as a kind of tribalism that challenges the state but will ultimately succumb to 'modernising' influences.⁸ The failure of this theory is obvious in light of post-Cold War developments and many social scientists now readily admit its inability to explain the many recent examples of state collapse. Some theorists have actually embraced the opposite view that modernisation creates nationalism by producing economic disparities (Hechter, 1975). The failing here is that there is no clear economic pattern to nationalism. Nationalist movements are found in every conceivable economic condition from the wealthiest region in the state (e.g. Catalonia) to rough equivalency (e.g. Scotland), to the poorest (e.g. Sardinia). The popularity of economic theories among peoples not of the Fourth World to define what most Fourth World nations insist is a cultural issue may reveal more about trends in academia than the phenomenon being described.

Lastly, an understanding of the so-called 'Westphalian' period helps explain why non-state nations are only grudgingly recognised by the world of states. Since the 1648 Peace of Westphalia modern states emerged characterised by mutual recognition, accurate inviolable boundaries, and non-interference in each other's 'domestic affairs.' People's identities have been forced to conform to the boundaries of conquest befitting an *ideology* of the nation-state rather than creating state boundaries around each nation as befits a *true* nation-state.

As Smith (1993) has argued, state-centric historians then provided a legitimising historical perspective as the basis for this 'nation-building'. Nationalist and minority historians are often set apart, so creating what Smith has called an uneven *ethno-history*. This imaginary reconstruction of a nation's past is no different from the imaginary representation of its territorial make-up – past and present.⁹ *Uneven natio-cartography* remains the norm as non-state boundaries are ignored; in the established 'international' (sic) system it has been the boundaries of the most universal mode of political power – the state – that matter.

The irony of the state-biased historical and cartographic representation of identity is that nations on average outlast states. Out of the 191 states, 127 are less than fifty years old. A generous figure for the geographical and political continuity of a modern state may be 347 years dating to the Peace of Westphalia. If we stretch this to include Spain's consolidation in 1492, we might claim 500 years. By contrast, Spanish-claimed Euzkadi may be 10,000 years old and requires archaeology to determine its cultural and linguistic origins.

A New Perspective

The non-state-centric, Fourth World perspective which has developed "*describes and maps geography, history, and politics based on the world's...nations, instead of focusing on states, regions, blocs and superpowers*" (Nietschmann, 1994: 225). Fourth World analysts thus categorise 'nations' by their own subjective claims: who they are, where they are, and what they represent. A 'nation' refers to "*the geographically bounded territory of a common people as well to the people themselves*" – a "*community of self-identifying people who have a common culture and a historically common territory*" (Nietschmann, 1994: 226). There are therefore three commonalities that bind them: identity, culture and territory. None of

these should be seen as static; their identity and culture continues to evolve like any other group, and their boundaries are often more fluid and dynamic than the rigid lines that characterise state-divides. However, what is constant is their unity in these three characteristics.

Mapping Nation Faultlines

Examining this problem of identification from the Fourth World perspective allows one not only to define nations, but, where possible, to map them. Since political boundaries rarely coincide with areas of cultural and regional identity, it is possible for segments of a state population to organise around the theme that they require special territorial representation. Mapping these areas of potential volatility can then serve to identify, predict and mitigate conflict. However, although Gurr has attempted to systematically catalogue all forms of state repression as a means of understanding the formation and distribution of 'minority peoples',¹⁰ and Murdock has contributed significant studies on the spatial characteristics of 'cultural' and 'ethnographic' groups (see Figure 2),¹¹ there remains a need for effective mapping of 'nation' claims. No map, list, encyclopaedia or almanac to date has displayed all the world's nations.

While the criteria or definition for mapping is sound, the method of delimiting nations is clearly problematic. There are historical difficulties in identifying and delimiting the nations as discussed previously. Furthermore, some nations, like the Tuareg in Niger, are nomadic and perceive themselves more along the lines of an ecosystem than a state-centric, rigid territory; others are unable to identify any more than the heartland of their common area. For example, although few would deny the existence of a discrete area known as Kurdistan, the exact area remains in doubt and its extent is something over which Kurds are unlikely ever to reach agreement with the surrounding states (O'Shea, 1991).

There are other difficulties; the debate over what scale of population is 'proper' to enjoy a government exclusively of its own, and at what level one recognises nations having 'legitimate' claims to territory, will no doubt continue.¹² The Tamils (60 million population) and the Kurds (20–30 million) could argue that, if a country like Nauru (8,000) has the right to self-determination, surely it must be extended to cohesive groups of tens of millions (Corn tassel and Primeau, 1995: 352).

Examining this returns us to the quote that opened this article and its historic basis. In 1960 the United Nations adopted the principle that all 'peoples' had the right of self-determination. It was proclaimed that sovereignty rested with the 'people' who were thus free to adjust the territorial limits within which they desired this sovereignty to be active.¹³ This was seen as a significant development, but there remains confusion over the full implications of this right – in both legal and political terms – and over the 'people' that it is applicable to, be they 'national', 'indigenous', 'ethnic', 'cultural' or 'minority' groups (Anaya, 1991; Corn tassel and Primeau, 1995). While the adoption of this principle has placed the states of the Third World on equal footing as participants in the *international* system, the Fourth World nations fail to enjoy the benefits of decolonisation or international recognition of their right to self-determination.

It is possible to see, however, that once a significant degree of groundwork has been done, the perceived territories and boundaries of nations can be mapped. It is interesting to compare the value of Griggs' (1993) illustration (Figure 1) of Spain with Figure 3, taken from Price's (1989) examination of the spatial distribution of world 'cultures', where, in mapping the 45 'cultures' he has identified in Europe, no territorial boundaries were depicted. The next *Boundary and Security Bulletin* will depict mapping of Fourth World faultlines across Europe providing another point of comparison (see endnote).

Figure 2. The Ethnic Groups of Native North America

Source: Murdock, G.P. and O'Leary, T.J. (1975) *Ethnographic Bibliography of North America*, Vols. 1-5, Human Relations Area Files Press, New Haven.

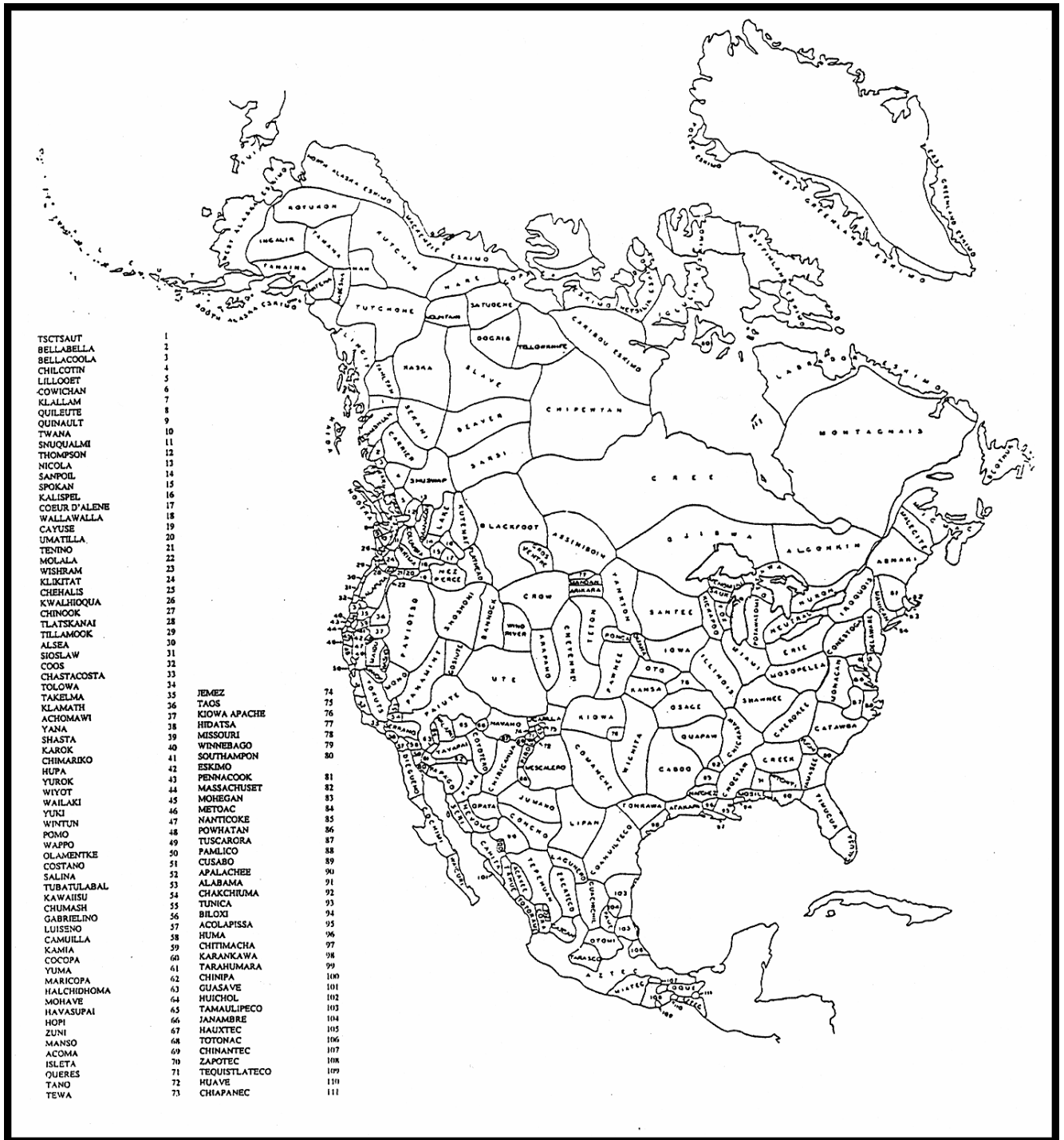
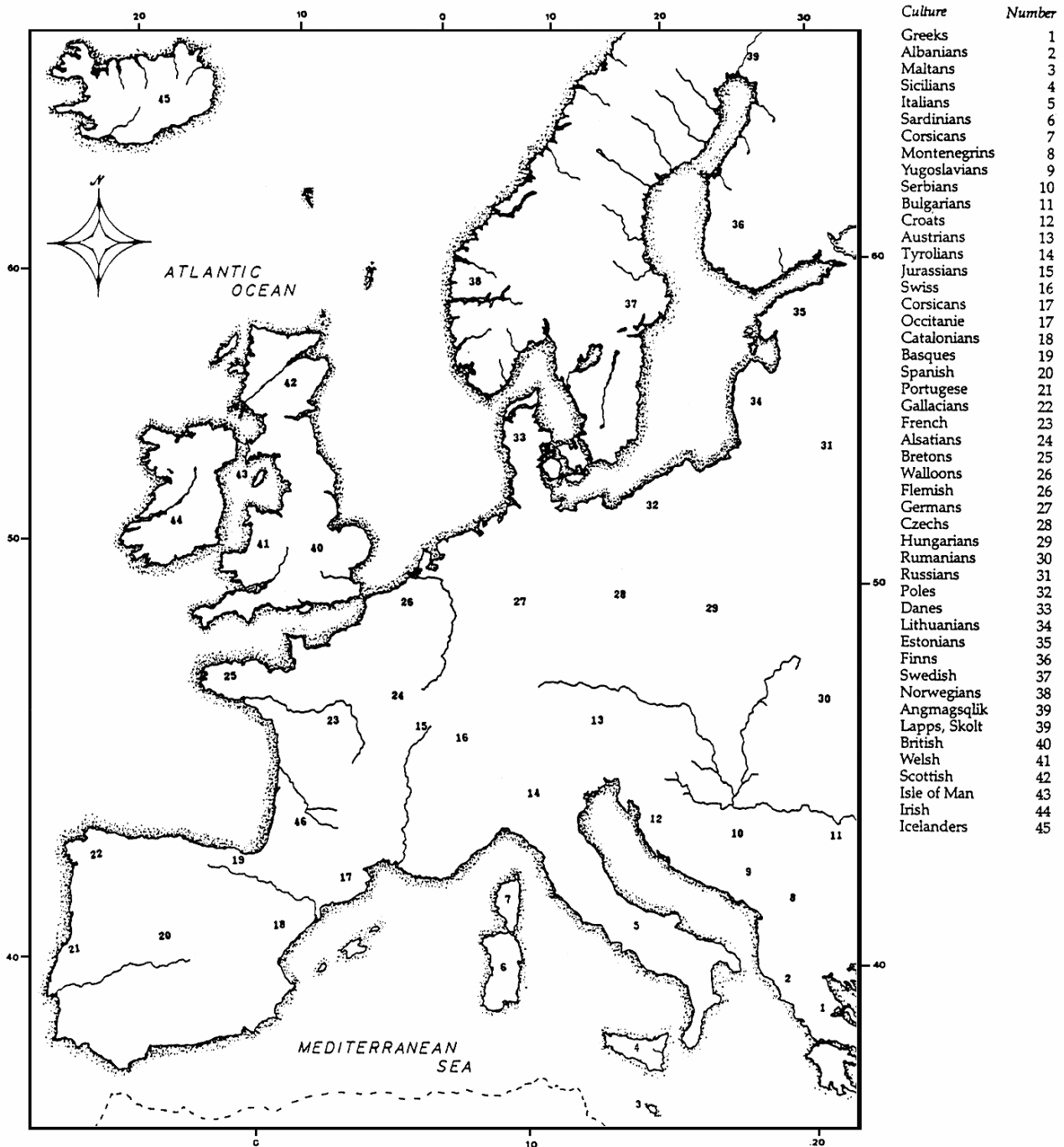


Figure 3. Price's map of 'Cultures' in Europe

Source: Price, D.H. (1989) *Atlas of World Cultures: A Geographical Guide to Ethnographic Literature*, Sage: London.



Reading Between the Lines

This process of reading between the established state–lines aids our comprehension of historical boundary changes – from the eradication of 39 self-governing nations in France by the Jacobin state-makers in 1789 (Griggs, 1992: 6), to the end of the Cold War, and the ‘tide’ of nationalist forces that remade the map from Germany to Kazakhstan (Gottlieb, 1994: 101).

We also become aware of the international boundary faultlines of the future. At the global scale it has been calculated that, since the end of World War II, state-versus-nation conflicts have produced the most numerous and longest wars, the greatest number of civilian casualties from state-directed genocide and the greatest number of refugees (Griggs, 1993). Nietschmann estimated in 1987 that of nation groups that were in arms, about 60% were seeking an autonomous territorial and political relationship with the host state, 15% were hovering between autonomy and independence, and 25% wanted full independence (Nietschmann, 1987: 7). At the regional level, Griggs (1995: 80) noted that in March of this year, 80% of Africa’s wars were tied to the issue of ethnicity and identity in some manner.

Identifying these boundaries allows us to deconstruct, redraw, and so reassess the world political map. There are wider implications to consider as well. It is possible to monitor national frontiers in relation to state frontiers, and make more informed commentary on the level of nation group geopolitical activity. This is important for predicting and resolving conflict. In studying the territorial arrangements in Europe, Griggs has categorised nations in terms of sovereign status. Some states have resolved conflicts by creating autonomous political structures for Fourth World nations. Spain and Belgium’s ‘Autonomous Communities’, Italy’s South Tirol, Germany’s sixteen *Länder*, and even Britain’s autonomous crown colonies (e.g., Isle of Man, Jersey) provide political models of how national identities and state identities coexist in a decentralised state structure.

It is also important to not only map the possible boundaries of the future, but what they may or may not enclose or divide – natural and strategic resources, manufacturing infrastructure, population concentrations, drug-producing regions or nuclear arsenal, for example.

Conclusion

The many recent territorial changes that we have witnessed are not the signal for the complete undermining of the state and its territorial sovereignty. In terms of human history, both unification and fragmentation of territory have been persistent thrusts, and we should fully expect territorial changes to continue. Since Fourth World nations have been both the cultural faultlines along which states break apart and the building blocks for their eventual reconstruction, this geopolitical force, and its indisputable potential for remoulding the world political map, deserves greater consideration not only from Boutros-Ghali and the United Nations but from boundary scholars too.

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- ⁶ See Griggs, 1992, and 1994: 259; and Nietschmann, 1994: pp. 225–232.
- ⁷ The UN Human Rights Sub-Commission's definition of a 'minority' fails to mention the people's history of independence, self-government, tradition of nationhood, and desire to preserve control over its own territory, resources, affairs, and freedoms (see Nietschmann, 1994: 231).
- ⁸ Malcolm Keir addresses the failure of the modernisation thesis in 'The Strange Survival of Nationalism', *Geographical Magazine*, pp. 25–29, July 1992.
- ⁹ Brealey (1995) provides a superb illustration of this process of re-presentation, examining the power of Euro-Canadian cartography in arresting and delegitimizing the territorialisation of nation groups in what is now British Columbia.
- ¹⁰ See Gurr, T.R. and Scarritt, J.R. (1989) 'Minority Rights at Risk: A Global Survey', *Human Rights Quarterly*, 11, pp. 375–405; Gurr, T.R. (1993) *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington.
- ¹¹ See Murdock, G.P (1967) *Ethnographic Atlas*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh; Murdock, G.P. and O'Leary, T.J. (1975) *Ethnographic Bibliography of North America*, Vols. 1–5, Human Relations Area Files Press, New Haven; Murdock, G.P. (1981) *Atlas of World Cultures*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh; and Murdock, G.P. (1983) *Outline of World Cultures*, 6th edn., Human Relations Area Files Press, New Haven.
- ¹² See Knight, 1982: 514–531 for an introduction.
- ¹³ General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December, 1960, recognised the right of all peoples to self-determination; exercise of this right, however, did not inevitably lead to secession. General Assembly Resolution 1541 of 10 December, 1960, identified three options for 'self-determination': sovereign independence, free association with a sovereign state, or integration with an independent state (see Wilmer, 1993: 169).

Notes

- ¹ Quoted from 'An Agenda for Peace' (1992) in Danforth, L.M. (1995) 'Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Nations, States, and Minorities', *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Summer 1995: 3.
- ² The study was completed in 1986.
- ³ This very term is used by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), set up in 1991, which aims to "provide a platform for those nations, minorities and peoples, indigenous and other, not represented in established international forums such as the United Nations". It now claims 43 members representing over 100 million people.
- ⁴ See Griggs, 1993: 1 (note: the source of this quote has not been properly attributed in recent publications on the Fourth World).
- ⁵ See Glassner, M.I. and de Blij, H.J. (1989) *Systematic Political Geography*, p. 602, New York: John Wiley and Sons; Mikesell, M. (1983) 'The Myth of the Nation-State', *Journal of Geography*, Vol. 82, p. 6; Knight, D.B. (1982) and O'Loughlin, J.O. (1989) 'Political Geography: Coping with Global

Dr Richard Griggs (University of Cape Town) and Peter Hocknell (International Boundaries Research Unit), in collaboration with the Center for World Indigenous Studies (Olympia, US), are currently setting up a project to identify, map and monitor the Fourth World Nation 'faultlines' which represent the potential international boundaries of the future. This article will be followed up in the next Bulletin where Griggs' (1994) mapping of Fourth World faultlines across Europe will be illustrated.