

cannot be attributed to indigenous conflict patterns. Third, by implication, tribal warfare is not a long-standing feature of the human condition but is a function of the state.

This argument is at once highly provocative, selectively insightful, and deeply flawed. It is true that previous accounts of tribal warfare have often underemphasized the effect of state societies in transforming or intensifying "indigenous" conflict. The book's best chapters rigorously document the military effects that state political economy has unquestionably had upon its expanding margins: in the West African slave trade (Law), the Iroquois Confederacy (Abler), eastern Peru (Brown and Fernandez), and the postcolonial Papua New Guinea highlands (Strathern). These cases illustrate (i) the political and military effects of conflict over western trade routes and goods; (ii) the escalating conflict that occurs as state powers play indigenous groups off against one another, and as indigenous groups attempt to appropriate agents of state societies for their own conflicts; (iii) the effect of state-society military organization and weaponry as they are selectively introduced to and adopted by indigenous peoples; and (iv) the tremendously disruptive effect of diseases introduced by state societies, particularly from Europe to the Western Hemisphere. The very disruptive effects that expanding states have had on their peripheries are amply and often convincingly documented.

It does not necessarily follow, however, that conflict among decentralized indigenous peoples was minimal or undeveloped prior to encroachment from state societies. Using their critical sword too strongly, the book's editors underweight the role of indigenous warfare, which careful ethnographic and archeological study has revealed to have been pronounced among non-state sedentary but decentralized food-producing societies from many world areas. (Ethnographic documentation is particularly dramatic and pervasive from interior New Guinea, which was not appreciably influenced by state societies until well into the present century.) The editors tend to attribute all tribal warfare to the subsequent transformative effect of economic and political encroachment by Western and other states. In this, they juxtapose a negative view of the state against an inappropriately Rousseauian view of what used to be called "tribal" societies.

To suggest that tribal warfare has been so saturated by the influence of state societies that no information is effectively knowable outside of our own Western context (as is done, for example, on p. 200) is to make the editors' position nonfalsifiable and true by definition. As the book's best chapters amply

demonstrate, the conflict dynamics of indigenous-state interaction need to be teased apart historically without sweeping either indigenous conflict patterns or the momentous and often horrendous effects of state political economies under the rug.

Refinement is needed; it does appear that the sociodemographic, economic, and ecological conditions for organized warfare were rare among decentralized hunter-gatherers, that is, prior to the advent of floral or faunal domestication and food production. And developed ethnocentrism appears to have been uncommon in the organizationally simplest human groups. But warfare often became pronounced with the devel-

opment of sedentism and food production, even among many of the decentralized indigenous groups that the present book's editors tend to exonerate. This should not detract from but rather help refine their thesis that the interface between state and non-state societies has fundamentally shaped the world of modern human conflict in all world areas in which decentralized human groups have struggled against great odds to maintain even a semblance of self-determination.

Bruce M. Knauff
Department of Anthropology,
Emory University,
Atlanta, GA 30322



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"Winter trees," salt print from a calotype negative by William Henry Fox Talbot, around 1840–42. [From L. J. Schaaf, *Out of the Shadows*, reviewed on page 1168; National Museum of Photography Film and Television]

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