Introduction

The Origins of State Fragility

IN THIS BOOK I EMPHASIZE THE domestic, internal, precolonial, and colonial origins of state fragility in the West African nation of Guinea-Bissau (formerly, Portuguese Guinea). In doing so, I seek to carve out a unique perspective in analyzing weak states and civil societies in colonial-era and contemporary Africa—in particular, in Portuguese-speaking Africa. My approach underlines the importance of tracing the historical lineages of state weakness, which I argue is linked to patterns of indigenous rural civil-societal development in the precolonial and colonial eras. Such a focus is crucial to appreciating the evolution of "strong" domestic forces in explaining state fragility. As this study emphasizes the centuries-long social roots of rural civil-societal strength and governmental policy failure, and of state/rural civil society conflict, I offer an especially historically focused perspective on the study of contemporary African politics.

In doing so, I suggest that examining precolonial and colonial politics makes it possible to better understand why contemporary Guinea-Bissau is characterized by a widening state/rural civil society gap, by continuing political disarray, periodic warfare, and economic dislocation. I acknowledge the significance of the international political economy in shaping the nature of colonial states—in particular, the contour of relations between metropolitan Portugal and its African colonies. To be sure, Portugal's own relative underdevelopment and low level of industrialization played a crucial role in explaining the lack of developmental progress in its African colonies.[1] At the same time, however, an overemphasis on European imperialism in the study of Portuguese-speaking Africa has tended unduly to marginalize the domestic, indigenous side of the colonialist equation. I suggest that a full understanding of African state fragility can be obtained only by investigating the domestic rural origins of adaptable, potent, and enduring social formations.

Thus, while taking into account the macrolevel context of metropolitan Portugal's relative "backwardness," I argue that the specific dynamics and contour of the relations between the state and rural civil society in Guinea-Bissau over the course of many centuries significantly shaped and structured the emergence of a weak state during the colonial and postcolonial periods. In order to advance this argument, I trace the evolution of the political, social, and military aspects of the central state and of rural power arrangements in Guinea-Bissau. The central themes presented here collectively suggest that the emergence of state debility in Guinea-Bissau reflects a lengthy, historically "embedded" evolution of rural civil-societal strength.

Rural Civil Society

Analytically, this book "historicizes" the study of nonstate spheres, encompassing a wide range of political and social activities and organizations and conceptualizing them as precursors to a strong rural civil society. The main point of the study is that the basis of Guinea-Bissau's weak state is to be found precisely in the precolonial and colonial lineages of its rural-based civil societies. Thus, my focus is the generation of patterns of rural-based political and social behavior that endured through the precolonial centuries and reappeared consistently during the colonial and postcolonial periods, despite significant changes and adaptive, strategic shifts. This approach necessitates an analytic turn toward "deep history," buttressed by historical, anthropological, and sociological empirical evidence—one focused on rural zones, where approximately 70 percent of Africans continue to live and where the main sources of social and political power are located.

In these regards, in order to attain insight into the policy capacity of African states, I follow Patrick Chabal's advice to concentrate on "low politics" (i.e., popular politics) rather than the "high politics" of the central government.[2] At the same time, I suggest a broadening of the classical conceptualization of "civil society," which typically refers to urban-based, centrally located, well-organized, visible institutions, to include a wide range of rural-based social formations whose potency is less visible to the unaware observer. Some of these rural-based social institutions may be virtually clandestine in nature, but they are the loci in which rural people invest their time, energies, resources, and political loyalties and often serve as the central nexus of rural political authority.[3] In this book, I suggest that a rural civil society—characterized by rural-based social institutions

that, having developed over the course of centuries, have become entrenched in the lifeblood of local society—can prove an enduring impediment to state building, while, at the same time, making possible a substantial degree of local-level autonomy and regional self-empowerment.

This argument lends support to the work of Joel Migdal, who has noted that weak, or soft, states are most likely to emerge where social structures are characterized by a "weblike" complexity marked by a high degree of political fragmentation and pluralism, which contributes to the ability of "social organizations" to function separately from state institutions.[4] For Migdal, it is the "tenacious and resilient" nature of weblike social forces that has effectively inhibited the ability of weak states to carry out their policies.[5] As a consequence, the state is unable to implement its policy agenda effectively and fails to incorporate the citizenry into government-controlled institutions or state-managed political mobilization efforts. Weak states do not achieve the status of sovereign political authority in a national domain, and they cannot extract sufficient resources from domestic markets to meet the state's institution-building requirements. Migdal usefully points out that the diffusion of power among (particularly rural) social organizations should become a key focus of investigation of the sources of state weakness.[6]

This perspective most notably finds its parallel in Africanist literature in the work of Naomi Chazan, who suggests that national-scale policy failure in Africa reflects, in part, the ability of nonstate spheres to withstand attempts at state hegemony. Chazan points out that these nonstate social spheres can serve as bases for peasant activities that provide enduring social strength to African social formations.[7] From this perspective, it is important to examine political processes "from the bottom up" and to research "specific social constellations" at the local level.[8] As both Migdal and Chazan have observed, it is these more subterranean, peasant-controlled social spheres that have served as key bases for a "strong" rural politics, offering significant protection to the countryside against the hegemonic control efforts of the central state. Like Migdal, Chazan underlines the utility of examining power centers located in the less-visible niches of social formations precisely because they help to explain why African states have been unable to achieve their goals.[9]

Embracing a parallel perspective, Martin Doornbos urges research into "the non-state sphere" in Africa to investigate the "political space" created by social and religious protests, liberation fronts, and revitalization movements.[10] Doornbos observes in particular the expansion of nonstate infrastructures at the grassroots level, including "potentially autonomous institutions" such as mutual-aid societies, farmers' organizations, religious and cultural bodies, "and

many other informal and traditional groupings such as the Ghanaian *asafo* companies, fraternities, and kinship associations."[11] Doornbos has also called attention to state breakdown in eastern Africa and the emergence of local and regional groups and networks as "autonomous, 'non-state' forms of social organisation."[12] In support of such an approach, Elke Zuern has recently argued that the concept of "civil society" ought to be expanded to incorporate "a very broad range of human associations" located in the public sphere "between the household and the state"—one that includes "forms of co-operation for mutual benefit," such as ethnic associations and village groupings.[13]

Chazan et al. refer to nonstate spheres and autonomous networks as representing "popular conflicts" that form part of the "deep politics" of postcolonial Africa. They write: "Territorially defined and physically removed from official power centers, local communities do control some resources and usually have evolved their own political institutions based on shared norms. Although they cannot exercise a full exit option, they carve out their own independent niches in certain spheres."[14]

From a different perspective, Jean-François Bayart has observed the extent to which "popular actions" have undermined and reduced the scope of the state in Africa. He includes as examples "the creation of theocratic communities outside state control," as well as revolts, the refusal to grow certain crops, migrations, religious revivals, informal exchanges, and various types of "sabotage of the instruments of political control."[15] Bayart concludes that "subordinated social groups have not been as passive as they are thought to be" and that state domination has often been challenged by social forces that have been "ill-contained."[16] Bayart's assertion that "Africa's cultural diversity" has acted as "a constraint on central power"[17] approximates Migdal's thesis regarding the ability of weblike social structures to weaken central states. Bayart calls attention to "strong local autonomy,"[18] which is similar to Chazan's depiction of autonomous social forces emerging in rural and urban communities.

In a particularly probing study, Jane Guyer examines the "spatial dimensions" of civil society in order to underline the extent to which chieftaincies in Nigeria and elsewhere reach beyond their formal boundaries and localities to incorporate multiple power sources within far-reaching networks. These networks may be considered to represent a unique aspect of civil society in Africa wherein chiefly power and influence were built upon people's political devotion and investment of their resources from a wide geographic span and from multiple hierarchical levels. This allowed "officeholders" in traditional authority systems to build up extensive power structures that were not controlled or

sanctioned by the colonial state but nonetheless may be considered part of a civil society that is polycentric, fractal, and defined by overlapping, flexible organizational boundaries.[19]

More generally, this book incorporates and builds upon the perspectives articulated above through an analysis of the social and historical basis of autonomy within a polycentric rural civil society defined by weblike social structures, with local as well as widely dispersed social constellations. In doing so, I adhere to the term *social formations,* rather than Migdal's *social organizations* or Zuern's *human associations,* because *formations* implies, consistently with Guyer's perspective, an especially ebb-and-flow character, enduring yet adaptable, inclusivistic, and malleable. Persistent, historically "deep" but evolving social formations represent a variegated diffusion of rural power nodes that help us to better appreciate the achievements of Guinea-Bissau's spheres of civil-societal strength, particularly in regard to carving out substantial social autonomy in rural areas. This book suggests not merely that rural social constructions are part of civil society but that they may be conceptualized to represent its core, considering that they embody the locus of power and resource accumulation in much of Africa, articulated in various and changing ways over the course of centuries.

Overall, then, this book emphasizes the internal evolution of rural-based social strength. But at the same time, it is crucial to understand state fragility from the political-science perspectives of problems in pursuing political penetration and in asserting political hegemony.

Local Power and Colonial Political Capacity

In order to appreciate the evolution of relations between state and rural civil society in Guinea-Bissau with particular regard to the allocation of power at the local level, it is crucial to examine the central government's effort to pursue what James Coleman has termed the "political penetration" of social forces by state institutions.[20] This concept refers to the degree of comprehensiveness of the state's social reach—a powerful state being capable of determining the flow of political relations and the contour of social power at the microlevel of society. B. Guy Peters suggests that a strong state with a high degree of "extensiveness" is able to develop a central policy apparatus through which political leaders can effectively coordinate and implement national-scale policy processes.[21]

In comparative studies of present-day Africa, this concept of political penetration has been utilized to suggest that contemporary African states have been

impeded in their quest to achieve a sovereign policy capacity and political predominance, especially in the rural areas.[22] Most African central states have not been able to mold local power structures within rural civil society so to coincide with the state's interests, and therefore national policies cannot be universally implemented at the local level.[23] As Jeffrey Herbst's recent study of power in African states makes clear, central governments have failed to consolidate their authority beyond centralized core urban areas.[24] In Goran Hyden's terms, a soft state is fundamentally lacking in the structural or institutional ability to enforce its policy decisions in order to shape society according to its policy preferences and to carry out its national plans.[25] My task in this book is to help explain why, in the case of Guinea-Bissau, this has been so. I suggest that a full explanation necessitates reference to the historical genesis of strong social formations and the patterns of power within rural civil society.

Crawford Young's recent analysis of the colonial origins of Africa's state crisis and Mahmood Mamdani's investigation of the power relations between state and localities provide useful guides to the study of state building during the colonial period.[26] However, I suggest that the present analysis of Guinea-Bissau diverges to a considerable degree from the models of colonial/postcolonial linkage presented in their work. Young describes the contemporary African state as "a purposive agent of history" that embodies the past as "a reservoir of instructive experience."[27] Young indicates that the contemporary state crisis in Africa is to a large extent the consequence of inheriting the colonial state's telos as a *bula matari,* or rock crusher.[28] In other words, the authoritarian, force-based nature of postcolonial African states originated in the heavy reliance on sheer coercion to build up colonial state institutions and to carry out the imperatives of state building. In some colonial states, colonial authority remained to some extent "precarious" in that its authority continued to rest essentially on the threat of force,[29] but in general, argues Young, "the construction of hegemony had produced comprehensive subjugation of African society."[30] By about the time of World War I, he asserts, in most of Africa rural colonial officials and compliant chiefs followed centrally mandated rules, the resistance option had been effectively supplanted, and the state began to assert "a powerful hold on subject society";[31] moreover, during the interwar years, that hegemony was consolidated and colonial state rule was "thoroughly institutionalized."[32]

The recent study of colonial power by Mamdani supports this analysis. Mamdani argues that colonial control became largely characterized by a type of "decentralized despotism" through which state builders relied on traditional chiefs at the local level to carry out their exploitative policies coercively.[33] He suggests that

local chiefs became increasingly alienated from the villagers they subjugated and repressed, inflicting harsh taxation and forced-labor policies, but in doing so they helped to assure a strong level of colonial-state domination over the peasantry.[34]

The studies by Young and Mamdani are particularly useful for understanding state growth in those cases where powerful and effective bureaucracies did emerge or where colonial control was consolidated through a hierarchical system of "fused" political, economic, and social power implemented by chiefs at the village level. However, the image of comprehensive domination suggested by Young and Mamdani does not coincide with the success of some rural civil societies in sustaining a relatively large spectrum of resistance activities through the colonial durée. In the present study, I explain that the origins of state softness lie not only in the manner of colonial state construction but also in the character of the rural social formations over which the state sought domination. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, it is not so much that the hard colonial state became transformed into the soft postcolonial state, but rather that the colonial state was essentially itself a fragile state—despite its eventual ability to extract and accumulate capital—that was internally fractured by corruption and relied preeminently on terror to assure its security and sovereignty.[35] In these terms, the "transition" was not so much hard-to-soft as soft-to-soft.

Relatively weak African colonial states such as Guinea-Bissau performed the "essential elements of state logic" (i.e., of policy making and implementation) poorly, and they had great difficulty consistently assuring their own "security"; they were unable to achieve "hegemony," or social and political domination, over rural civil society.[36] Attention to the dynamics of political and social life at the community level reveals that a wider range of colonial states stood on more fragile legs than has generally been assumed. Part of the reason for the emergence of weak states in various parts of postcolonial Africa in many cases reflects the enduring strengths and adaptability of rural social structures.

In this respect, this book differs sharply from the approach adopted by Herbst in his recent analysis of the limitations of African state power.[37] Extending prior discussions of state softness,[38] Herbst asserts that state failure to project administrative power outward from core urban settings in part reflected state leaders' political attitudes and pattern of elite decision making and in part reflected obstructive geographic factors. He argues that it was precolonial leaders' unwillingness to consolidate central state power throughout their territorial domains, along with the difficult topographical terrain, that lay the foundation for weak states in the colonial and postcolonial periods, resulting in highly circumscribed political geographies of state power.[39]

The conceptual problem there is that while Mamdani's and Young's analyses do not adequately recognize the limited character of colonial state power, Herbst's study fails to provide adequate attention and historical responsibility to social actors and structures within the African rural heartland—territory that he dismissively terms as the "hinterland."[40] In this book, by contrast, I include but go beyond state leaders' attitudes and incentives to probe the dynamic evolution of rural civil society and the way in which rural social structures, political activists, interethnic alliances, and potent rural-based military forces posed complex roadblocks to the builders of central state power. In doing so (and in contrast to Young, Mamdani, and Herbst), I assert interepochal linkages among the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods with specific regard to the vibrancy, malleability, and assertiveness of rural civil society.

Victor Azarya has helped to lay the analytic groundwork for such a perspective by underlining the link between colonial and postcolonial Africa in terms of focusing on the "continuing gap between state and society" in both epochs. He argues that in some parts of Africa (such as Chad, Niger, and Sudan), the notion of "disengagement" actually misrepresents social continuities, because this term inaccurately implies that social actors had been "engaged" or "incorporated" into state-controlled social spheres during the colonial period.[41] Azarya highlights the continuing process of social disengagement through both periods in certain parts of Africa and suggests that the task for the policy analyst, in light of such continuities, is to "pay more attention to how a given society lives beyond the scope of state capabilities."[42] My investigation into the historical nexus of rural social and political spheres does precisely that with specific regard to Guinea-Bissau.

In doing so, I suggest that the Portuguese colonial state in Guinea-Bissau was unable to achieve meaningful and effective incorporation of the rural populace into the state's social or economic policy spheres (in Young's, Mamdani's, or Hyden's senses). As occurred elsewhere in the rural areas of African colonies, the relative isolation of state officials promoted a certain arbitrariness in the effort to carry out the hegemony imperative since each official relied on "situational strategies" and "a large range of initiative" to assure the subjugation of the peasantry under his charge.[43] However, I shall make clear that despite this relatively wide latitude of rulership, in Portuguese Guinea the rural populace not only found ways of circumventing colonial state officials but also built up alternative spheres of political and social authority and of economic activity that served as social counterforces to power.

That is why I refer to the four decades that followed the military conquest of rural Guinea[44] as the "settled" colonial period,[45] rather than adopting Young's

notion of a period of state "institutionalization." In doing so, I emphasize, consistently with Herbst's analysis, the relative incompleteness of the hegemonic superstructure created to rule over rural Guinean society.[46] However, it is crucial to appreciate the variability of the power arrangements between state and rural civil society in differing parts of Africa; thus, I argue that the colonial state in Portuguese Guinea was unable to attain the degree of effective social control that had been achieved by some of its west, central, and southern African counterparts.[47] Attempts at a Lusitanian version of southern Africa's decentralized despotism (meaning, in Guinea-Bissau, the appointment of Fulbe — and, to a lesser extent, collaborative Biaffada and Mandinka — chiefs to rule over provinces dominated by other ethnic groups) were not successful. In contrast to the destruction of rural civil society in parts of southern and eastern Africa (per Mamdani), Guinea-Bissau's peasants found numerous ways of "avoiding" the state centralist administrative structure, of locating alternative trade circuits, and of strengthening their own social and civil-societal institutions — including the re-creation of alternative authority sources such as age-based decision-making forums and social spheres of activity controlled by nonstate actors that originated in precolonial times (e.g., shrine-based societies).

This does not mean that the state in Portuguese Guinea was unable to accomplish any official task: during the relatively brief settled colonial period, annual taxes were collected and forced-labor parties were occasionally organized. However, sending a tax-collection police force out through the countryside once a year and putting together an occasional work party is not equivalent to establishing a tightly monitored hierarchy of control by the colonial state over indigenous, village-level production, trading flows, and the reorganization of labor — as occurred in the "fused power" village structures described by Mamdani and Young. In Guinea-Bissau, in contrast to other colonial states, political penetration and social domination were in effect "blocked" — not (as Herbst argues) by leaders' lack of incentive to pursue hegemonic politics or by the existence of mountain passes, rivers, or other geographic structures,[48] but by the emergence of vibrant, adaptive, locally embedded social institutions located outside the administrative rubric of the national government and its appointees.

The relative uniqueness of Guinea-Bissau's experience and the extent to which it diverges from many of its colonial counterparts deserves emphasis. To be sure, in much of Africa during the 1890s and early 1900s (i.e., the initial period of colonial state construction), state hegemony remained fragile, assured only by "a skeletonal grid of territorial administration" and by occasional displays of its coercive capacity.[49] During this early phase, state administration consisted at best

of a string of far-flung outposts staffed by a handful of officials, interpreters, and soldiers and was only intermittently sustained by contacts from the capital city. According to Young, by the end of this construction phase (normally by 1910), the basic infrastructure for state building had in fact been established in most of the continent; the routinization of violence had ended, "basic order" was established, and colonial officials restructured social institutions so as to assure a rising revenue flow.[50]

However, in contrast to this schema, I argue that in the case of Portuguese Guinea, the transition from construction to institutionalization was incompletely realized. The routinization of societal subordination lagged significantly behind the more "institutionalized" colonies. In these regards, a brief comparative look at the case of the Belgian Congo helps to clarify Portuguese Guinea's distinctiveness. Both the Belgian Congo and Portuguese Guinea were characterized by heterogenous rural societies that complicated the achievement of political and social hegemony. In both colonies, a mixture of "administrative" and "domination" strategies was employed, including the cultivation of chiefly rule in traditionally hierarchical areas as well as the effort to employ more direct methods of supervision where chiefs were regarded with suspicion.[51] In both cases (although more extensively in Guinea-Bissau), administrative inadequacies were such that the colonialists had no choice but to rely on African auxiliary chiefs to rule over those areas that lacked indigenous chiefs, and this helped to underline the relative fragility of state domination. Tom Callaghy has analyzed the Belgian Congo as having imposed a relatively superficial administrative structure over the rural areas, using a "coverover" strategy based on prefectures that did not enjoy a deep hegemony within peasant communities.[52] Similarly, I will argue that the hegemony of the Portuguese Guinean state remained at best superficially imposed.

However, this aspect of the Congo-Guinean parallel must be placed in proper perspective; the superficial character of the colonial state was manifested far more dramatically in Portuguese Guinea than it was in the case of the Belgian Congo. The demands that the colonial state superstructure was able to impose on peasants in the Belgian Congo were in substantial excess of those placed on the peasants of Portuguese Guinea. And the extent of peasant avoidance and the creation of peasant spheres of alternative authority in Guinea notably exceeded those in the Congolese case. Here again, it is crucial to peer closely into the dynamic evolution of rural social formations in order to appreciate differential results in the implementation of the state's hegemonic mandate.

Overall, it may be suggested that the case of Guinea-Bissau, today as during the colonial era, represents the high end of a continuum of policy paralysis and

state softness; at the same time, the findings here—and, to a greater extent, the general approach adopted—bear significantly on the general study of relations between civil society and the state in Africa. This work demonstrates the general utility of tracing the social lineages of rural power to better understand the domestic sources of state fragility. In doing so, I suggest that a focus on the historical origins of weblike social formations and rural civil society in Africa may reveal significant aspects of the sources of policy paralysis elsewhere on the continent, despite the relative uniqueness of Portuguese Guinea's dénouement.

At the same time, in analyzing the dynamics of state incapacity, it is important to observe that one consequence of policy dysfunctionality is state actors' often frantic, desperate search for a mechanism of political domination. In Portuguese Guinea, I argue that this search in fact led to the introduction of state terror.

State Terror and State Fragility

Indeed, precisely because of the relative weakness of the colonial state's infrastructure, its policy difficulties, and its failure to establish its political authority within the countryside, during two important historical episodes the Portuguese colonial state in Guinea turned to an overt policy of state terror in an effort to fulfill its security function—that is, to assure its political sovereignty throughout the Guinean would-be nation. The first episode was the 1913–15 conquest of the interior; the second was the 1962–74 war against the movement for national liberation. In both cases, massive violence was used by the state against defenseless civilians in an overt effort to terrorize the peasant population into submission.

How can a colonial state that we here characterize as relatively "weak," or "soft," possibly carry out a "terror"-based strategy of rule? What could be the connection between a strong rural civil society, a fragile national state, and the use of state terror? My argument is that it was precisely the inability of the state to carry out its security and hegemony functions by more "normal" or peaceful means that pushed the Lusophone state builders in Guinea—who were fully determined to consolidate state sovereignty throughout their claimed territory—to turn to state terror to carry out their goals. It was because the Portuguese were operating "from a position of weakness" that they relied so heavily on "brutality," or ultraviolence.[53] I conceptualize the 1913–15 and 1962–74 wars against the civilian populace as "state terrorist" violence because of the methods of cruelty employed against the unarmed civilian populace.

Here we must observe that the colonialists in Portuguese Guinea were not alone in their reliance on massive state violence to secure political sovereignty. Most other colonial powers relied on similar means at some point in the conquest period to assure the "pacification" of the interior of their respective colonies. As Young has demonstrated, "punitive expeditions" characterized by the "burning of villages," the carrying out of various "barbarities," and the destruction of sacred symbols of African power were frequent.[54] Crowder has similarly underlined the burning of villages by the British in Sierra Leone and the forced enslavement and the killing of women and children by the French in Western Sudan.[55]

It may well prove helpful for scholars to reconsider this period of colonial "conquest" in much of Africa as having been characterized by the widespread use of state terror in the senses depicted above. At the same time, however, I would suggest that the extent and viciousness of state-sanctioned violence used against the peasantry of the Guinean interior represents an extreme version of most "pacification" military assaults carried out against resistant African societies. Moreover, whereas in most of sub-Saharan Africa this conquest phase was completed by 1900,[56] in Portuguese Guinea violent resistance continued for nearly two decades after that date.

Conceptually, we may note that few analyses of African state building have employed a "state terror" analytic perspective. Several studies do note the use of terror in present-day Africa—for example, Ibrahima K. Sundiata's analysis of Macias's personal reign of terror in Equatorial Guinea and Rhoda Howard's argument that Moi's regime in Kenya in the 1980s was heading toward a terror-based strategy of rule.[57] In addition, the suppression of black Christians in Mauritania in the 1980s has been interpreted as a "campaign of terror."[58] However, none of these analyses places the *colonial-era* use of terror at the forefront of their analytic frameworks.[59]

In this book, especially in chapter 5, I suggest that the massive use of violence by the colonial state in Portuguese Guinea during the 1910s and the 1960s constitutes state terror in the sense of the term as used in examinations of terror-based regimes in Latin America, Central America, Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and Eastern Europe[60]—that is, the use of massive violence by a government against unarmed citizens to achieve total political domination. As Stohl and Lopez suggest, state terrorism is "the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behavior in a victim and/or audience."[61] Schmid's definition of state terrorism is particularly useful: it refers to "patterned and persistent atrocities by state or state-sponsored actors" in which the government "goes beyond the legitimate use of violence" and includes "deliberate attacks on

civilians, . . . secret torture, and massacres."[62] Schmid also notes that state terrorism is "a method of rule whereby some groups of people are victimized with great brutality . . . by the state or state-supported actors, so that others who have reason to identify with those murdered will despair, obey or comply."[63] Bushnell et al. suggest that the terror-based state aims to create a "culture of terror" in which "people are numbed into subservience" through the use or threat of massive violence.[64]

It is important to emphasize that analysts of state terror have typically linked the emergence of institutionalized large-scale violence with a particularly weak state. Indeed, Bushnell et al. argue that state terror is especially likely to emerge when government institutions become marked by "disarray" and ill-trained civil servants weakly committed to the public service; when ethnic factors complicate the relations between state and society; and when the state becomes especially dependent on a foreign power.[65] A study of state terror in Latin America similarly suggests that terrorist strategies are utilized by government leaders as survival mechanisms of weak regimes when political institutions become "incoherent" and institute erratic, ineffective policy programs.[66] I argue below that it was precisely because of the relatively brittle character of its "stateness" that the colonial government in Portuguese Guinea turned to a policy of national-scale terror in order to attain political sovereignty (in the 1910s) and, later (in the 1960s), to retain its rulership. Reliance on a methodological campaign of terror by the Portuguese colonialists in Guinea reflected a perception by state leaders that no other options were available, considering the inability to achieve domination over the Guinean interior by treaties, through economic exchanges, or other means.[67]

Thus, in analyzing the historical basis on which the colonial state in Portuguese Guinea was constructed, I suggest that state building in that colony was distinctively characterized by a heavy reliance on massive anticivilian violence during key historical moments. Even during the "settled" colonial period, the colonial state relied on authoritarian control measures that often developed into extreme violence, thus perpetuating the "terror"-oriented culture on which its rule was based. This zero-sum logic of rulership was a logical consequence of the failure to establish enduring linkages with the key power structures of rural civil society (in Young's terms, it reflected the inability to carry out the hegemony imperative effectively).

Despite this state violence, in Guinea-Bissau both before and after the 1913–15 conquest, rural social formations were able to mobilize an impressive praetorian response and retained the integrity and autonomy of most social and political spheres. Through the forty-year settled colonial period, social formations in the

countryside proved capable, by various means, of fending off or deflecting many of the colonial state's hegemonic thrusts (see below). To be sure, from the 1930s to the 1950s, taxes were collected on a fairly consistent basis, and forced-labor gangs assured that some roads and public buildings were constructed. However, these measures were applied inconsistently and only in certain locations, and they did not collectively result in the coercive incorporation of cultivators into a colonially controlled national economic trade structure.

Thus, producers retained control over land tenure and land use, and clandestine rural markets operated so as to severely limit the extent of both internal economic change and institutional state building. The Guinea-Bissauan countryside was in fact marked by extensive peasant avoidance of state tax collectors, internal migration, self-sufficiency with regard to food crops, the sale or barter exchange of items on hidden marketing circuits, a widespread refusal to cooperate with officials in regard to economic policies, as well as extensive levels of external trade across the porous Senegalese border that was invisible to Portuguese colonial officials. All of these activities helped to serve as independent financial sources of relative economic autonomy for many rural communities, and in doing so they deprived the state of much-needed resources, assured a fundamentally disarticulated economy, and hindered the potential for statecentric economic development. At the same time, community-based political power structures and indigenous sources of authority proved more influential, at the local level, than the stooled chiefs appointed by the state. Reliance on co-opted indigenous representatives of the state did not have the desired effect since these local leaders lacked popular respect in most regions, and the state largely was unable to reinforce appointed chiefs' decisions on a consistent basis. The variegated nature of rural civil society was in fact characterized by locally generated political structures and social formations that represented viable popular alternatives to government-sanctioned authorities.

By the 1960s, the extent of peasant autonomy contributed to villagers' ability to provide widespread support to the growing nationalist movement for independence. More particularly, the de facto decentralization of political and social structures politically facilitated peasants' capacity to choose to ally with the rebels. This, in turn, helped make it possible for the nationalists to mobilize the rural populace and, eventually, to outbattle the colonialists. In this sense, the return to a policy of state terror had backfired, with extensive popular support for the violent anticolonial movement assuring the military success of the rebels, which in turn eventually helped to provoke the abandonment of Guinea by the Portuguese.

Social Formations, Alliances, and Praetorian Social Memory

It is precisely in reflection of the crucial role played by rural civil society in helping to assure state fragility through the colonial era and in helping to determine the outcome of the nationalist war that it is so important to investigate the historical evolution of rural social forces. Here it is vital to refer back not merely to the nature of the Portuguese-African encounter, but also to precolonial indigenous social institutions, locally rooted communities, empire formation, military experiences, regional spirit deities, and, especially, interethnic exchanges and cooperation. These represent the historical antecedents of rural civil-societal strength and the origins of modern social formations. By the time of the emergence of the colonial state, spheres of political, social, and economic activity had been carved out that lay outside the rubric of the colonial state, and they would remain so after independence.

In some cases, these alternative fields of power and social formations were specific to a locality or communal group, but this did not prohibit a robust set of political, military, and economic exchanges with other rural communities. Thus, the same communities that displayed strong, ethnically based attachments to certain territorial locales commonly decided to forego ethnic exclusivity in exchange for interethnic alliances when they were faced with external challenges. In this way, political mobilization often assumed relatively fluid forms. For example, I suggest that different sets of chiefs from Fulbe-djiábê, Fulbe-ribê, Mandinka, and Biaffada ethnic backgrounds formed common alliances throughout the latter portions of the nineteenth century, as did ordinary members of decentralized societies such as the Balanta, Papel, Oinka, and Bijagós groups, with particular alliances depending on changing macropolitical circumstances.

We will also see that chiefs and peasants from various groups made political choices that were largely pragmatically based, rather than ethnically based, during the 1960s–70s struggle for national liberation. I contend that the particular nature of rural civil society within each community, especially regarding their varying political structures, helped to determine the direction of political decision making during the war for national independence. The idiosyncratic ways that communities evolved, despite their belonging to the same ethnic group, resulted in differing types of leadership structures from one community to the next and therefore produced differing political choices during the liberation struggle. Thus, decisions regarding which side to support tended to reflect the character of rural civil society rather than ethnic identity per se.

On this theme of ethnic flexibility, it is important to emphasize the role of

multiethnic alliances in appreciating the sources of rural civil society's capacity for praetorian mobilization. Historians have tended to discount the role of multiethnic alliances in understanding the military resistance by rural African communities in Guinea-Bissau to Lusitanian-led armies of conquest. René Pélissier, for example, underemphasizes these alliances and the extent of supraethnic coordination, remarking that, along with an "absence of charismatic chiefs" and a lack of a "community of interest," the indigenous peoples of Guinea-Bissau were characterized by an absence of interethnic coordination of political and military affairs.[68] Similarly, Peter Karibe Mendy, in his study of primary anticolonial resistance in Guinea-Bissau, underlines the extent of warfare between Portuguese and Africans but does not stress the degree of military cooperation between groups.[69]

According to these perspectives, it was not until the recent national-liberation struggle that common military fronts were forged by Guineans. However, as I make clear in chapters 2, 3, and 4, the local peoples of Guinea-Bissau did form large-scale alliances among widespread villages of common ethnic origin (intraethnic collaboration) as well as multiethnic alliances. This alliance forming helps to account for the effectiveness of rural civil society in countering Luso-colonial attacks. Prior to the conquest-period battles, and throughout the precolonial period, multiple alliances had been created among chiefs hailing from different locational and ethnic origins. Thus, the ethnic commitment to defend specific territories among the Balanta, Papel, Mandjack, and others did not prohibit active and frequent involvement in common interethnic military fronts. At the same time, the ruling families of the powerful Gabu kingdom represented intermarriages among Mandinka, Fulbe, and Banhun elites; the kingdom functioned as a "decentralized hegemony" in which Mandinka, Banhun, Biaffada, Diola, Fulbe, and other groups were able to mobilize and coordinate their forces effectively.[70]

In these respects, a search for the social origins of state weakness can reveal significant, previously unappreciated nuclei of rural praetorian strength. Indeed, through those lengthy precolonial centuries, the armies organized and trained by the military and political leaderships of various Papel, Mandjack, Balanta, and Biaffada societies, of the Fuladu empire as well as of the Gabu kingdom, were often better organized than their Portuguese counterparts, were commonly better trained, and sometimes had access to technologically superior weaponry. This remained the case through the first decade of the twentieth century. Thus, for most of the period stretching from 1879, when the Portuguese began to launch full-scale invasion attacks on the countryside with the intent of conquest, up until 1913, most African chiefs, groups, and allied forces

who fought the Portuguese troops and their African allies defeated them. The period from 1800 to 1912—eleven decades—was in fact a time of great military success for rural civil society in Guinea-Bissau.[71] During this period, colonial troops were repeatedly humiliated, beaten, diseased, and frustrated in vain efforts to subdue various chieftainships and anti-Portuguese African forces.

To some extent, these military successes against Portuguese armies were reflective of a general pattern of indigenous military success against European armies prior to the introduction of superior military technology in the late 1800s (particularly the Gatling and Maxim guns).[72] The fact is that African resistance against European expansion has generally been overlooked, largely as a consequence of what appeared to be the "ultimate" outcome of European victory. In much of the continent, resistance proved significant for two or three decades, as African armies took advantage of their superior numbers, knowledge of local terrain, rapid mobility relative to the slow-footed Europeans (who had to transport heavy equipment), and their ability to purchase weapons from illegal traders.[73] As a result, African fighters slowed or even set back the advance of the Europeans in central Nigeria, Western Sudan, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Ghana, southern Guinea, Mali, and Mauritania.[74]

A particularly interesting aspect of this resistance was that "segmentary societies" often proved especially effective in battling the Europeans because they tended to resort to guerrilla warfare, which was difficult for European standing armies to overcome.[75] In Guinea-Bissau, we shall see that groups with acephalous political traditions proved especially adept at guerrilla-style confrontations. However, a number of centralized kingships throughout sub-Saharan Africa, such as the Temne (Sierra Leone), the Ijebu kingship (Nigeria), the Sarakole (western Sudan), the Sokoto Caliphate (Nigeria), the Mandingo empire of Samori (French Guinea), and the Dahomey kingdom also effectively confronted European forces through the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed, it was often the case that Europeans perceived it to be too difficult to seek to defeat centralized kingships directly and so had to take advantage of divisions within or between these kingdoms to make military progress against African resistors. This was possible precisely because African chiefs and kings did not perceive the coastally based Europeans to represent a serious military or political threat.[76] This occurred in Guinea-Bissau as well, but more slowly and with lesser effect than elsewhere. Thus, the Portuguese did not seek to defeat the Gabu or Fuladu empires but rather awaited their slow internal weakening through intersocietal warfare, a process that the Portuguese did not fully profit from until after the turn of the twentieth century.

In the following chapters, I suggest that even compared with the impressive

resistance efforts of their West African counterparts, the precolonial societies of Guinea-Bissau were unusually successful in mobilizing armies that pushed back the imperial military drive. Other West African indigenous societies also developed military skills that enabled them to counter the invasive thrusts of colonial armies for a noteworthy period of time. But in Guinea-Bissau, powerful indigenous armies and a weakly endowed colonial bureaucratic infrastructure made possible an unusually long-lasting and effective anti-European war effort.[77] This helped to entrench within Guinea-Bissau's social formations a memory of praetorian success that would reemerge periodically through the colonial period, and then with dramatic impact during Portuguese colonialism's terminal phase. Indeed, this memory was reinvoked at the start of the nationalist war and would help assure that the state's reintroduction of terror policies in the 1960s would fail as rural peoples succeeded in remobilizing their military forces and made substantial progress toward defeating the colonialists.

It is important to underline the fact that the praetorian accomplishments of the indigenous communities of Guinea-Bissau on the field of battle represent a key component of the social lineages of rural strength, and hark back to indigenous military developments during the precolonial period. Through the period from the sixteenth century to the twentieth, political and military power in most of the rural areas was located in key social institutions that were usually able to keep aggressive Europeans at a relatively safe distance. The remobilization of the countryside in the 1960s was based in part on the historical continuity of interethnic patterns of praetorian coordination.

To some extent, this argument extends and supports T. O. Ranger's point that the historical basis of modern nationalism in Africa lies not so much in the mobilizational activities of an educated urban elite, but rather in a tradition of resistance established during the "primary" anticolonial wars of the period from the 1880s to the 1910s.[78] Ranger notes that in much of Africa, the separation between primary wars of resistance and the modern nationalist movements was often chronologically brief, that the historical memory of prolonged anticolonial fighting during that early resistance period remained very much alive, and that modern (1960s) nationalist leaders openly called upon those memories to induce members of different ethnic groups to cooperate in a common proindependence front.[79] Mendy's study of primary resistance in Guinea-Bissau does not link ethnic cooperation to the building of a proindependence front, but it convincingly emphasizes the nationalist struggle as representing in a general sense a continuity of Guinea-Bissau's lengthy tradition of resistance.[80]

While my argument is consistent with these points, I stretch the chronology

further back in time, suggesting that many African societies were engaged in lengthy episodes of combat with one another as well as in multiethnic alliance formation throughout the precolonial period and that the historical origins of twentieth-century resistances lie in these older historical experiences. Indeed, I use the term *praetorian social memory:* I do so to suggest that this was not simply a matter of African social formations resisting European imperialism, but rather was reflective of a long-standing set of experiences of success at warfare during precolonial times—thus, it is more of a memory of praetorian capability, rather than a memory of "resistance" per se. I link this praetorian social memory to the determination of certain communities to retain their local autonomy, reflecting a many-centuries-long social history of community based self-rulership that rural Africans have been willing to fight and die to retain, from the early precolonial period through to contemporary times. In other African rural societies as well, such as among the Shona of Zimbabwe, a continuity of military struggle against invaders became manifest during precolonial times and was extended, through spirit mediums calling upon this ancient past, to Zimbabwe's anticolonial struggle.[81]

In Guinea-Bissau, the continuity of this praetorian social memory and multiethnic alliance making helped to set the historical stage for the military success of the nationalist liberation struggle: it can therefore be considered a key social factor in the emergence of anticolonial nationalism. Although the strategic, organizational, and international success of the nationalist movement may in part be attributed to Amílcar Cabral and other key leaders of the PAIGC (the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde), I argue that it was a history of interethnic cooperation on and off the field of battle that, in effect, established favorable social conditions for the nationalist movement to become embraced by members of all of Guinea-Bissau's ethnic groups.[82] In this sense, the origins of the anticolonial nationalist struggle in Guinea-Bissau hark back to ancient practices of social interchange and military cooperation that would be reflected in the eventual formation of an autonomous, yet interlinked rural civil society and in the practice of praetorian coordination on the part of various local communities.

Social Autonomy, Rural Civil Society, and Ethnicity

The preceding set of discussions enables us to suggest more precisely what is meant by autonomy with regard to social formations. In doing so, we may contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which rural civil society retained

its relative independence in the colonial and postcolonial periods and how it has helped to determine the contours of rural political space vis-à-vis the central state.

Social autonomy may be understood as the historical evolution of political, social, religious, and economic practices and spheres of social activity that are established by local communities rather than by nation-state governments. The way in which social autonomy evolves in a given locale is determined by the nature of the continuing and changing structures of civil society and its inter-action with external forces. To the extent that local communities achieve auton-omy, they are able to undertake political decisions that are not overturned by government agencies, they are able to create social units over which external powers hold little or no influence, and they control the major portion of their own social resources. Strong civil societies may not achieve autonomy in all these respects, but to the extent that they do so, they may be considered to rep-resent powerful bulwarks against central state intervention that advance and deepen the extent of community-based rulership.

In Guinea-Bissau, as I will make clear, rural civil society derived its strength from various historical sources, including the evolution of multiethnic interrela-tions and alliances, age-based social structures, locally selected village authority systems, dynamic religiosocial formations, and a variety of rural decision-making institutions. These aspects of rural civil society have contributed significantly to the establishment of substantial social autonomy and have been manifested con-sistently over time in rural Guinea-Bissau, although the particular nature of their manifestations sometimes changes in reaction to altered circumstances and exter-nal challenges. Thus, for example, the centralized and hierarchical Fulbe, Biaf-fada, and Mandinka sociopolitical structures of the precolonial era had become considerably restructured through the twentieth century, becoming significantly more decentralized despite the efforts of colonial officials to uphold their cen-tralized nature. One consequence of this change was that it augmented the ability of community leaders to distance themselves from central state control.

The internal structures of social formations in rural Guinea-Bissau have in some cases changed markedly over time, with the degree of change depending on the particular region or community, but typically in a way that has produced a retention or deepening of local autonomy. At the same time, the enduring na-ture and versatility of certain social practices and of spheres of social and political behavior such as interethnic exchanges allow us to identify a set of characteristics of rural civil society that are particular to Guinea-Bissau's evolution of locally generated social autonomy. Overall, in consequence of the combination of the considerable durability and the relative adaptability of rural civil society, Guinea-

Bissauan communities have been able to carve out a significant latitude of self-direction that has obviated repeated efforts at statecentric domination.

Finally, as a result of the emphasis placed throughout this book on interethnic relations as serving to strengthen rural civil society and on the simultaneous endurance of locally specific commitments, it is important to make clear that the term *interethnic* is intended to suggest the extent of group interchanges and their dynamic impact on social relations. This approach stands in contrast to the use of *interethnic* to imply exchanges among "fixed," or unchanging, social entities.[83] On the contrary, it will be suggested that members of ethnic groups manifested a substantial degree of social malleability in reflection of the dynamics wrought by interethnic exchanges, despite some communities remaining relatively committed to locally grounded social institutions and practices. Most Mandjack and Balanta, for example, engaged in peaceful exchanges with members from other groups, incorporating them into their own communities through intermarriage; new members were often absorbed into the host community and adopted local practices, but in some areas this process led to the formation of new ethnic formations (such as the Oinka).[84] Religious and social sources of civil-societal strength have been characterized by relatively flexible organizational boundaries over time, rather than fitting cleanly into corporate ethnic categories. Among these are the spirit-based movements through which Guineans reconstructed new domains of political and social authority untouched by colonial overseers. Key power figures within the communities based on spirit shrines allocated meaningful real-world resources, both political and economic, that directly affected the daily lives of shrine-society members hailing from different ethnic backgrounds. This is one of many examples of the way in which cultural exchanges among ethnic groups often produced new dynamics both within and among local groups and, in doing so, strengthened and enriched rural civil society.

The Informal Economic Sector

One factor that contributed both to rural civil-societal strength and to central state fragility in Guinea-Bissau was the emergence, in the colonial and post-colonial periods, of an "informal" economic sector based on peasant-controlled land use and trade links. The concept of an "informal" or "second" economic sector has been developed by, among others, Daniel dos Santos (with regard to Angola) and Janet MacGaffey (with regard to the Congo). For MacGaffey, this

sector involves "unmeasured, unrecorded" economic activities, income in kind that is hidden from state officials, and activities such as transborder trade, often on ancient mercantile circuits, involving food crops and other items that fetch higher prices outside the Congo and that "deprive the state of revenue."[85] Barter— frequently based on "reciprocal obligations," "mutual trust," and personal ties between producers and merchants[86]—is often the central mechanism for commodity exchange.[87] Dos Santos describes "systematic arrangements," or *esquemas,* developed in Angola under colonial rule and expanded after independence, through which a variety of producers and merchants exchange foods, clothes, meat, and other products.[88] These are so predominant in Angola that "the population devotes at least one-third of its productive time to them on an everyday basis";[89] this practice has represented a major barrier to organizing a national economy, while providing a channel of economic opportunity for those engaged in this economic sector.

In Guinea-Bissau, peasants determined their own land-use patterns and the direction of their trade sales or exchanges: a significant segment of rural economic activity remained "uncaptured" (i.e., effectively outside the rubric of state monitoring or control).[90] Despite growing levels of taxation and the establishment of "formal" trading circuits controlled by the state or by state-approved companies, most peasant economic activity in Guinea-Bissau in fact remained unmonitored and unregulated in the senses noted by MacGaffey and dos Santos; it therefore was part of the informal economic sector. As in the case of the Congo, so, too, in Guinea-Bissau the practice of intercommunity barter exchanges as well as long-distance trading networks hark back to marketing systems and exchange circuits that existed in precolonial times. In both the colonial and postcolonial periods, the predominance of "hidden" trading circuits and the accumulation of resources within rural civil society helped to assure the continuing fragility of the economic base upon which state power rested.

A general parallel may be drawn with the French colonial state established in the Middle Niger Valley during the final two decades of the nineteenth century. The French sought through treaty making as well as the use of military force to assure that the leaders of the precolonial Segu Bambara empire carried out the economic policies of the French colonialists.[91] But despite the broad political supremacy achieved by the French at the national level, they failed to control economic production, the supply of labor, or commerce.[92] Instead, a "parallel market" in cotton and cloths emerged that supplanted the state-sanctioned markets and that remained indigenously controlled.[93] As a result, the French colonial state in the Niger valley remained a fragile entity at the turn of the twentieth

century. Although local resources could be extracted through sheer force, economic production and trade was not effectively controlled, and so the French colonial state may be regarded as a "weak state" during that time period.[94]

Richard L. Roberts implies that after 1905, the French colonial state in Niger would progress out of this weak-state character and become more fully entrenched through the middle decades of the twentieth century. In contrast, in this book I suggest that the colonial state in Portuguese Guinea would never quite emerge out of this weak-state status. Rather, the predominance of the informal economy and of peasant-determined production patterns prohibited a fuller exploitation of indigenously controlled resources. Like the French colonial state in Niger in the late nineteenth century, the Portuguese Guinean colonial state as well as the postcolonial state in independent Guinea-Bissau remained fragile in part because the central government failed to more effectively exploit agronomic production or rural commerce and could not intervene in village-level land-tenure arrangements.

In both the colonial and postcolonial periods, the lack of state access to substantial rural resources coincided with the previously discussed political and social limitations on state policy capacity, manifested at the most fundamental level by the inability of the central government to establish effective institutions that incorporated rural social formations into its political domain. This, in turn, reflected the ability of rural civil society to achieve and sustain its autonomy in various social, economic, political, and military spheres.

A Domestic vs. International Perspective

Finally, it is important to state clearly that although this book focuses primarily on the domestic sources of African state fragility, I do not seek to minimize the international context as an important explanatory variable. I refer here to the relative underdevelopment of Portugal itself and the administrative paucity of the Portuguese state in Lisbon (noted earlier), which has been accurately targeted by perceptive analysts as a key source, even the central source, of colonial weakness in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau.[95] However, I suggest that this is not the only side of the story. There is also a domestic, Africa-focused, and historically rich component to the relative failure of the colonial implantation in Portuguese Africa. To understand this analytic perspective, it is essential to peer into rural, indigenous lineages of civil-societal change and continuity. In this respect, I argue that the evolution of Guinea-Bissau's weak-state

character cannot be appreciated without understanding the social context in which that state was created and sought to function.

Roberts makes a similar point in his study of French colonial development in Senegal, in which he urges a focus on localistic processes, in addition to examining the state/international conjuncture, in order to more fully understand both "the social history of rural change in Africa" and the inability of colonial administrators to fulfill their goals.[96] We may concur that it is important to recognize the colonial and international context within which relations between the domestic state and rural civil society unfold, but it is no less crucial to underline the extent to which Africa's indigenous actors were able to retain local control over key social processes.

Thus, to be sure, the origins of Portuguese Guinea's colonial state fragility can be partially traced to Portugal's weak economic position in the world economy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as Lisbon proved unable to provide sufficient administrative and economic resources to its colonial projects to allow officials to carry out their hegemonic and institution-building goals. In this regard, Guinea-Bissau, and Lusophone Africa more generally, were somewhat unique within Africa, reflecting the relative economic and institutional backwardness of Portugal during the nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth centuries. But the origin of the colonial state's weakness in Guinea-Bissau is also in part to be found in the manner in which the precolonial states and the variations of rural civil society within the physical borders of what is now Guinea-Bissau evolved. Furthermore, investigation of the historical linkages among precolonial societies, rural social formations, and the problematics of colonial state building is crucial for an appreciation of postcolonial policy malaise. The roots of the contemporary state's inability to configure rural civil society in its preferred direction reflect, in part, the history of these precolonial/colonial/postcolonial connections.