Nationalism and Democracy

This book sheds light on the complicated, multifaceted relationship between nationalism and democracy by examining how nationalism in various periods and contexts shapes, or is shaped by, democratic practices or the lack thereof. This book examines nationalism’s relationship with democracy using three approaches:

• The challenge of democracy for sub-state nationalism: analyzing the circumstances under which sub-state nationalism is compatible with democracy, and assessing the democratic implications of various nationalist projects.
• The impact of state nationalism on democratic practices: examining the implications of state nationalism for democracy, both in countries where liberal democratic principles and practices are well established and where they are not.
• Understanding how state nationalism affects democratization processes and what impact sub-state nationalism has in these contexts.

Featuring a range of case studies from Western, Eastern and Central Europe, Russia, Africa and the Middle East, this book will be of interest to students and scholars of political science, sociology, nationalism and democracy.

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Nationalism and Democracy
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The editors
March 2009
Part I

Theoretical and conceptual discussion
1 Introduction

Tensions and paradoxes of a multifaceted relationship

Luis Moreno and André Lecours

Nationalism and democracy represent two of the most important processes and powerful ideas of contemporary politics. Both as ideological forces and institutional programmes, nationalism and democracy have not always pulled in the same direction, although they both feature common claims to individuals and people. Nationalism sometimes appears to be fully congruent with democracy as it speaks of freedom, equality and progress, and galvanizes the positive energy of whole societies. At other times, nationalism and democracy seem almost antithetical, with the former producing mechanisms of exclusion and sentiments of intolerance, and the latter constraining its definition to instrumental mechanisms of a majoritarian representation. The relationship between nationalism and democracy is therefore not only multifaceted but also full of tensions and paradoxes.

Academic contributions dealing with the interaction between nationalism and democracy are as varied as the relationship between these two phenomena. Not only theoretical social scientists, but also political comparativists and experts on international relations have engaged in furthering our understanding of specific aspects of that relationship. Indeed both nationalism and democracy are packages of multiple components rather than discrete monolithic phenomena. Nationalism involves notions of collective identity, territorial mobilization and, very often, political and constitutional change. Democracy features, among others, notions of popular sovereignty and political participation. As a result of this multiplicity of foci and interests a doctrinal comprehensive coherence is unusual, although a number of academics have examined such a relationship as a unit of observation.

Analysed from such an interrelated perspective, nationalism and democracy are processes which mutually reinforce themselves. Both are anchored in ideas of sovereignty and representative government. In their normative foundations nationalism and democracy challenge forms of political organization which are not legitimized by the people. From an historical standpoint, the apparently close and symbiotic relationship between nationalism and democracy has manifested itself in the development of state nationalism (or majority nationalism) in modern Europe, a process which is associated mainly with the outcomes of the English, American and French Revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
In Europe, state or majority nationalism consolidated as a crucial element behind the political mobilization against absolute monarchy. In some instances it was an ideological claim used by dynamic sections of the bourgeoisie, as well as some rural classes, to combat the privileges of the aristocracy. The concept of citizenship, initiated by the English Revolution and grounded by the American and French Revolutions, played a central role in the shaping of state nationalism. Furthermore, the initial proposals of the French Revolution also vindicated democratic notions of liberty, equality and fraternity (solidarity). Later, nationalism became the organizational and ideational reference for movements that sought emancipation from a variety of political situations (e.g. the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires; the French, British and Spanish colonial empires; and the Soviet Union). In those contexts, nationalism seemed to be in perfect congruence with democracy, although it was not always the case. Let us remind ourselves that, as happened with France and the US, the liberal nationalism postulated by Giuseppe Mazzini had a vocation for state formation (Italian Risorgimento). However, there were other manifestations of undemocratic state nationalisms during the nineteenth century, such as Bismarck’s Germany or Romanov’s Russia.

Congruence between nationalism and democracy has been less evident when their institutional and political manifestations are analyzed ex post, or when they are assessed from diverse framings of interpretations. Taking the example of the French Revolution, let us remember that Jacobin advocates were precisely those who proclaimed their ideas and aspirations as centring on universal human rights. Nevertheless, in their efforts to promote universal justice, progress, reason, democracy and equality, the Jacobins came to see an irreconcilable conflict between the rights of the individual – viewed as a socially autonomous unit – and the traditional rights of social groups or collectives. Besides, Bonaparte’s cultural imperialism tried to instrumentalize French revolutionary values and aimed to impose such values by force all over Europe. Often, the nationalism which inspired the French Revolution was spuriously exploited to support dictatorships, or it was fostered for bellicose purposes. Nationalist resistance to the above mentioned empires sometimes resulted in the establishment of new political undemocratic regimes.

There also exists stateless or minority nationalism, particularly in plural polities. This type of nationalism – also labelled equivocally as ‘ethnic’ – has often come to reassert collective identities in the form of political mobilization for the decentralization of powers. Its claims are generally based on a lack of accommodation in the processes of state formation and nation-building carried out from the centres of their polities and, as a consequence, demands are put forward for self-government which can range from a degree of home rule to the establishment of a new independent state.

Nationalism has been associated with the worst episode in human history: the Holocaust. Recently it has also been considered the main culprit behind other events of destructive violence in the late years of the twentieth century (e.g. war in Yugoslavia or genocide in Rwanda). There are theoretical bases for explaining how nationalism can lead to outcomes that are in such contradiction with
democratic principles and practices. After all, nationalism speaks to political power, and it necessarily involves mechanisms of differentiation and exclusion. The exercise of power in a nationalist context and the desire to differentiate one community from another can involve various types of references (e.g., language, culture, religion or ancestry) that may generate intolerance and/or conflict.

Organizational pluralism characterizes contemporary democracies. Robert Dahl has drawn attention to the existence of different societal interests and has thus theorized on the various interpretations of what the common good is. Within the ‘pluralistic game’, Dahl pointed to how in modern democracies individual equality among citizens is often replaced by a concurrential parity among groups or organizations of individuals. As concerns ethnic or national, it so often happens that ethnic or cultural bonds prevail upon those of a functional nature – class or status – in the deployment of collective action.\(^7\)

Crucial for the research carried out in the last decades on nationalism and democracy has been the pioneering work of social scientists, such as Stein Rokkan and Juan Linz, which focused on the territorial dimension of societal life. Rokkan focused on the structure of cleavages by means of scrutinizing the historical genesis and early processes of state formation, nation-building, mass democratization and social citizenship in his long-standing attempts to conceptualize his ‘model of Europe’.\(^8\) Linz studied in depth the development of modern nations and the crystallization of nationalism within the contemporary state. He also underscored the close linkage between nationalism and the languages upon which it operates, analyses that preceded recent ones on multiculturalism. Moreover, Linz advanced interpretations on primordialism in the case of stateless nationalism and the viability of the federal option regarding territorial accommodation with polities of a plural composition.\(^9\)

How to institutionalize democracy is certainly the most controversial question concerning the adaptation of nationalism to the majoritarian principle. In this regard, the view of using a concept of democracy based purely in the arithmetical ‘majority’ – also labelled as majoritarianism – has been criticized as ‘demosceticism’. Indeed, democracy can be regarded as a much broader process than the establishment of mechanisms of popular representation such as the universal suffrage. As will be reviewed below these lines, also from a liberal perspective, democracy is to be considered more a question of quality than of quantity.\(^10\)

Revitalization of analytical approaches

Beginning in the 1990s, a handful of political theorists concerned with the analysis of their most immediate social reality (Québec and the Canadian Federation) challenged the traditional liberal view of justice and rights. They criticized the assumption that these ‘mainstream’ notions were always to be put in place in societies whose members were united by their attachment and loyalty to one single cultural and national community. They were foremost concerned with how collective rights could square with individual rights in the context of multicultural societies.\(^11\) More broadly, they were interested in reconciling the
realities of group and cultural belonging with the tenets and practices of liberalism. A main concern put forward by the advocates of the politics of recognition was for the collective rights in multicultural societies, which they postulate as fully compatible with political liberalism. Initially the focus of political theorists was on rights and culture but, subsequently, they developed much broader normative views around the comprehensive interaction between nationalism and liberal democratic principles and practices.

This theoretical work on the compatibility of nationalism and liberal democracy did not represent the first consideration of democracy by scholars of nationalism. In fact, one could make the argument that democracy was always a central concern of the scholarship on nationalism and ethnic conflict. This was particularly visible in studies of nationalist and ethnic conflict in the developing world. In the 1970s and 1980s studies with an ambivalent assessment were published concerning countries which have also left their colonial past in contemporary times. This debate is ongoing, but the 1990s and 2000s literature on liberal nationalism seems to have helped the argument that the inclusion of ethnic identities in a population is not an absolute obstacle to democracy. Despite the fact that the politicization of ethnicity by political leaders and elites at times resulted in institutions that undermine democracy, the academic contributions of the last 20 years have aimed to provide coherence to the argument that ethnic identities ought not to be regarded as insurmountable obstacles for the consolidation of democracy. Indeed, the analysis of the politics of identity is an area of study of the foremost importance in order to explain and make interpretations of the processes of nationalist mobilization and conflict for the preservation of democratic political communities. After all, the politicization of the ethnic identity is the conditio sine qua non for the spread of nationalism.

Modernization was regarded to have brought about the idea of an all-embracing state national identity rooted in both cultural and civic axes. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, national state identities are openly questioned and have become problematic instead. While being corroded by the forces of globalization they are also subject to fragmentation, competition and overlapping elements of a multiple and diverse nature. In parallel, there is a noticeable strengthening of sub- and supra-state identities. The revival of ethnoterritorial identities has coincided with an increasing challenge to the centralist model of the unitary state. In plural polities, decentralization, federalization and subsidiarity seek to accommodate a response to the stimuli of the diversity or plurality of the polities involved. The latter comprise groups and countries with differences of identity, history, language or traditions, which are often reflected in different party systems, channels of elites’ representation or interests’ articulation. Both discontinuity and heterogeneity of societal contexts make it possible for collective identities to interact among themselves in a manner often unpredictable, something which can have deep implications for the relationship between nationalism and democracy.

Indeed, the revival of ethnoterritorial identities in multinational states – or those with a plural and multiple composition – has attracted growing attention...
from social scientists and researchers. The manifestation of ‘dual identities’, or
other collective identities of a multiple nature, has stimulated the formulation of
new theoretical approaches and analytical categories which formulate interpreta-
tions concerning political mobilization and institutional processes in the light of
how citizens incorporate in variable proportions both state-national and ethnoter-
ritorial (sub-state) identities, as well as those referring to supra-state, or contin-
ental contexts (e.g. the EU’s) (Moreno 2006).

The degree of internal consent and dissent in plural polities has found in the
concept of dual identity a useful methodological tool for sociopolitical interpreta-
tions. As regards multinational democracies and compound states, citizens have
striven during the long period of peace after the Second World War to make com-
patible both ethnoterritorial/regional and state/national identities. The quest for
self-government and home-rule by regions and sub-state communities is in full
accordance with the variable manifestation of such duality in citizens’ self-
identification: the more the pre-Union ethnoterritorial identity prevails upon
modern state identity, the higher the demands for political autonomy. Conversely,
the more characterized the state national identity is, the less likely it would be for
ethnoterritorial conflicts to appear. In some instances, positive perceptions by the
citizens of the actions of state actors may have resulted in a ‘loosening’ of their
ethnoterritorial identity and a corresponding reinforcement of their sense of mem-
bership within the compound state, and vice versa. At the extreme, complete
absence of one of the two elements of dual identity would lead to a sociopolitical
fracture in the pluriethnic polity. In such an event, demands for self-government
would probably take the form of secessionist independence or forced assimilation
would seek to impose homogeneity and acculturation. In other words, when cit-
izens in a sub-state community identify themselves in an exclusive manner, the
institutional outcome of such antagonism will also tend to be exclusive. An impor-
ant angle on the relationship between nationalism and democracy in countries con-
cerns the implications of claims for independence in established democracies.17

Notwithstanding, the greater share of the scientific production by the experts
on nationalism has in recent decades explored how options such as territorial
autonomy and federalism may offer alternatives enabling secessionism to be
avoided.18 It comes as no surprise that the foremost concern for democracy is
paramount in this kind of analysis dealing with accommodation and territorial
management of nationalism. Such studies explore how the various ethnic and
national groups can coexist peacefully in a stable and democratic polity.
Research on federalism, for example, often puts the emphasis on the inherently
liberal nature of the federal agreements and mechanisms to conciliate national-
ism and democracy.19 However, alternative visions persist on whether federalism
ought to increase ‘state formation’ or ‘nation-building’, following the conceptual
distinction put forward by Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) between social interactions
in Gesellschaft polities – more ‘mechanistic’ and impersonal – or in Gemein-
schaft polities – more ‘emotional’ and ethnically homogeneous.20

If scholars of nationalism have always been sensitive to democracy, theorists
democracy have often assumed the existence of one single demos per
democratic system. During the 1960s and 1970s it was contended, and generally accepted, that majoritarian democracy – with its 50%+1 decision-making rule – was best suited to govern multiethnic and plural societies. Representatives of the American School of Comparative Politics – many of them behaviourist-functionailists who were belligerent ahistoricists – claimed that ‘old’ community-based identities were to be substituted in modern societies by ‘new’ associative ties, as a result of internal migrations and demographic transitions from rural contexts to urban ones in contemporary times.21

The main alternative to the functionalist view was the consociational model which could be observed in some European countries (e.g. Belgium, the Netherlands or Switzerland), and the manner in which these countries had managed their long-term societal cleavages (ideological, confessional and linguistic). Consociationalism, or power-sharing as it has also been conceptualized, was associated with the successful management of ethnic, religious and national cleavages in deeply divided societies.22

The most specific treatment of the relationship between nationalism and democracy has been carried out in studies of democratic transitions in multinational/multiethnic countries.23 The concrete impetus for the development of this literature was the fall of the Soviet Union and the processes of democratic transition that ensued in multiethnic and multinational societies in the former Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia. An influential thesis in that literature puts forward the contention that pushing for elections in multinational/multiethnic countries that lack strong civil societies and robust human rights regimes is likely to cause nationalist and ethnic conflict.24

Other areas of observation have attracted a lesser degree of academic attention as state or majority nationalisms have often remained ‘hidden’ in those analyses or they have simply been mystified and confounded with other categories such as that of ‘patriotism’.25 Perhaps a reflection of the Janus-faced nature of nationalism (Nairn 1997), the picture of the relationship between state nationalism and democracy that comes out of literature is ambiguous. State nationalism sometimes manifests itself on strong ethnic lines, or is powerfully instrumentalized by a particular ethnic group in a plural society (e.g. WASP in the US for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries).26 Other scholars have suggested that the apparent ethnocultural neutrality of some forms of state or majority nationalism serves to hide policies that marginalize ethnic and national minorities.

Outline of the book

This book contributes to these debates on nationalism and democracy by examining various dimensions of their relationship. It provides analyses and reflections with the aim of increasing our knowledge on the interaction of both political categories, and is carried out from a plurality of angles in order to enrich the contrast of approaches and views of the topics under observation. The first section features chapters that look at this relationship from conceptual, theo-
William Safran examines in Chapter 2 the relationship between the nation, culture and democracy. More specifically, Safran wonders about the impact of multiculturalism on national unity and democracy. He suggests that not all cultures and multicultural policies affect national coherence and democratic practices in a similar way, and reviews how diversity is approached in the United States, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Safran also tackles the difficult question of how to decide, in particular contexts, which minority culture(s) should have recognition and support from the state through an analysis of arguments such as the quality of a culture, its compatibility with the dominant culture, the seniority of a group within the state, and its demographic weight.

In Chapter 3, Ilan Peleg looks at how the way a state defines itself in relation to the ethnocultural landscape of the polity affects democracy. It asks to what extent a robust liberal democracy can exist in a deeply divided society if the state is mostly a reflection of the dominant group. Peleg finds that ‘particularistic’ state definitions (states that define themselves in relation to particular ethnocultural characteristics) easily lead to highly undemocratic practices such as discrimination but that ethnocultural neutrality in state definitions can also serve to establish the domination of a group over others. States that recognize the diversity of their polity, Peleg argues, are much more conducive to democracy, especially if they recognize group as well as individual rights.

In Chapter 4, Benyamin Neuberger analyses the connection between national self-determination and democracy. Although national self-determination is at first glance a profoundly democratic principle with its central notion of government by consent, Neuberger argues that the reality is far more complex. If the political emphasis is on the national aspect of self-determination, democratic concerns can easily take a backseat to various processes of political and institutional change structured around an ethnic logic. Moreover, the basic problem of determining which specific ‘national selves’ have a right to choose their own political future, including the option of secession, generates the types of conflicts that easily undermine democracy and sometimes lead to violence. Neuberger explains that none of the methods used to make this choice of the group worthy to actually self-determine (for example, favouring groups that enjoy autonomous institutions within a state) are unproblematic from the democratic perspective.

In Chapter 5, Enric Martínez-Herrera discusses how national identification affects democracy. He argues that the nature of both citizens’ and elites’ identification with the political community weighs not only on the capacity of a political system to survive but also on its capacity to function democratically. The connection between national identification and democracy is especially important in the context of a potential democratic transition since, Martínez-Herrera suggests, weak identification with the political community can explain the reluctance of elites to move ahead with a transition towards democracy. In the conclusion of the chapter, Martínez-Herrera suggests it could be possible to trigger a
‘virtuous’ circle between national and democratic sources for the legitimacy of political systems: identification with the political community could facilitate the perception of a ‘common good’ and improve the performance of the political system while a good performance of the political system could foster collective pride and strengthen such identification.

The case-study section opens with a chapter that looks at sub-state mobilization in liberal-democratic contexts. In Chapter 6, Pedro Ibarra and Ramón Máiz propose an analytical framework borrowed from social-movement theory to understand what makes a nationalist movement successful politically (as measured through the popularity of nationalist parties and their capacity to bring about change) and symbolically (for example, their ability to have their version of the national identity accepted in society). The authors use their framework, which emphasizes political opportunity structures, discursive frames and resource mobilization, to investigate Galicia’s Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG, Galician Nationalist Bloc) and the failure of the Basque Country’s Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco (MV LN, Basque National Liberation Movement).

Chapter 7 looks at state nationalism. Discussing European countries, Ray Taras suggests that undemocratic and illiberal values in segments of some societies can find their way into the nationalism of states through parties that, for example, have a xenophobic agenda. In this context, state nationalism can favour undemocratic practices. Taras argues that the existence of xenophobic parties in countries such as France and Poland gives another meaning to the notion of a ‘democratic deficit’ in the European Union.

Elena Meleshkina explores in Chapter 8 the tensions between democratization and democracy in the post-Soviet space. Meleshkina argues that all post-Soviet states share a common imperial legacy and identity, which presents issues of state consolidation, boundary-setting and political structuring. To compensate for weakness in the state and national identity, as well as for the lack of consensus around key political and institutional questions, Meleshkina shows how post-Soviet countries have had a strong tendency to adopt nationalizing policies that rest on the domination of one specific ethnic group. She uses an analytical framework developed by Linz and Stepan to analyze this nationalizing politics in post-Soviet countries.

Chapter 9 looks at the relationship between nationalism and democracy from the discursive perspective. Olga Malinova and Philipp Casula examine the discourse around political and national identity in Russia. In the 1990s, they find several discursive strands, the most prominent being that of the ‘Democrats’, which was primarily concerned with democratic opening in the context of a mainly civic nationalism articulated in the Russian context. Since 2000, the authors argue, a ‘statist’ discourse that connects the Russian identity with Great Power politics has become almost hegemonic.

In Chapter 10, Ilana Kaufman looks at the impact of the nationalizing project of a state on a democratization process. She argues that the politics of nationalizing states should be analysed by considering the relationship between the stances
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of the (host) state, the national minority and the ‘homeland’ state for that minority, and that these stances should be understood as political strategies as opposed to fixed objectives. Kaufman uses the case of the Arab minority in Israel to test and adapt a model for understanding the behaviour of national minorities in nationalizing states.

Chapter 11 deals with the interactions between state nationalism, ethnopoltics and democratization in the case of Zambia. James Scarritt shows how Zambian nationalism has enjoyed strong support among political leaders since independence and how this state nationalism has helped contain the potentially centrifugal effects of ethnopoltical competition. The coexistence of state nationalism and ethnopoltitics, Scarritt argues, has facilitated a fairly successful democratic transition.

In Chapter 12, Allan Craigie challenges conventional interpretations of nationalism that frame sub-state nationalism as a problem because they defy the established order. He argues that there also exists a state nationalism whose interactions with sub-state nationalism define the whole of nationalist politics in deeply divided societies. Craigie shows that the nature of state nationalism in such contexts can vary from a unionist interpretation that suggests the existence of multiple *demos* to a pan-nationalist one that assumes a single *demos*.

In Chapter 13, Adrian Guelke looks at the management of nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland. He asks to what extent the 2006 ‘St Andrews Agreement’ represents a triumph for consociational democracy or if it is more the product of close cooperation between the British and the Irish governments. Guelke argues that the latter view is closer to the truth as the two states were more enthusiastic about the 1998 ‘Good Friday Agreement’ than the two camps in conflict. This interpretation puts into question the notion that the peace settlement in Northern Ireland can serve as a template for the resolution of similar conflict where outside actors are not as helpful.

Finally, the book concludes with Chapter 14 in which the editors summarize some of the most important insights brought out by the authors and points out future avenues for research concerning the relationship between nationalism and democracy.

Notes

1 The authors are grateful for comments made by William Safran to an earlier version of this text.

2 Nationalism is considered by some authors as the ‘god’ or dominant ideology of modernity (Llobera 1994; Conversi 2006). Likewise, the nation-state is regarded as the institutional expression of political modernity (Tivey 1981; Guibernau 1996).

3 Cf., for instance, the contributions by Nodia (1992); Fukuyama (1992); Diamond and Plattner (1994); Burg (1996); Bose and Jalal (1997); Jubilus (2001); Liew and Wang (2004); Máiz and Requejo (2005); Chipkin (2007) or Conversi (2008).

4 For Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872) the nation was an intermediate stage between humanity and the individual. With its language, customs, trends and traditions, the nation reflects a reality in which individuals can develop one life ‘inwards’ and one of social relations simultaneously. Thus, to destroy the nation would mean the
suppression of a fundamental instrument to fulfil people’s democracy and human aspirations (Mazzini 1891).

It can also affect two or more neighbouring states, as the Basque or Kurdish cases illustrate.

Both types of nationalism – ‘state’ or ‘stateless’ – can be ‘civic’ and ‘ethnic’, or a combination of the two, according to the particular circumstances concerning their political manifestation. The nation is a ‘relational construct’ which ought to be examined under the contingent characteristics of time and space (Smith 1971). On ethnonationalism, see the contributions made by Walker Connor (1994).

According to the study of Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (1963) in New York City, Afro-American, Italian, Irish, Jewish and Puerto-Rican communities had cultural markers which made them distinct beyond their common US citizenship. This is reflected in the promotion and pursuit of their own group interests in a competitive manner.

The seminal work of the Norwegian researcher is systematically analysed by Peter Flora et al. (1999).

For the articulation of democracy, multinationalism and federalism, see Linz (1997).

With the consequential expansion of plurality, including the protection of minorities and their participation in all levels of decision-making (Bobbio 1987; Conversi 2004).


Some authors concentrated on the notion of ‘liberal nationalism’ (Tamir 1993; Moore 2001), while others did the same on ‘multinational citizenship’ (Harty and Murphy 2005), or in ‘multinational democracies or federations’ (Gagnon and Tully 2001; Gagnon et al. 2003; Burgess and Pinder 2007). The basic conclusion of this line of research is that nationalism and democracy ought not to be incompatible. This is particularly relevant for minority nationalist movements – in stateless nations – which aspire to political autonomy but not necessarily full independence (Moreno 1999; Safran and Máiz 2000; Keating 2001; Loughlin 2001).

To be contrasted, for instance, the positions put forward by Rabushka and Shepsle (2008 [1972]) with the more cautious ones advanced by Horowitz (1985).

See the studies of Berman et al. (2004) and Whitaker (2005), respectively.

For Ernest Gellner, nationalism compels congruence between rulers and ruled sharing a same collective identity and ethnic membership (Gellner 1983).

In the 1990s little more than a third of the surveyed people (World Survey Values) thought that the primary source of their identification was the state-national, while one in every two responded that it was the regional and/or local (Norris 2000).

In this context, a small but important literature has emerged that looks at how secessions squares with liberalism and democracy (Norman 2006; Buchanan 1991) and, from a more empirical perspective, how peaceful secessions may happen (Young 1997).

See, for example, Lapidoth (1996); Simeon and Conway (2001); or McGarry and O’Leary (2007).

Cf. Elazar (1987); Burgess (2006); and Watts (2007). More empirical studies have illustrated how federalism has served the purpose of consolidating democracy in plural polities (Moreno 2001; Burgess and Pinder 2007).

In the case of the US, Samuel Beer (1993) has made a distinction between the type of federalism focused in the nation – and proposed by the ‘framers’ of the American Constitution – and the federalism preferred by their opponents.

Many ‘mainstream’ US social scientists had accepted the thesis put forward by Talcott Parsons and Karl Deutsch claiming that universal progress required assimilationist integration and inclusive social systems. Political integration and nation-building were regarded as the ‘independent variables’ around which culture and language were ‘dependent’ (Deutsch 1966).

23 Cf. Zaslavsky (1992); Diamond and Plattner (1994); Henders (2004); Harris (2002); and Mann (2004).
24 Cf. Snyder (2000). This idea is coherent with Dahl’s argument that successful democracies were first liberal regimes (1971).
25 Cf. Lecours and Nootens (2008). The chapter in this book by James Scarratt on the role of state nationalism in Zambia is a valuable contribution. In general it is extraordinarily difficult to draw a clear dividing line between the concepts of patriotism and state nationalism. A ‘patriot’ generally expresses a committed loyalty not only to the state but also to the way of life, language, history and culture of his/her country. Naturally, such a country may be integrated into a larger polity (e.g. Scotland and the United Kingdom).

References


2 Multiculturalism, ethnicity, and the nation-state

Ideology, identity, and policy

William Safran

In the course of the past two or three decades, the debate on “multiculturalism” has become a veritable growth industry within political science, as attested by an endless proliferation of articles, books, seminars, and conferences. This is not surprising, given the change in the role culture has come to play in the modern political system.

This was not always the case. For many years, political scientists paid relatively little attention to culture, except insofar as it was part of the policy component of the state. This was particularly true of the United States, where political analysis focused on institutions and processes of decision, and where matters of culture were left to subnational units and civil society. Today, however, culture, or more exactly the cultural diversity of society, has become a major preoccupation of policy-makers and policy analysts.

There have been three historic phases of the relationship between culture and polity: pre-national, national, and transnational. Before the rise of the modern state, culture, religion, and language were independent of politics. Churches were autonomous, and religion was a transborder affair; culture and lifestyles were determined by membership in a religious community and by a particular estate or social class; there was no “national” language serving as a constraint to intellectuals such as Hobbes, Erasmus, Rousseau, and Voltaire, who sojourned by turns in one country or another. During the age of nationalism, the idea of a national religion, reconfirmed by the Treaty of Westphalia, was eclipsed by that of a national language. But this was not consistent: some states had a national established religion, and others did not. In certain empires, the ruling class was not concerned with an “indigenous” language; many of its members spoke French (as at the Romanov Court) or German (as in a number of East-Central European countries). In most cases, the language of the masses was left to localities and provinces. This made little difference to the rulers, because they did not communicate directly with their subjects. In the United States, language is left to the marketplace, and the government has little concern with it. In France and Germany, however, language became official business once it was evident that regime legitimacy and the authority of the rulers depended on the support of the population as a whole, and hence on effective communication with it. This provided the impetus for the enforcement of cul-
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tural uniformity. In most countries, there was no question of “alternative lifestyles.”

At one time, just as it was possible to speak of a congruence between state and nation, so it was possible to speak of a congruence between a nation and a specific language, religion, and culture. Today, culture has transcended both the state and the nation, and it is no longer possible to speak of “one state, one nation, and one culture.” There are no “pure” national cultures, especially in modern states. The idea that “France is the French language” (a theme expressed in the writings of Jules Michelet and Fernand Braudel); that the Spanish nation is essentially defined in terms of its Catholicism; or that the distinction of Germany is based either on its race or its nature as a Kulturvolk – the idea that it is “ein Volk von Denker und Dichter” (a nation of philosophers and poets) – is no longer tenable. Earlier, England, France, and Germany were regarded as “Christian” nations; more recently as “Judeo-Christian” ones; and today, as “Western,” “modern,” and “postindustrial” ones.

The belief in the unique character of a particular nation was coupled with the conviction about the unique character of its culture, which in most cases implied a belief in its superiority compared to that of other nations. But such beliefs have been undermined by a number of developments, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, among them the following:

1. The tarnishing of the reputation of several important nation-states, due to their policies during wartime.
2. A growing awareness of the fact that the “nation-state” is both too small and too large: too small to solve economic problems by itself, and increasingly dependent on external markets and resources; and too large to address the concerns of diverse subcommunities.
3. The decline of traditional national elites as guardians of a nation’s high culture – both because the behavior of much of that elite had compromised its moral image, and because technology and the democratization of access to culture has dethroned those elites, the guardians of “high culture” and of the purity of language, and obscured the distinction between high culture and a popular culture that is increasingly international. This is attested by the losing battle to preserve the “purity” of the national language in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.
4. The loss of authority of many traditional fixed points of orientation within a nation: the family and its traditional head, the paterfamilias (the decline of family unity); religion (growing secularism); the trade union (desyndicalization owing to the delocalization of many industries); the political party (convergence of “catch-all” parties); and the national government itself (the weakening of state sovereignty).
5. more recently, the growing complexity of society within given nations, the consequence of the influx of immigrants who have brought with them their homeland cultures, languages, and customs that could not be easily eradicated.
Two generations ago, the philosopher Horace Kallen, taking note of the complex nature of American society, with its diverse origins, argued in favor of what he called “cultural pluralism.” Rather than having the above-mentioned diversities dissolved and melted into a uniform and undifferentiated “American” culture, which in his time was essentially White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP), he insisted that such diversity is a good thing; that the United States should be considered a “federation of cultures;” and that cultural pluralism should be maintained, consistent with a tranethnic and “transcultural” commitment to a common American civilization, including common political and social values. For Kallen, culture referred to a community’s collective patrimony, including its history, language, literature, religion, social customs and traditions; and he believed that the various cultures had intrinsic worth and should not be snuffed out. In arguing against homogenization and uniformity, Kallen wanted to replace the metaphor of the “melting pot” with that of an orchestra – “with each instrument likened to a cultural group making its unique contribution to the symphony of civilization” (Ratner 1984). The assumption was, of course, that the contributions would not be so discordant as to produce disharmony. They would not be substitutes for the national culture, nor would they create an assortment of competing mini- or counter-nationalisms.

Kallen’s idea of cultural pluralism was not universally accepted; it was criticized by those who considered the perpetuation of a multiplicity of cultures, in one form or another, a danger to national political unity and democracy. But much of the criticism came from those who made qualitative distinctions between the culture of the dominant majority – in this particular case Americans of Western and Northern European origin – and that of immigrants from Eastern and Southern European countries.

Such criticism was not unique. In many countries, distinctions are made between the culture of the dominant majority and that of the minority. The former is often considered “high culture,” and the latter is denigrated by being labeled folklore. The same is true of language: according to “Lyautey’s Law,” a language is a dialect that has an army and a navy (Laponce 2006: 13, 113f.). Just as folk cultures were sometimes upgraded and “gentrified” in the process of nation-building, so Czech, Slovak, Romanian, and Norwegian dialects were promoted by “state-building” intellectuals to the status of official languages by means of orthographic and grammatical standardization.

Cultures and languages are publicly supported and flourish in the open arena, while folklores and dialects are at best merely tolerated and expected to be hidden away in the private recesses of civil society. Cultural pluralists tend to reject those distinctions; they regard all cultures as unique and worth preserving, and consider them all as contributing to the culture of society at large. They favor a “dialogue” of cultures leading to cooperation and cross-fertilization, peaceful competition, and mutual respect, it being well understood that there is an acceptance of common “national” values and a common political destiny.

Kallen’s cultural pluralism has been eclipsed by what is called “multiculturalism,” at first in the United States, and subsequently in European countries. Mul-
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Multiculturalism has less to do with culture in the sense that Kallen referred to it than with a policy of inclusion of minorities; these are increasingly defined less in cultural-linguistic terms than racial (e.g. African-Americans, Latinos, Pacific Islanders), gender (women), and lifestyle or sexual preferences (e.g. gays and lesbians). In the broadest sense, multiculturalism refers to a tolerance of diversity, the encouragement of difference, and the inclusion – by common understanding, public policy, or law – of individuals and groups falling outside accepted norms of society and the nation. Increasingly, individuals belonging to these categories, whether they are the object of government attention or not, are now considered part of a “diaspora.” Moreover, the debate on multiculturalism is often marked by a conflation of this concept with postcolonialism and postmodernism. If cultural pluralism, in the sense of narratives, language, ethnograms, collective myths and traditions, still has a clear meaning distinct from multiculturalism according to its more recent connotation, it is probably found in ethnolinguistic minorities.

No national cultures are static, and all are subject to external influences. Cultural mixing has been speeded up as a result of migration, globalization, and the porousness of frontiers. Most cultural infusions are gradual; they reflect a “cultural creep” or drift rather than a precipitate invasion, and they do not significantly modify existing cultural patterns so that they suddenly cease to be “national.” The fear of such a drift has given rise to a number of images of cultural pollution: of pre-World War II Budapest transformed by Jews into “Juda-pest;” of the major high school of Miami, Florida having become so thoroughly Hispanicized by Cuban immigrants since the Castro revolution that it is called “Havana High”; of a growth of the Pakistani presence in London since decolonization so overwhelming that the city has become “Londonistan;” and of the massive influx of Arabs into a continental Europe being metamorphosed into “Eurabia.” These images may not accurately reflect reality; nevertheless, they attest to the fear of an irreversible “denationalization” of culture. In his widely cited Report, Birkhu Parekh poses the question “Does Britishness have a future?” and answers in the negative (Parekh 2000: 38). The images mentioned above are based less on illusions of national cultural purity or fear of cultural cross-breeding than on a concern for the maintenance of sociopolitical order. The question arises: is “multiculturalism,” as defined above, more of a threat to national political unity or democracy than “cultural pluralism” (as defined by Kallen) or less so?

Not all cultures and not all multicultural policies have the same impact on political and social systems. Cultures that are traditional, rural, and confined to a relatively small group, such as that of the Amish or Hmong in the United States, provide little competition with the culture of the majority and pose no threat to its dominance. This is true also of the cultures of basically Western, and largely Christian, immigrants to France, Britain, and North America, which have been sufficiently similar to that of the long-established residents. But what about cultures that are modern, thick, or “strong,” such as those with strong Islamic values that are incompatible with the democratic values of the host society? (Srinivas...
If cultural pluralism implies the granting of legitimacy and “rights of the city” to those cultures, it may contribute to what Huntington has called an “internalized clash of civilizations” (Berger and Huntington 2002: 15). This would be the case especially if the culture is that of a diasporic community that is significantly oriented toward the ancestral homeland, is strongly supported by that homeland, and has a questionable commitment to the hostland.

Members of the cultural-linguistic majority (including political scientists), who are often monolingual, tend to be in favor of cultural and linguistic assimilation for the sake of cultural homogeneity and political unity; and they have little appreciation of the value of minority cultures and of the difficulty of abandoning them. Such cultures are often equal if, not superior to, those of the majority. There is no doubt that Catalan culture is at least the equal of Castilian; Jewish culture the equal of Polish; Armenian and Greek culture the equal of Turkish; Hungarian culture the equal of Romanian; Russian culture the equal of Latvian and Estonian; and Chinese culture the equal of that of Malay. The claims made by the dominant majorities of several nations – Germany, France, Spain – regarding the moral superiority of their cultures and their universalism has been belied by their behavior, especially during wartime. In the face of the racist and genocidal actions of members of the majority elites, often in the name of Kultur, minority cultures have often been more humane, and more justified in claiming to be a model for universal imitation, than the majority.

It may be argued that the culture of the majority, because it is politically and linguistically dominant, is ipso facto superior. But in a number of countries, it is not the majority but the minority that is the promoter of progress, inventiveness, modernity, and democracy. What complicates this discussion is the fact that the respective “progressive” minorities – the Greeks and Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, the Jews in Poland, and the Chinese in a number of Southeast Asian countries – have tended to express their specific cultures in the language of the host society, i.e. that of the majority. In our own day, the uniqueness of majority cultures has been called into question by globalization, a development reflected in the eclipse of traditional national elites by high-tech elites speaking an international language, most often English.

Multiculturalism is now the most widely accepted alternative to separatism, territorial autonomy, and assimilation: Among the few identitarian foci of individuals that are left are race, religion, language, and lifestyle (including sexual preferences). It is in the interest of protecting these foci that multicultural approaches have been embraced.

**Political context as a variable**

The debate is not the same in all countries, however. Different countries have different views of multiculturalism, depending on the nature of their societies, their ideology, and their historical experiences. France, with its Jacobin ideology, its tradition of centralization, and its mythology about “nos ancêtres les Gaulois,” is much less tolerant of multiple identities than are the United States
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and Canada, which were founded as settler countries; Great Britain, a kingdom of “four nations”; or Germany and Spain, with their long histories of regional identities.

The current multiculturalism debate today in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Germany reflects a decisive shift from denigration and delegitimation (for reasons of racism, cultural arrogance, and concern with national unity) to a growing toleration of difference, the celebration of diversity, the accommodation of minorities, and even the embrace of a “post-modern” view of culture. The nature of the debate varies with the political context, the prevailing ideology, and the societal structure of the country in question.

The United States

The United States has been viewed both as a model and anti-model of multiculturalism. As a settler society, it has not been able to argue for the primacy of a specific ethnic, religious, or racial group in terms of its indigenous nature (except, of course, for the Native Americans, who were not considered part of the political community, and, until the 1860s, African-Americans). To be sure, WASPs have played a leading role in the development of the country, and for many years there was pressure toward Anglo-conformity; but it has given way to a broader view of American history and culture. The American “melting pot” has always been set on a slow fire; assimilation has proceeded by cooptation, not law. Given its distinction between citizenship – a political status – and “nationality” – the complex of origins and sociocultural identity – the United States has been committed to a pluralistic and multicultural society, analogous to its pluralistic (or polyarchic) political institutional structure. In recent years there has been a growth of “identity politics,” due in part to a massive immigration, an overload of the ethnic assimilation machinery, the persistence of racism, and a quest for a rediscovery of roots. The rapid growth of the Latino, non-white, non-Western, and non-Christian population has led to a reaction against multiculturalism (see Buchanan 2002; Huntington 2004).

Canada

Canada, too, is a settler society; but it differs from the United States insofar as it is more openly structured as a multicultural society and its ethnoreligious communities enjoy a much greater public recognition. This is reflected in federal financial support of ethnic projects and community centers. This approach began as biculturalism, an officially sanctioned equality between the Anglo- and French-Canadian cultures and languages. (It was adopted in 1971 following the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism of the same year.) The situation has been complicated by a certain asymmetry between the Anglo provinces and Québec: the former was defined as a “civic” nation while the latter was regarded as an “ethnic” nation, composed of the descendants of
rural settlers. Due to immigration, Québec has been increasingly redefined in “civic” terms; but its continuing fear of being linguistically dominated has acted as a brake against multiculturalism. This explains why the French language occupies a clearly specified preferential position in that province, which, _inter alia_, limits the choice of language of instruction. Moreover, there are growing claims of recognition by members of the “First Nations” within its borders.

**France**

France has for many generations constituted the epitome of hostility to multiculturalism. The notion of unity of nation and state implied the rejection of any kind of intermediary between the individual and the state. This has made for a “robust” approach to the melting pot; it prevented France from acknowledging the existence of ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic minorities.

A French citizen is simply, and exclusively, French. If one enters that community “one [is] dressed simply and solely in the garb of an individual citizen divested of all particularistic affiliations” (Jennings 2000: 577). Multicultural claims are a manifestation of narrow identity politics and _communautarisme_, both particularistic and reactionary, and (although this may not be directly articulated) of a lack of appreciation of the high caliber and universal qualities of French culture. Officially, France subscribes to the notion of the “open republic”: one in which an immigrant has all the individual rights of indigenous inhabitants if he accepts the nation’s values and performs the political acts required by the state. He is included as a citizen once he transcends his (original) social, religious, cultural belonging – his _identité communautaire_ – and becomes an abstract individual (Schnapper 1994: 49). But that is man as an ideal-type.

“Communitarian” identification has maintained itself for two reasons: the increasing number of immigrants; the growth of immigrant institutions; their continuing turn to their countries of origin as points of reference; and a voluntary ghettoization as a response to socioeconomic exclusion and neglect by the host society. In order to fight discrimination and promote integration and equality, it has been found desirable by some to determine exactly what categories of people were most often the victims of inequality and discrimination, that is, to compile statistics about the background of the French population. This would be a departure from French tradition, since the last time census-takers asked questions about ethnicity, race, or religion was in 1872. Opponents have objected to the gathering of such statistics because these would be based on highly subjective self-definition of one’s identity and would lead to the replacement of merit-based recruitment to schools and jobs by ascriptive criteria (Khiari 2007).

Ethnic pluralism, multiculturalism, and communalist collective identities continue to be opposed in principle; but owing to massive immigration, transnational relationships and influences, and persistent racism, the reality of multicultural identities is increasingly accepted; as a result, there has been an evolution from a refusal to ratify the European Charter for the Protection of Regional Languages to a recognition that these contribute to the cultural richness of France. Never-
theless, this stops short of the belief that all (minority) cultures have a right to be protected, for such broadmindedness calls into question the superiority of French national culture – a culture that seems to many to be under increasing challenge from the homogenizing pressures of globalization.

French opposition to multiculturalism relates especially to language. France has been reluctant to support minority languages for three reasons: (1) the fear of national unity being undermined; (2) the belief that the purity of the French language was being destroyed by infusions of other languages, notably English; and (3) the decline of the global importance of French. Some have argued that if France wants French to be maintained abroad as an important language (albeit a minority one compared to English), it must practice a _quid pro quo_; it must support minority languages at home (Safran 1999). However, although French Jacobins favor multiculturalism and multilingualism in the global arena, they do not favor it in their own country. The cultural-linguistic insecurity of the French elite explains the constitutional amendment of 1990 (Article 2) specifying that “French is the language of the Republic,” and the opposition of the Académie Française to a proposed constitutional amendment introduced in parliament (and ratified in 2008) adding the phrase “Regional languages belong to [France’s] patrimony” (Larquier 2008). But there has been a certain change of attitude: as mayor of Paris in the 1980s, Jacques Chirac commented about the “odors and noises” of North African Muslim immigrants; at the end of his presidency in 2007, he sponsored a museum of indigenous non-Western and primitive art (Musée du Quai Branly).

**Germany**

Historically, Germany has been regarded as an ethnic nation marked by a _jus sanguinis_ approach to citizenship, one based on notions of kinship in which the myth of a “racially pure” Christian peasantry played an important role. Germans did not welcome outsiders; and for many years they insisted that theirs was not a country of immigrants. But the country has been faced with two realities: (1) the need to deal with a recent history of racism and genocide, the ultimate consequence of membership in the national community based on _völkisch_ criteria; and (2) a massive immigration of non-Europeans after World War II. The wartime behavior of its people, including its elite, led many to question the validity of the claim they once made for the superiority of their culture. During the first three or four postwar decades, many Germans preferred to identify themselves less in national terms than in provincial or religious terms – not as Germans, but as Bavarians, Europeans, or Christians. But today such identification is less useful, given the gradual de-Christianization of Germans and the decline of religion generally. Provincial identification retains a certain importance, and is reflected in the federal arrangement. But given the increasingly heterogeneous population in the German Federal Republic and the growing homogenization of cultures, Bavarian and Saxon traditions have lost much of their traditional specificities. The need to retain valuable workers in Germany has led to the...
abandonment of the “myth of return” (*Heimkehrillusion*) and the gradual introduction of *jus soli*, which has opened the gates to the naturalization of immigrants, including more than two million Muslims of Turkish origin; and a growing tolerance and a racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. To what extent these developments add up to multiculturalism is open to question. It is true that there has been increasing acceptance of lifestyle choices outside the norm – e.g. tolerance of gays; motherhood outside marriage; and dual citizenship. But there is only a limited acceptance of multilingualism; there are no parallel Turkish-language schools, and immigrants must show a willingness to adapt to the basic elements of the majority culture (*Leitkultur*). Similarly, the constitution protects freedom of religion; but the official status – including the receipt of public funds – enjoyed by Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Judaism has not yet been extended to Islam.

**The United Kingdom**

Great Britain is a “civic” kingdom of four nations. As such, it has had a tradition of making concessions to its component parts in terms of law, religion, and currency and has granted official status to several regional languages (e.g. Scottish Gaelic and Welsh). It has recognized the special needs of non-Christian religions, most recently Hinduism and Islam with respect to education, burial, and family law; and recently, Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has argued in favor of a selective use of shari’a law. In the wake of Islamist terrorism there has been growing concern about the extent to which a permissive approach to multiculturalism should be tolerated.

**The Netherlands**

For more than a generation following World War II, the Dutch treated the various immigrant groups as more or less permanently marked by their non-European languages and non-Christian religions, under the assumption that they would not remain permanently in the country. It was hoped that pillarization (verzuiling), an approach to representation originally applied to religious groups, all of them sharing common political values and committed to Dutch national integrity and political unity, could be applied to immigrant groups coming from different political, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This is reflected in the fact that many minority cultural organizations, including Hindu and Muslim schools, are subsidized by the government. But recent events, including the assassination of individuals for criticizing Islam, have dashed this optimism, as Muslim immigrant groups have had difficulty accepting Dutch political values such as freedom of speech and gender equality. Fearing the development of a parallel and separate society, Dutch authorities have put a halt to multicultural education and have insisted on a mastery of the Dutch language.
What kind of multiculturalism, and for whom?

Multiculturalism covers a multitude of approaches and policies, including the following: simple tolerance, encouragement, legalization, facilitation and institutionalization of a variety of languages, religions, customs, and lifestyles; the protection of group rights and entitlements, including preferential treatment; laws against group libel; and the integration of minority communities and their inclusion in the political process by consociational and other forms of representation. The choice of approach may be based on specific criteria.

A number of policies vis-à-vis members of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities are part and parcel of what is regarded as constitutional liberalism: equality under the law; protection against discrimination; and the right of individuals to practice their religion and maintain their traditional culture within civil society — which includes the right to maintain voluntary cultural associations. One begins to speak of multiculturalism properly so called when the maintenance and fostering of differences become matters of public policy. Here the question arises: what kinds of multicultural policies should be pursued; what categories should be favored or ignored? What are the criteria that should be applied? In a discussion of multiculturalism, Birkhu Parekh does not preach cultural relativism; he acknowledges that not all cultures are equal, or equally deserving of recognition or support, but he does not furnish precise recommendations for dealing with different kinds of ethnoreligious minorities (Parekh 2005). This inevitably brings up the question of relative merit: what are the criteria for deciding whether a minority culture deserves more or less support, or none at all? I will attempt to address these questions by positing a number of criteria.

Quality of culture

A major argument for or against multiculturalism revolves around the qualitative distinctions between majority and minority languages and cultures. Those who argue for the primacy, if not the monopoly, of the majority language distinguish between “high” and “low” cultures, the former having a literary patrimony, a certain antiquity, and general prestige, whereas the latter tends to be a patois often spoken by the peasantry, only recently, if at all, standardized, which concerns itself with folklore and household matters, and is not very suitable for global communication. As a journalist once expressed it, “L’Occitanie ça se raconte mais surtout ça se chante…” (Ambroise-Rendu 1977), but one can’t do science with it. Under the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, some members of the Habsburg ruling elite who spoke German argued that the Magyar language was (or should be) used to command horses; and in Eastern Europe, embourgeoisé Jews dismissed Yiddish as a “homey” jargon known for its curses. But as François Bayrou, arguing in favor of the official recognition of ethnoregional minority languages in France, said, “certaines langues régionales possèdent un patrimoine littéraire bien plus ancien que le français.” With growing globalization, the fusion of “high” and “low” cultures and languages as well as the
differentiation between them is not only internal to a state, but transpolitical. On
the one hand, there is a cross-border homogenization of both kinds of culture: art, literature, music, architecture, and painting are no longer “nationally” spe-
cific; and neither is the consumer culture of the masses.

The recognition of minority languages may be meaningless unless it is accompanied by concrete measures, for these languages cannot maintain them-
selves unless they are used in public life (Kymlicka 1989; Taylor 1992). Never-
theless, “recognition” as such is important, and an official refusal to grant it, or withdrawal of it once it has been granted, is tantamount to a devaluation of the status of a minority. But legitimation may be more symbolic than substantive. This applies, for example, to the legitimation of ethnoregional minority lan-
guages in the French constitution: the overwhelming majority of members of these minorities in that country do not enroll their children in classes in which these languages are taught. The selective use of French in English-speaking provinces of Canada, the publication of official records in Arabic in Israel, and the Spanish-language notices on public buses in American cities are largely what Laponce has called a “bilinguisme de politesse.” Moreover, the public subsidi-
ization of ethnic-minority plays and folk festivals may amount to a subsidization of kitsch, and thus a de facto demotion of the culture in question.

The effect of linguistic multiculturalism depends on which, and how many, cultural features we concede: the legitimation and support of a minority language is less threatening to national political unity if the minority shares a religion with the majority.

Granting linguistic concessions to a number of relatively small ethnic com-
nunities is less threatening to political unity than concessions to a single ethnic community whose size comes close to matching that of the dominant majority (as in the case of Belgium), unless the language of that majority is accepted as a transthetic and superordinate one (as is the case in India and, to a lesser extent, South Africa).

Antiquity and seniority

Another criterion is the history of a minority’s presence in the country, which may give it the right to demand that its culture be respected. Do indigenous and immigrant ethnic groups have the same right? It has been argued that immigrant minorities, in having opted for a new country with an established culture and language, are obligated to adapt to them; in leaving their homelands, “they have chosen to place themselves in an insecure cultural context,” and the host country has no moral obligation to accommodate them in all cultural respects (Spencer 2008: 244). This applies in particular to non-territorial ethnic minorities. More-
over, “if cultural diversity is seen to be an intrinsic good, it follows that immi-
gants also possess a duty to respect long-established culture or cultures existing within their newly adopted state” (Spencer, op. cit.) This is particularly relevant in the case of immigrants whose culture is secure in their countries of origin and is thus not in danger of disappearing from the face of the earth. Conversely, in
terms of justice, indigenous minorities – for example, Bretons and Occitans in France; Scots and Irish in Britain; Basques and Catalans in Spain – ought to have the same rights to have their language acknowledged and protected as the majority. The argument becomes complicated in the case of settler societies, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, where the culture of the dominant majority is that of immigrants as well. Should the languages of Native Americans in the United States, of the First Nations in Canada, of aborigines in Australia, and of Maoris in New Zealand, be protected?

History and founding myths

In most cases, an important element of difference between majorities and minorities is the primacy of the former in founding a nation and/or state, a difference that is often invoked in order to justify assimilation. An emphasis on the historical role of a particular “primordial” group in the creation of a nation and the association of the national community with a particular essence – Germany and “das deutsche Wesen”; Polishness and Catholicism; the notion of the “Russian soul”; Frenchness and Gallo-Roman provenance – makes it difficult for a member of a minority, especially an immigrant one, to feel fully accepted. A multicultural approach would solve this problem, but what would that imply for the teaching of a nation’s history? To what extent should minority views, or contributions, be taken into account? How should the “useful myths” of the majority be modified? To what extent should its narrative include mea culpas with respect to slavery, the treatment of Native Americans, and the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II? Should the United States stress the contributions of African-Americans and other minorities to the building of the nation? Should the story of the Battle of Poitiers and of the role of Joan of Arc in the building of a Catholic French nation be “rectified,” in the name of multiculturalism, by a recital of the St Bartholomew massacre and the Vel’ d’Hiv deportations? Should the discussion of Germany as a land of poets, thinkers, and composers provide equal space for teaching about the gas chambers?

Utility

The debate about language policy frequently revolves around the question of utility. There is no doubt that, in a multilingual environment, there may be a division of labor: some languages are more useful than others when it comes to science, technology, the bureaucracy, and global (and transethnic) communication. “Multicultural” – that is, polyglot – individuals may use one language at international conferences; another in their laboratories or offices; still another with their neighbors; and another again in conversations with their grandparents. Thus minority languages have their varied uses; but the question remains what the proper public policy should be with respect to minority languages. Should their status be protected as supplementary, alternative, or parallel to the majority language? As obligatory for the minority community in question? Should
selected West African languages be retrieved for use by African-Americans? And what about “ebonics”? As a cultural supplement, these languages are harmless; but as a substitute they may serve to impede their users’ upward mobility and their full integration into the national community.

Should not some languages be suppressed? In the case of the Breton language, the question has often been posed: “Of what use is it”? Such a utilitarian view caused the Abbé Grégoire to ask the Convention in 1794 to wipe out local languages (anéantir les patois). It has often been argued that a language should be used as a medium of public instruction only if that language is equally serviceable for a full functioning in society, economy, and polity, that is, in private and public employment and in relations with the public authorities; for if it is not, it becomes a mechanism of isolation and the maintenance of an inferiorized parallel society. What if the language of a minority is indeed a rich and respectable language, but happens to be the language of a powerful neighboring state and used as an instrument of political pressure, e.g. German in Sudetenland; Russian in Estonia and Latvia; Tamil in Sri Lanka; Greek and Turkish in Cyprus; and a variety of other languages instrumentalized for political purposes, including Moldavian, Albanian, Arabic, Catalan, and Hungarian? What if the neighboring state is hostile?

Demography

Numbers count: ethnolinguistic communities may be large enough and sufficiently developed institutionally to insist on a full legitimation of their cultures. Indeed, the number of speakers of a minority language must be large enough, and growing, to justify maintaining a network of institutions for the use of that language and the promotion of the culture associated with it. But what is a proper benchmark for size? What about a minority community that is too small in terms of demography, is not reproducing itself; has too small an elite; has no significant middle class; and lacks an adequate institutional infrastructure to maintain itself without intensive government help: e.g. the Sorbians in Germany, the Gagauz in Moldova, the Ladino-speaking Jews of the Balkans, and a number of Native American tribes on reservations in the United States? What about languages that are in process of disappearance (a situation that applies to several dozen a year)? They may deserve to be recorded for posterity; but should they be kept on “life support”? Does not the revival or survival of a rural dialect reflect a certain romanticism and imply the survival of a rural civilization that is economically and socially backward and reactionary?

The question of size played a role in the ambivalent attitude of German liberals vis-à-vis the Jews. Most of the latter, although patriotic Germans who were culturally assimilated, wished to maintain their identity as Jews, however watered down. In short, they wished to have an equal place with Lutherans and Roman Catholics in institutions where religions were represented. But their number was too small. As Hjalmar Schacht put it prior to 1933, “[the Jews’] religious values were certainly not worth fifty or a hundred times those of other
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Beliefs” (quoted by Kurlander 2008: 52). In short, assimilation meant a de facto merger into one of the two dominant Christian communities.

Conversely, a minority community may be so large as to threaten the majority culture, especially if it feels insecure. Clearly there cannot be a uniform policy with respect to all minorities and their cultures. Distinctions have to be made based on the nature of the political system, the complexion of its society, and the specific characteristics of the cultural minority in question.

Selected minority communities may be prohibited by their religion or culture to practice birth control; if the minority is small, this should present no problem to the majority that favors such controls or even imposes them for reasons of controlling the population. Such a disparity should be permitted in the name of multiculturalism. But what if this disparity upsets the existing population balance – if the minority population is comparatively large or grows so quickly as to pose a demographic and/or cultural or political threat to the dominant society? This may be a consequence if a minority is allowed, in the interest of multiculturalism, to practice polygamy, to oppose birth control and abortions, or to have a lower minimum legal age for marriage than the general population. Does the dominant majority in a society have a right to protect itself against being outnumbered, especially by a community that might reduce the formerly dominant group to minority, if not dhimmi, status? There are a number of instances of minority populations becoming so large as to transform the culture of a society and the nature of its polity, or threaten to do so: the Kosovars in Serbia; the Kurds in Turkey; the Chinese in Singapore; the Indians in Fiji; and perhaps the Arabs in Israel. These instances account for the fear of many members of the French political and intellectual elite that the Muslim community will become so large that Islamic culture will ultimately eclipse and displace French culture (Pauwels 1985). The larger the minority group defined in terms of a language, race, ethnicity, or religion, the more strongly does it assert a claim for autonomy, and, as a consequence, the greater the threat to the political unity and governability of a nation (Naßmacher 1991).

Political compatibility

Multiculturalism should be a dialogue of cultures leading to cooperation and cross-fertilization, and be marked by peaceful competition and mutual respect, it being well understood that there is an acceptance of common “national” values and a common political destiny. The minority culture must be compatible with the democratic values, laws, institutions, and political procedures of society at large. These values include freedom of expression; gender equality; regular, free, and competitive elections; peaceful transfers of power; and due process of law. It must be committed to certain universal principles, such as respect for human life (as against a culture that encourages martyrdom by suicide missions). The minority community must be receptive to change, and it must be respectful of other cultures and willing to learn from them. It must be open to outsiders and willing to admit them to membership, albeit under certain conditions.
Conversely, it must provide for freedom of exit: it must allow its own members to leave its embrace without threat of punishment. Unless such exit is possible, the legitimation of existing religious constraints and sociocultural pressures could tie them permanently to their roots against their will. This inevitably raises the question whether an ethnoreligious minority community should be permitted to excommunicate its members. The answer would be yes, if the rest of society is open to receive excommunicated members into its own ranks, or if it is possible for those members to create an alternative group that would enjoy equal rights.

The debate about multiculturalism frequently revolves around the question of law, because the clash of cultures or civilizations is often a clash of legal principles. This applies especially to personal-status law, where cultural differences are most striking. In the United States and Great Britain, the clergy of a number of religions have been allowed to act as agents of the state in performing marriages, and Muslim and Jewish religious law may be applied in certain divorce cases. In 2007, a German provincial court applied shari’a law in denying an application for divorce by a Muslim woman who was being beaten by her husband. The supremacy of civil over religious law was asserted when, in May 2008, an imam in France was fined for performing religious marriages without prior civil license. But at the same time, a French court annulled the marriage of a Muslim couple at the request of the groom because the bride had lied to him about her virginity. In so doing, the court put itself on the side of a traditional Islamic anti-feminist position and, in the eyes of some observers, was defending an “archaic fundamentalism.”

Should the right to practice one’s religion include the right to have a particular conception of its place in the state embodied in the legal system, if that conception is not consistent with that of the majority? By the same token, does not a genuine commitment to multiculturalism require, or imply, granting equal rights to ethnoreligious minorities who do not accept commonly accepted values? For example, many Muslims in Western democracies do not accept freedom of the press, and resort to violence in protest against cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed. Do they not also have a right to be accommodated, in the same way that anti-system political parties are represented in the parliaments of Western European democracies? Should not individuals who subscribe to a fascist ideology have the right to be judged on the basis of organic or racial principles in the name of multiculturalism? What about competing epistemologies – should these not be tolerated in the same way as are differences in religion, lifestyle, sexual preferences, and levels of intelligence? Should society be equally open to postmodern, “postcolonial,” or “post-factual” approaches to sociopolitical reality, as opposed to those of standard empirically based social-science? Should multiculturalism include giving equal weight in school curricula to theories of evolution and “creation theory”? A modern society cannot do so if it is committed to teaching science.

The clash of cultures between minorities and majorities is not necessarily permanent, because the former adapt to conditions. They shed their “exotic” or “oriental” features and adapt to those characteristic of the dominant religion. This
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has applied to Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and (in many instances) Islam. In Europe and North America, Jewish law (halakha) has taken a back seat to civil law, according to the principle of dina de-malkhuta dina (the law of the land [of residence] shall be our law). In the United States, the Church of Latter-Day Saints (mainstream Mormonism), has given up polygamy; and in France, a large proportion of Beurs have adapted to French culture and narrowed the range of their religious practices, and there are movements in the direction of creating a “French” Islam. It is unclear, however, whether such developments are a condition of multicultural acceptance or a consequence of it. It is impossible to put these criteria into a neat quantitative formula and to rank-order them for coding. Nevertheless, they can serve as a rough guide to policy-makers.

Compensatory justice

Should entitlement to multicultural accommodation be based in part on past injustice to a particular minority? Should it be promoted to compensate for injustices done to their speakers, e.g. enslavement, oppression, persecution, or genocide? Examples of compensation include affirmative action for people of color in the United States, approaches to “scheduled classes” in India, and special efforts to integrate harkis in France. Rectificatory justice also includes “Wiedergutmachung” (making things good again) – the compensation of Holocaust survivors by the German government. But this cannot mean bringing millions of murdered people back to life. It is a posthumous (and relatively inexpensive) form of multiculturalism, which has been applied to the destroyed cultures of ethnic groups whose members have been forcibly assimilated, oppressed, or exterminated, such as Native Americans in the United States, First Nations in Canada, Maoris in New Zealand, indigenous communities in Australia, and Jews in Europe. Governments have asked their survivors for forgiveness; have erected monuments, have established museums, ethnographic collections, and research institutes for their lost cultures, and have even tried to revive their languages. An interesting example of the valorization of a dead minority culture is the teaching of Yiddish and the performance of klezmer music in Germany.

In the 1960s, in the wake of decolonization, the question arose of how to determine which oppressed peoples were most deserving of special consideration of cultural protection – which meant, in most cases, political autonomy or independence. Allen Buchanan, a philosopher, came up with the “saltwater” and “pigmentation” tests, “the former requiring oceanic separation between the secessionists and the state from which they secede, the latter that the secessionists be of a different color from those from whom they seek to secede” – that is, from that of their colonial overlords (Buchanan 1992: 349f). In the United States, by analogy, entitlement to “multicultural” consideration is often based, not on the merits of a particular culture, but on the culture associated with persons of particular ethnoracial groups, especially those who have been subject to discrimination or oppression. In Germany, Judaism receives official support, but not Islam, despite the fact that the latter has many more adherents than the
former; here the justification is different: Jews are more assimilated and pose no threat to the existing majority culture. In determining relative merit, should a form of distributive justice be applied? Should a minority community be given special protective consideration because its culture is unique in the sense that a given state is the only place where an ethnically particularistic culture is still in existence, e.g. a primitive Brazilian tribe?

**Costs**

Opennes to diversity comes at a price. There is no doubt that separate, gender-specific public schools and classes, gymnasiums, and swimming pools in districts heavily populated by devout Muslims; institutional *dédoulement* in Belgium; the provision of halal or kosher food respectively for Muslim and Jewish pupils in school lunchrooms, soldiers in military barracks, and inmates of prisons are desirable in the interest of multiculturalism, equity, and social peace, but these approaches must be weighed against the cost to society as a whole. For instance, the observance of minority religious holidays might lead to shorter school years or work weeks and disrupt “normal” national schedules.

**Implications and consequences of multiculturalism**

The claims of minorities have varied from a simple toleration of differences to complete parity with majorities with respect to symbolic recognition, official legitimation, public support, access to educational and economic institutions, and representation in political bodies. Not all these claims have been, or can be, satisfied everywhere. Nor should they be, for their satisfaction may have unintended, and sometimes perverse, consequences – both for society as a whole and for the ethnic minority group.

Some have argued that multiculturalism is promoted best by means of the “institutionalization of differences” (Kook 2000: 43f.). Such institutionalization implies the recognition of group rights. “Minority cultures are rendered unequal citizens if their sources of meaning are neglected in the public realm” while those sources are institutionally supported in the case of the majority culture. (Gagnon and Iacovino 2005: 27). Minority cultures are not rendered unequal if their religion, language, history, or family traditions are merely ignored by the general public, but not interfered with. However, since in many cases these sources are located in the community, equality of rights for an individual cannot be separated from the collective rights of a particular group. The relationship between individual and group rights has been the subject of endless discussions, most of which do not show convincingly that the two rights are incompatible. Nevertheless, group rights may be used to fortify the hold of members in a community in such a way that escape from it is fraught with serious social consequences. That is why informal accommodation is sometimes better than institutionalization, which may rigidify difference, make them permanent, and lead to the creation of parallel societies.
Preferential compensatory treatment of selected minorities, as noted above, is an important aspect of multiculturalism; but affirmative action, a reversal of the old discriminatory *numerus clausus* for minorities (e.g. Jews, African-Americans, Asians), is anti-modern in the sense that it is an alternative to merit-based selection; and it also implies a limiting quota for individuals not subsumed under the rubric of disadvantaged categories. This leaves open the question whether accommodation of categoric groups other than ethnic, racial, or religious minorities in the name of some sociopolitical interest or public good comes under the rubric of multiculturalism: e.g. the GI Bill of Rights after World War II, under which veterans of the US military were given financial support to obtain higher education, or a recent French approach to “affirmative action,” under which impoverished urban youths in Paris (regardless of race or ethnicity) were given privileged admission to the Institut d’Études Politiques in Paris.

In the debate on the impact of multiculturalism, the question is this: what is the threshold beyond which diverse “communalist” institutions, social patterns, and culture impact negatively on the general interest or fragment national unity? Beliefs and cultural patterns that are important components of a minority culture should not be interfered with, especially if they do not adversely affect the majority’s interests. That would be true of vegetarianism, because it does not normally affect the food supply of meat-eaters; teetotalism, because it does not interfere with consumers of alcohol; homosexual orientations, as long as there are enough heterosexuals to secure society’s – and the majority’s – demographic reproduction; the nomadic lifestyle of Roma and Sinti, as long as there is enough space available for campsites and public facilities are not overloaded, and the space is not needed for public parks.

The issue becomes more complex in the case of communities whose culture opposes equal rights for women. They may support modest dress for women, separate classes for schoolgirls, and arranged marriages in order to protect chastity and promote what is often referred to as “family values”; but how is one to measure these against such majority values as equality, personal liberty, and rationality, which are important in Western societies? Do cultures “deserve” to be equally protected if they believe in, or practice, cannibalism, polygamy, slavery, forced marriages, honor killings, fatwas, jihads, autos-da-fe, forcible conversions, or terrorism?

To return to the question of marriage: Arranged marriages, an important feature of certain non-Western cultures, are acceptable if they are not “the only game in town” – if freely contracted marriages are also available to members of ethnic or religious minority communities. Mixed marriages are part and parcel of multiculturalism and are the province, not of the state, but of civil society. Complications may arise with respect of the offspring of such marriages, in particular their education and religious upbringing, but this is normally a matter of prior agreement; but complications regarding custody may arise in case of divorce.

Multiculturalism presupposes that rights enjoyed by the majority should be granted to minorities as well. Should the right to life be extended to radical Islamists (*shaheeds*) against their will? In encouraging suicide bombings by
promising paradise to prospective martyrs, such Islamists indicate that they do not share Western notions about the sanctity of human life. How should the state enforce its values in this case? Should multiculturalism include the acceptance of the caste system? How can the state intervene to protect a person who refuses to accept the status of Dalit (Untouchable) while insisting on remaining a member of the Hindu community? We can persuade such a person to convert to another religion; we can reason with the leadership of the Hindu minority; or we can ignore their practices, as long as they confine these to their own kind and do not prevent members of their group from leaving the fold.

Certain multicultural elements are protected under the principles of freedom of expression: This applies to items of clothing and symbols of religion, whether ostentatious or not, worn in public, e.g. the headscarf (foulard) of Muslim women; the Jewish kippa; the Sikh turban; the yellow robe of Buddhist monks, and the large Christian crucifix pendant or Christian nun’s habit. In fact, Sikh policemen in the United Kingdom are allowed to wear the turban, and Muslim policewomen in Netherlands, to wear the headscarf. But what about women who wear the burqa? They adhere to Salafism, a fundamentalist Islamic sect, which does not accept the principle of equal rights for women. They do not vote and do not go anywhere without their husbands. Moreover, the burqa, which covers a woman’s entire body and face, makes it impossible to take photos for identity cards. For these reasons, the Council of State in France has ruled that the wearing of the burqa is not compatible with French republican values and French citizenship. Although the foulard is a harmless expression of multiculturalism, the French government banned it in public schools because Muslim girls who did not wear it became the object of taunts by Muslim boys.

Opposition to flag saluting (as idol worship) does not harm the interests of society at large; but interfering in flag-raising ceremonies may do so. Refusing to take an oath on the Bible is acceptable before a court if there is a ceremonial substitute, such as affirmation. A majority can usually tolerate pacifists, as long as they are a distinct minority and there is peace; but if there is war and the country needs to be defended, pacifists become “free riders,” and their orientation can put society in danger. Minorities are free to practice homeopathic care, spiritual healing, and other non-traditional medicine. But the refusal (e.g. by Christian Scientists) to have their children inoculated against communicable diseases cannot be tolerated in the name of multiculturalism. Cliterectomy may be permitted if it are freely consented to by adult women; but certain forms of punishment stipulated by shari’a law, such as the cutting off of the hands of thieves, cannot be allowed by a society that outlaw cruel and unusual punishment. Observant Jewish businessmen have the right to close their shops on Saturdays; but what if the only pharmacy in town is owned by an Orthodox Jew? Muslims have a right to worship in their mosques; but what if muezzin calls on Fridays tend to disturb the sleep of Christians or non-believers?¹⁰

In the majority of Western societies, such problems are normally resolved in an informal and ad hoc manner. Since their governments are increasingly
secular, they do not want to get involved in religious disputes. They often see *laïcité*, like republicanism, as a “metaculture” – as the major integrator above and beyond the ethnocultural identities. What about minority communities whose culture does not accommodate itself to *laïcité*? Many Orthodox Muslims, for example, do not distinguish between religious and secular concerns and do not accept a polity based on the rights of man because they believe that all legitimate political power flows from the Koran (Caldwell 2000). Furthermore, they may argue that the secular state is an ideal-type; and that the abandonment of ethnoreligious minority culture and its replacement by a purely secular national identity do not guarantee full integration or acceptance of minorities – both because the identity of the majority is not fully secular, and because there are markers of identification that cannot be fully “covered over” by a common Western secularity.  

Notes

1 *Communautarisme* is sometimes cited for questionable polemical purposes. Thus in June 2008, Jean-Pierre Chevènement reacted to the aggression against a young Jew in Paris by asserting that it was the consequence of a *communautariste* form of behavior, that is, the victim was wearing a kippa and thus inviting aggression. See “Juif agressé” l’UMP ‘scandalisé’ par les propos de Chevènement, *Nouvel Observateur*, 23 June 2008.

2 This is reflected in rhetorical adjustments, such as occasional references to “*unsere ausländischen Mitbürger*,” our foreign fellow citizens, which suggest that national citizenship is not the only kind. See *Deutschland-Nachrichten*, 4 June 1993 and 30 September 1994.

3 The demand by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyib Erdogan, during a visit to the Germany in 2008, for separate Turkish schools for Turkish immigrants in that country was summarily rejected by Chancellor Angela Merkel.

4 Unlike Hebrew in Israel, neither the dominance of French in France nor that of English in the United States is threatened by the recognition of minority languages.

5 Jean Laponce (2006: 150ff.) makes a distinction between protecting a language as an end in itself, and accommodating the *speakers* of a language.

6 The judge ruled that under Moroccan law a husband had the right to beat his wife. *Libération*, 30 May 2008. The decision was reversed on appeal.

7 In the 1970s, Roman Hruska, a Senator from Nebraska, supported an unqualified nominee for the US Supreme Court, arguing that mediocre judges also have the right to be represented in that institution.

8 In the United States, university departments of ethnic studies usually have sections on African-American, Chicano, and Native American, but not Irish, Jewish, or Greek culture.
10 In Christian-dominated societies, the reverse problem – that of loud church bells disturbing the sleep of non-Christians – is not normally articulated.

11 The secularism of Jews in Germany and that of the Japanese-Americans in the United States during World War II did not exempt them from “special” treatment; and the francisé descendants of immigrants in France in our own day continue often to be referred to as “Français d’origine algérienne” or “immigrés de la 2e génération.”

References


3 Ethnonational state definition and liberal democratic practices

Beyond “neutrality” in deeply divided societies

Ilan Peleg

When different ethnonational groups live within a single political space, their action on behalf of their nationalist agenda and the promotion of democracy within that political space are usually in tension with each other. The fundamental goals of such ethnonational groups and the political strategies for achieving them are often contradictory to and incompatible with the requirements of democracy. While nationalism is designed to enhance the position of a particular identity, an identity that may or may not include all citizens or inhabitants of the polity, democracy, particularly in its “liberal” form, aims at guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens as well as special protections for minority groups and their members. The essence of the nationalist agenda and the essence of the liberal-democratic agenda are more often than not found on opposing sides of the political spectrum.

This inherent tension between nationalism and democracy is particularly pronounced in what might be analytically described as deeply divided societies. In such societies different demographic groups within the population have sharply diverse identities and, therefore, different visions in regard to the preferred essence of the polity in which they share citizenship. The deeper the divides between different identity groups, the more severe might be the challenge to maintain a genuine democracy within the polity.

In deeply divided societies the definition of the state reflects often, although not always, the national identity of the dominant group and its particular political agenda. Conflict with minority groups that represent alternative identities and promote alternative agendas then becomes a prominent feature of the state. The majority–minority struggle may result in severely damaging or even destroying the fabric of democracy and particularly its more liberal features.

This chapter looks at the alternative ways in which polities facing deep demographic and sociopolitical divisions define themselves, and particularly in cases in which their self-definition is expressed in an ethnonational manner. The implications of such self-definition for the quality of democracy in those polities are explored. The chapter offers alternative routes for easing the tension between the pressures of nationalism and the demands of democracy, arguing that while that tension can never be entirely resolved in deeply divided societies, it can be alleviated, managed, and somewhat reduced. A productive way to think about this issue is to outline a number of alternative regime designs.
To usefully deal with the nationalism-versus-democracy tension the fundamental dilemma addressed here might be sharpened by asking the following question: “Can a full-fledged liberal democracy really exist in a deeply divided society if the dominant group insists on the promotion of a strong national identity?” Put differently, one might ask “How much does a polity need to weaken the identity politics of the dominant group in order to facilitate real democracy?” The thesis advanced here is that the more one allows identity politics to dominate the political process in a deeply divided society, the more likely one is to end up with a flawed democracy that violates at least some of the provisions of liberal democracy.2

Although this chapter is mostly analytical and empirical in addressing the nationalism-versus-democracy dilemma, it touches on the normative issue of “what might be done” to ameliorate or treat the negative results of particularistic, nationalist state definitions and policies that inevitably flow from such definitions. In general, this chapter takes the position that most states in deeply divided societies are not truly neutral, particularly from a cultural perspective (such as in the case of linguistic preference); such states promote the majority culture, sometimes explicitly and sometimes under the cover of “neutrality”. A just solution for this problem, it is argued, needs to give individuals and minorities equal rights as a means of sustaining and advancing genuine democracy.3

The reality of particularistic state definitions

While some observers view the modern state, particularly in the form in which it emerged in post-French Revolution Europe, as a political, bureaucratic organization designed to guarantee equal rights to all citizens, in the case of many modern states this is, in fact, often not the case. First, different states approach their own definition and define their own essence in a diverse, varied manner; state definition is itself a variable, not a constant, fixed or objective condition. Second, state definition is more often than not biased toward the dominant socio-political group within society, although in theory – that is, formally and officially – the state might guarantee the equality of all citizens. States vary substantially in terms of their own self-definition, and their self-definition has significant implications for interethnic relations, particularly in regard to the type and quality of democracy that they provide to their citizens.

The granting of equal individual rights to all citizens has been at the very center of the modernization of the Western state. This process, while resulting in human equality on an individual level, has contained within itself the seeds of the tension between individual equality and group rights. This tension continues to impact many multiethnic states today. Individual equality, as a universal philosophy and as a regime type, is often inherently unfriendly toward the very notion of group rights. The notion of equality given to the world by the French Revolution, and through it to numerous European societies, was that of individual equality before the law within a unified national community but, at the same time, the negation of special rights or privileges for any group within society (and particularly any national or ethnic group).
But in that very notion of national unity lies the problem in regard to many societies. The uneasiness of the modern, individual-centered state toward the rights of ethnic groups is often a source of conflict, especially when such groups see themselves as entitled to special recognition due to historical precedents that reflect their legacy, the cultural uniqueness inherent in their traditions, their presence on what they regard as their ancestral land, and so forth. The historical transformation from a corporate, group-based society and state to an individual-centered polity, the transformation that we tend to identify with the French Revolution, could make the incompatibility between different visions of the state a major bone of contention.

Interestingly, the tension between individual rights and group rights exists not only in a Jacobin state like France and many other states that have adopted the French model, a model that views the nation as united and indivisible in pursuing its ideals and interests (Schnapper 2004). This tension exists also in liberal polities like the United States and many polities that adopted its model, a system that views the rights of individuals as paramount and the interests of any and all ethnic groups as private. Because most Western countries today reflect some kind of combination of unitary (“French”) Jacobinism and enhanced (“American”) liberalism—the United Kingdom is a good example—the tension between the state and assertive ethnic groups of all types is almost inevitable.

The tension between individual-based rights supported by the state and group rights for particular collectivities could be reduced but never completely eliminated. Yet, fully developed liberal democracies, more than democratizing states, can afford the recognition of some group rights in the interest of equity and stability (Spinner-Halev 2002). Although the principle of majority rule is supreme in all liberal democracies, the recognition of some group rights could be accepted without serious harm to the state.

While in theory some or even most states claim to be “civic” and thus neutral in treating different sociopolitical groups within them (while identifying other states as “ethnic” and therefore inherently discriminatory), in fact almost every state has at least some particularistic characteristics that conform to the desires of the dominant group and are at least somewhat antagonistic toward the minority (Greenfeld 1992). This generalization about the nature of modern states includes so-called democracies and even self-defined “liberal democracies” (Spinner 1994).

The common ideological biases inherent in modern polities, as it relates to the preferential treatment accorded to dominant ethnic groups, are many and diverse. Rather than covering all or even most of those inherent ethnic biases, an impossible task within the context of a brief essay, several typical examples of such biases would be given.

Despite Europe’s credentials as liberal and democratic, numerous European states are un-neutral when it comes to state religion, a condition that characterizes even more non-European countries. Thus, many European countries grant a special place to Christianity in general, and sometimes to the particular Christian denomination of the majority. In Greece, Eastern Orthodoxy is the state reli-
Ethnonational state definition

Ethnonational state definition

The language and the culture of practically all states, whether democratic or not, are the language and the culture of the dominant ethnonational group; thus the state is a reflection of and a tool for a particular culture and language. In deeply divided societies this preferred linguistic/cultural status could be rather controversial, especially if the heritage of the minority remains unrecognized or, worse yet, actively oppressed. The number of examples for ethnonational tension resulting from what is, in effect, a cultural war is large. Slovak is the “state language” in Slovakia (where a large Hungarian minority of over 10 percent of the population resides). A similar situation exists in Bulgaria (with a significant Turkish minority), the Baltic countries (where there are large Russian minorities, especially in Estonia and Latvia), and so forth.

The linguistic commitment of the dominant group is sometimes merely symbolic, although always important; thus in Ireland the Irish language is the “first official language” while English is the “second official language”, although in reality English is the dominant tongue throughout the island. Castilian is the official language of Spain and enjoys clear advantage over all other languages despite the decisive liberalization of Spain over the last 30 years. The language policy of the dominant ethnonational majority is often implemented through state institutions – Israel, Turkey, and Sri Lanka are but some examples.

The dominance of a particular group within a given political space is invariably reflected in the “symbolic order” adopted by the polity. Flags and anthems, the way in which the history of the polity is presented and taught, and the creation of its “national” pantheon of heroes are of particular importance in this regard. These tend to always represent the dominant group and underrepresent or completely ignore the subservient group(s). The cross appears on the flags of all Scandinavian countries, as well as in several “Anglo-Saxon” counties,
Switzerland, Greece, etc. It was many years before Martin Luther King was accepted as an American hero in the United States.

Often there are special relationships between a state, and especially its dominant ethnonational group, and people descending from that group and that state. Those relations might include special provisions for the repatriation of persons who emigrated from the state and who share the ethnic descent of the majority group. Persons of Finnish descent, for example, enjoy special consideration in immigrating to Finland (most often from territories that were held until recently by the Soviet Union), even if they left the country generations ago. Similar provisions exist in such diverse countries as Germany and Greece, Ireland and Israel, and in Poland.

In some countries, even the very identity of the state is tied to a seemingly specific, particularistic symbol. In 2004 Italy’s constitutional court ruled that the crucifix is at the foundation of Italian identity, and that it cannot be regarded as merely a religious symbol. The cross is the state symbol in numerous countries, some of them highly democratic. The cross and the crucifix are heavily used as a symbol even if those countries have significant non-Christian minorities.

Particularity, democracy, and ethnic discrimination

All of those particularistic policies within states, and others, mean that those who do not belong to the dominant group (religiously, culturally, linguistically, ethnically, or in any other way) might be discriminated against in several manners, both as individuals and as groups:

1. Their mere differentiation from the majority and their clear identification as members of the minority could be regarded, in and of itself, as a form of discrimination;
2. The religion, culture, tradition, or history of the minority might be regarded as inferior by members of the majority and, worse yet, by public and even state institutions;
3. Members of the minority and the minority as a group might be actively discriminated against in various ways, not only symbolically but also materially.

While differentiation between ethnic groups or even perception of inferiority is not undemocratic per se, active discrimination, particularly when initiated, endorsed, or tolerated by the state, is highly undemocratic. It is quite common in deeply divided societies.

To assess how different countries perform in terms of democratic practices, we need to deal somewhat more systematically with the notion of democracy. Like “state definition”, democracy is also much more of a contested concept than generally assumed (Gallie 1962). In fact, I would like to suggest that democracy could be defined in at least three very different ways according to the levels of requirements it imposes or entails:
A *minimal requirement* of a democracy is “majority rule” via the institutionalization of regular, free, and fair elections. This type of minimalist democracy is often called “procedural democracy”. Such a democracy, however, does not prevent the discrimination of a minority; in fact, often it facilitates it by giving it legitimacy via “majority rule”.

A *middle-range requirement* for a democracy is that, in addition to regular elections, the protection of fundamental freedoms be institutionalized. This form of government is, essentially, “liberal democracy”. While liberal democracy might prevent discrimination against individuals, particularly when its fundamental freedoms are rigorously enforced, it does little to prevent discrimination against groups and it surely does not respond positively to their claims of recognition as distinct groups within society.

A *maximal requirement* for a democracy might be that, in addition to regularizing election and institutionalizing basic freedoms, there is equality not merely in law but in practice, and, even more importantly, that such equality is applied to both individuals and distinct groups within society. In deeply divided societies, such maximal definition (and practice) of democracy might be necessary, I would argue, for three reasons: (a) fundamental justice to all members of society, (b) the long-term political stability of the polity, and (c) the international legitimacy of the country.

The quality of a democracy could be assessed on the basis of a regime meeting those three requirements.

**State definition and liberal democracy**

So what are the relationships between the ways chosen by the state to define itself and what might be regarded as liberal-democratic practices, especially in terms of the equal treatment of minorities (as individuals and groups)?

My general analysis of democracy leads me to conclude that liberal democracy, as a democratic variant that puts emphasis on individual rights, occupies a middle-of-the-road position in the political world, particularly if the standard for comparing political systems is the level of equality granted to diverse groups within the polity. On the one hand, liberal democracy is not “hegemonic” in the sense of giving one ethnic group total control (either by brute force or through the use of “majority rule”, an unrestrained majoritarianism). On the other hand, liberal democracy is not “egalitarian” either – by its own philosophy and rules, it does not act vigorously to equalize the conditions of all or most groups within society, arguing that, in principle, groups are irrelevant.

Within liberal democratic regimes, the rule of the game in regard to ethnic groups is “neutrality” – the state does not support (at least openly) any particular ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural group, but it does not oppose or check it either. Thus, by omission it accepts the rule of the majority with no protection for the minority.
In deeply divided societies, this position of formal “neutrality”, even if carried out in good faith, is problematical on a number of different counts. It gives the majority a clear-cut advantage by virtue of the fact that its language, culture, and traditions dominate societal and, therefore, state institutions.

Moreover, even if the state is “liberal” in many of its characteristics – particularly in guaranteeing the fundamental freedoms – it often expects and demands that all individuals conform to the majority’s language and culture regardless of their own, or their groups’ culture and language. Both France and the United States are examples for the exclusive power of the majority. In both cases, the self-description of neutrality does not mean a liberal position in regard to the status of the dominant language or culture.

The declaration of neutrality does not guarantee non-discrimination against minorities; in fact, it might facilitate it by avoiding any recognition for minority rights (or, in some cases, even the recognition of the very existence of a minority). Even if the state declares itself “neutral” in regard to ethnic descent, it might or might not discriminate (in reality) against minorities. Turkey, for example, has adopted since the 1920s (at least officially) a neutral, civic definition – but it has a long legacy of oppressing the Kurds, politically and culturally. France and the United States claim a “neutral” state definition, but minorities need to “melt” into the collective identity that reflects, in reality if not in theory, the tradition of the dominant group (especially in terms of language and culture). So while Turkey’s methods are rougher, the results for the minority are quite similar in “Western” democracies.

On the other hand (and quite ironically), even when a state does not accept neutrality as a guiding principle, it might or might not discriminate in practice. The United Kingdom, for example, is clearly a non-neutral polity: by law, the Anglican Church is the official church, headed by the monarch (who is the head of the Church of England), and its bishops sit in the House of Lords. Yet, there is little evidence that religious minorities in the UK (Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, Jews) are discriminated by or estranged from the state. In the past, however, Catholics were discriminated against in the UK. Northern Ireland, of course, has witnessed long-term discrimination against Catholics; the recent constitutional developments there represent a major effort to move beyond discrimination.

In any event, those examples indicate that state definition per se does not determine the status of a minority. Other factors, such as accommodating political culture, are apparently as relevant.

Beyond state definition, if a polity in a deeply divided society is to achieve a solution that is just, stable, and legitimate – it needs to build institutions that guarantee the real equality of the minority in all aspects of life. In the political sphere, such institutions might include consociational, federal, autonomal, and cantonal arrangements.


**Hegemony and majority–minority problems**

The tension between nationalism and democracy as political forces in deeply divided societies often comes down to the type of relationships that exist between the dominant majority and a dominated minority. Deeply divided societies might witness the development of hegemonic regimes dedicated to the promotion of the interests of one and only one ethnic group. O’Leary defines hegemony as a situation that makes an overtly violent ethnic contest for state power either “unthinkable” or “unworkable” on the part of subordinated communities.\(^\text{10}\) The creation of such a regime exacerbates the tensions between nationalism – often represented by the state itself – and democracy. While hegemonic regimes might be perceived as authoritarian by their very nature, in fact they might be full-fledged liberal democracies. In such cases the hegemonic yet liberal regime may grant fundamental individual rights to all the citizens but nevertheless maintain subtle and often not-so-subtle distinctions between members of the majority and members of the minority. Moreover, a hegemonic regime might even grant limited group rights to minority groups, especially in areas such as religion, regulation of personal status (marriage, divorce, etc.), language, culture, and even the running of an independent educational system. At the same time, such a regime will still insist on sustaining the political advantage of the dominant majority.

The democratic problem with the type of hegemonic situation in a deeply divided society as described above is that it tends to produce an inherently flawed democracy. The major flaw of such a regime, which Sammy Smooha has defined as “ethnic democracy” (1997, 2002), is that, despite its relatively liberal posture toward individuals, it is designed to guarantee on a macro level the dominance of a single group over the public sphere in its entirety. Examples of this type of regime include Israel, the post-Soviet Baltic States, pre-Good Friday Northern Ireland, and others.

Under the best of situations, such a regime may create a facade of perfect or near-perfect democracy. Under the worst of circumstances, however, an ethnic order, even a relatively liberal one, could deteriorate and adopt comprehensive, discriminatory policies against the minority. Sri Lanka is an example; Turkey in certain periods of its history is another.

Hegemonic regimes typically adopt an exclusivist rather than an accommodationist solution to their sociopolitical dilemma. The exclusivist multinational or multiethnic state strives by all means at its disposal to maintain, enhance, and perpetuate the dominance of one ethnic group over all others. The state becomes the tool of such exclusivity and genuine democracy in the broadest definition – that is, with emphasis on equality of all individuals and groups – becomes its victim. The “core nation”\(^\text{11}\) views the state as its exclusive possession and the state is merely the institutional reflection of the nation, not a neutral zone for interethnic competition, let alone cooperation.

The accommodationist state, on the other hand, readily recognizes its own diversity. To the extent to which such a state strives for unity and integration, it does so by recognizing its ethnic components. Although such recognition might
be reflected in a variety of institutional arrangements, the fundamental purpose of the state remains the balancing of the interests of the different national or ethnic groups within its political and territorial space. It is important to recognize that for the state to be “accommodationist”, it must recognize its own ethnic group(s) as legitimate and give this recognition institutional expression (Safran 1994: 72).

One way of distinguishing between exclusivism and accommodationism in a multiethnic setting is to view the former as ethnocentric, even when it uses the state as a tool for the promotion of the interests of the “ethnic”, and the latter as state-centric. When compared to all forms of exclusivism, the accommodationist position is inherently more sympathetic to diversity, including ethnic diversity, within the state. Such diversity might be recognized by a conscious decision by state institutions not to pay any attention whatsoever to ethnicity (van den Berghe 1981), a position that liberal democracy readily endorses, or alternatively, by the state’s adoption of a group-rights approach in which various or all ethnic collectivities are politically and socially recognized. Either way, the purpose of the accommodationist political regime is to publicly accept the “other” rather than dominate it (Peleg 1994).

The accommodationist approach is inherently more democratic than the exclusivist one. It is willing to recognize equality of all ethnic groups within the political space or, alternatively, privatize ethnicity altogether. The exclusivist approach cannot hope to manage interethnic conflict except by dominating the minority; the accommodationist approach tries to devise “a system of just and stable conflict management” (Sisk 1996).

A pragmatic, clever leadership in a hegemonic majority can manage and control an active or potential ethnic conflict for a long time, thus prolonging hegemony in an exclusivist system. Yet, in today’s world this cannot be done “forever” because of the increasing emphasis on genuine equality, often accompanied by real political pressure. Moreover, once exclusivity is established, there are great difficulties in transforming it to any type of accommodationism. First, there is a problem that in an exclusivist, hegemonic system outbidding is pervasive: ethnic leaders describe any and all compromise moves as a sellout of group interests (DeVotta 2005; Sisk 1996: 17). Ironically, the more democratic the state is, the greater the outbidding problem might be. Second, in a hegemonic and exclusivist system, the majority’s sense of possession toward the state is so intense that a shift toward accommodationism is all but impossible.12

Individual- vs group-based regimes

Unlike exclusivist systems, accommodationist regimes seek resolution to their ethnic conflict by granting equal rights to all their citizens as individuals and even public recognition to some or all of their ethnic groups. While crossing the line from the individual to the group level might violate some liberal principles and sensitivities, it could provide for a more just and more stable resolution of long-term sociopolitical conflict.
There is an intimate link between accommodation and democracy, just as there is a link between exclusivist hegemonic conditions and non-democracy or, as the case may often be, flawed democracy. The record of non-democratic regimes in solving ethnic problems is miserable, \(^{13}\) while the record of democracies is mixed but considerably better. \(^{14}\)

Accommodationist solutions adopted by ethnically divided societies tend to be based on several ideas that cut across specific institutional arrangements established by those societies. First, there is a belief that social problems, including ethnic conflicts, could benefit significantly from “political engineering”. \(^{15}\) The “trick” of successful political engineering in a multiethnic setting is to maintain democracy while channeling the popular forces it is built on in constructive, accommodationist directions. Second, accommodationist solutions are based on the belief in human equality as a foundation for political order. While the exclusivist formula for interethnic conflict assumes the inherent superiority of one ethnic group over all others – superiority achieved via demographic advantage, historical rights, higher moral “worth”, etc. – accommodationism assumes equality among individuals and groups as a supreme value, a desired goal, and a preferred public policy.

The key in assessing the public policy adopted in a deeply divided society is to realize that although individual-based democracy is in principle an attractive, straightforward alternative, it often does not respond to the needs of all ethnic groups within the society. In such situations, unless a satisfactory group-rights solution is found, serious conflicts might develop. What might be called the “dynamics of ethnic rights” often leads ethnic groups to demand, first, equality as individuals and then group rights. Among those are cultural rights such as the use of language in public and in the educational system in particular, institutional political recognition, and so forth (Coakley 1993).

While the move from a liberal order based on individual rights to a group-rights order might be necessary and beneficial, it is not an easy one. The problem with group rights is that they have “never been coherently codified in a package that has attracted general agreement” (Coakley 1993). While individual rights are based on the relatively simple principle of citizens’ equality before the law, it is not easy to define precisely and impossible to define authoritatively which group is entitled to group rights within a deeply divided society and what rights it is entitled to. This difficulty is particularly serious in a liberal democratic setting where the notion of group rights is an anathema in the first place.

In several liberal-democratic polities, such as the United States, so-called “affirmative action” has been tried as a solution to addressing past discrimination with serious, lasting repercussions. By definition, affirmative action violates the most fundamental principle of an individual-based regime, that of equality of individuals before the law. Yet, in the interest of justice and stability such a “deviation” might be regarded as necessary.
Easing liberal democracy’s dilemma

Many strategies can be adopted when trying to resolve or at least ease an ethnic conflict. Liberal democracy is one of these, but in an already deeply divided society, with deeply rooted ethnonational conflict, it is probably not the most promising.

Some analysts have distinguished between political strategies based on actions taken by the state versus actions taken by the international community (Keating and McGarry 2001). A state could deal with an internal ethnic challenge by granting a variety of rights in the area of religion, culture, or language. Thus, the language policies of Canada, India, Israel, or Spain are designed to give recognition to a variety of groups (Harel-Shalev 2006). While those policies are by no means “classic” liberal solutions insofar as they recognize group rights, they may in effect ease the problems of liberal democracies struggling to maintain stability in the face of sociopolitical divides.

The inherent problem in liberal democracy lies in its tendency to adopt unidimensional commitment to individual rights as a foundation of the sociopolitical order while negating group rights. In deeply divided societies, where there is an historic conflict between majority and minority, classical, orthodox liberal democracy is simply insufficient as a solution. Procedural democracy with periodic elections cannot guarantee human and civil rights for minorities even if there are constitutional provisions in place.

Hegemonic regimes are unavoidably in tension with liberal democracy, even though some of them may seem to fulfill the formal requirements of liberal regimes. Hegemonic regimes often represent what Fareed Zakaria has called “illiberal democracy” (1997, 2003). While they can quite easily hide behind the cover of majority rule, majoritarianism does not solve the issue of minority rights in deeply divided societies.

Mechanism and methods for reducing ethnic conflict

As a regime type, liberal democracy has a reasonable claim on actively promoting individual rights; no other regime type comes close to liberal democracy in that respect. At the same time, most liberal democracies could do promote group rights a lot better than they usually do. They can accept at least some group rights, although their focus on individual rights tends to interfere with the promotion of comprehensive group rights.

The way to solve the dilemmas of the liberal democracy in deeply divided societies is to push group rights within them and move beyond the traditional parameters of liberal democracy, that is, to adopt an alternative conceptual framework in which equal rights for individuals are seen as necessary but insufficient conditions for genuine democracy. There is a need to adopt a group-rights approach and institutionalize such regime designs as consociationalism, federalism, autonomy, or cantonization as mechanisms for alleviating the divisions.
The history of numerous hegemonic regimes indicates that ignoring the rights of minorities, even in the name of universal and equal rights (that is, “liberal democracy”) is extremely dangerous. On the other hand, transformation to group-rights regime designs of different types is possible. As diverse polities as Canada and Spain, the United Kingdom and South Africa, Switzerland and Turkey, have been able to improve their democratic performance in a significant manner while countries that have refused to explore the group-rights approach have allowed the quality of their democracy to deteriorate. (Peleg 2007).

Notes

1 For a systematic exploration of the relationships between nationalism and ethnicity see Guelke (2004).
2 The issue of the requirements of liberal democracy will be addressed later in the chapter.
3 My approach is generally compatible with the one expressed in Kymlicka (1995).
4 In the case of the United Kingdom, this tension exists in the relationships between the state and old groups like the Scots, as well as newer groups such as British Muslims.
5 Thus, for example, the Polish constitution recognizes the country’s culture as “rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation” but, interestingly, does not grant special recognition to Catholicism.
6 By law, the president of Argentina had to be a Roman Catholic; this law has been revised.
7 Interestingly, the words “under God” were only added in 1954.
8 The Republic of Ireland has been committed in Article 3 of the constitution “to unite all the people who share the territory of the Island of Ireland”; South Korea voiced a similar commitment in regard to the unification of the Korean peninsula, and so had West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany) prior to reunification.
10 O’Leary’s definition is based on the analytical approach of Lustick (1993).
12 In a way, this feeling is “hegemonic” in the Gramscian sense. See Gramsci (1986).
13 This record includes the USSR, the former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Franco’s Spain, among other cases.
14 The record of discernible progress toward resolution of ethnic conflicts include post-Franco Spain, Canada, Northern Ireland, and so forth.
15 For the application of this idea to Canada, see Russell (1994). On the general proposition and usefulness of this notion see Sartori (1968).
16 Examples include the recognition given to the Church of Scotland by the United Kingdom and religious rights granted to Palestinians in Israel.
17 The Anglo-Saxon world and the Scandinavian states represent examples of bona fide liberal democracy. Countries such as France or Germany are not such good examples.
18 The case of Canada is particularly interesting in that regard. So is the much newer and less settled case of post-Franco Spain. In both cases individual rights are comprehensive but minorities are somewhat limited.
19 For detailed development of this idea see Peleg (2007).
References


4 National self-determination and democracy

Benyamin Neuberger

The principle of national self-determination has been haunting the world since the French Revolution. There may be no other term in modern political discourse which is used with more emotion and passion. Recent history has known many wars fueled by conflicting interpretations of self-determination. Woodrow Wilson thought that implementation of the principle of self-determination would lead to a better world, a world without wars and “safe for democracy.” His secretary of state, Robert Lansing, had doubts. He suspected the concept of self-determination to be “loaded with dynamite” (Pomerance 1982: 74) and capable of causing even more bloodshed because it “will raise hopes which can never be realized” (Cobban 1970: 62).

The principle of national self-determination as a moral issue dominated much of Europe’s politics during the latter half of the nineteenth century (De Shalit 1996; Freeman 1996; Horowitz 1997; Moore 1997; Tilly 1993; Werther 1992). Woodrow Wilson led the United States into World War I in order to make the world safe for democracy and national self-determination, while Lenin led the Soviet Union out of the war proclaiming the principle of nationalities as a new guiding principle for a socialist world order. Later the principle of national self-determination was universalized and legalized. While in the post-World War I era people talked only about the principle of national self-determination, after World War II international conventions established the right of peoples to national self-determination. Today, many international jurists agree that national self-determination is no longer solely a moral demand and a political principle but, in many circumstances, a legal right recognized by international law. Indeed, national self-determination appears after 1945 in all-important documents relating to the organization of the international community. The United Nations Charter speaks about “the principle of equal rights and of self-determination of peoples,” while the International Covenant of Human Rights says that “all peoples and nations shall have the right of self-determination” (Emerson 1964: 27).

The ambiguity and ambivalence contained in this principle of self-determination are best shown by the fact that opposing sides in many international conflicts often justify their positions by resorting to it. They can do so because there is no agreement on what is “national,” what is the “self” and what “determination” means. The principle has thus acquired almost universal accept-
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ance, but the interpretations to which it is subjected continue to be widely divergent. Let us be aware that there are principles of national self-determination – not one principle which applies to all situations. We have to differentiate between “external self-determination” (“the right of every people to choose sovereignty under which they live”) and “internal self-determination” (“the right of every people to select its own form of government”) (Pomerance 1982: 1; Kiss 1986). External self-determination may also mean the right of a nominally independent state to true independence, while internal national self-determination may also refer to minority regimes, regional autonomy schemes, or federalism within an established state. That means that one may talk about two varieties of external self-determination: internationally recognized independence for a people and true independence for an already existing state. While the Poles and Czechs before World War I, the Lithuanians and Georgians in the late 1980s and the Chechens in the 1990s all fought for national self-determination in order to attain legally recognized statehood, the Hungarians in 1956, Czechoslovaks in 1968, Poles and Romanians in the 1970s and 1980s strove to achieve self-determination in the sense that they wanted their national independence to be true and “real.”

In addition to external self-determination there would be three varieties of internal self-determination: democracy in a homogeneous state; autonomy or federalism for a distinct people within a democratic state (e.g. the Hungarians in Slovakia); or autonomy/federalism for a distinct group within a non-democratic system (e.g. the “titular nations” within the Soviet Federation). The distinction between states and nations (or peoples, nationalities, ethnic groups, or any other distinct population) with regard to national self-determination is a crucial one. While there are thousands of nations in the ethnocultural sense on the globe – all potential candidates for external sovereignty or internal autonomy – there are less than 200 sovereign states and only about 15 states in which state and nation completely overlap. Sometimes external and internal self-determination are completely interwoven and cannot be separated. For example, the choice given to East Timor in 1999 involved both external self-determination (independence or no independence) and internal self-determination (autonomy within Indonesia).

Different from political self-determination is “cultural self-determination,” the right to teach and study in one’s own language, to develop an autonomous culture and to resist assimilation by a dominant power (Faust 1980: 6). Cultural self-determination may again be both external and internal. For example, the derussification of language, culture, and education after independence in the former Republics of the Soviet Union (e.g. the abandonment of the Cyrillic script and a return to the Arabic or Latin script) has to be seen as cultural self-determination vis-à-vis the former external colonizer. On the other hand the Berbers’ demand for cultural autonomy within Algeria is directed against the same policy of “Arabization” which is regarded as cultural liberation by the Arabs and oppression by the Berbers (Maddy-Weitzman 1999). Demands for cultural self-determination may be linked to a specific territory (e.g. Transylvania in Romania) or it may be raised as a demand for personal–cultural self-determination (e.g. the Jews in Eastern Europe after World War I). In the twentieth-century
Third World, there is also a crucial distinction between “colonial (or better, anti-colonial) self-determination,” which is the liberation of Asian or African peoples in a colony from European colonial rule (e.g. Algerian or Palestinian self-determination), and secessionist self-determination, which represents a people’s aspiration to break out of the postcolonial state and achieve liberation for one Afro-Asian people from rule by another Afro-Asian people (e.g. Kurdish or Southern Sudanese self-determination).

In the 1990s in Eastern Europe we have seen a variation of this distinction between self-determination by recognized political units and self-determination by peoples who don’t reside in recognized political units. Federal states within the Soviet Union (Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, etc.), Yugoslavia (e.g. Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina), and Czechoslovakia (Czech and Slovak Republics) were recognized by the European Union, the UN and the international community as legitimate units for external self-determination. This recognition was not accorded to the Tatars and Chechens in the Russian Federation, the Ossets in Georgia, the Hungarians in Serbia (Vojvodina), the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia, the Turks in Bulgaria, the Gagauz in Moldova or the Russians in Kazakhstan, the Ukraine and Moldova (Smith 1996; Tappe 1995).

National self-determination is, at first glance, clearly a democratic principle. Or, as Richard Falk (2002) puts it:

The idea of self-determination recognizes that the legitimacy of any political arrangement depends on the will of the people subject to its authority and is closely associated with ideas of democracy and fundamental human rights.

The whole history of the right of self-determination is, for better and worse, the story of adaptation to the evolving struggles of peoples variously situated to achieve effective control over their own destinies, especially in reaction to circumstances that are discriminatory and oppressive.

National self-determination became associated with government by consent, minority rights, and equality (of nations) – all clear-cut democratic principles. Reality is, however, more complex. Among politicians and scholars there is no consensus as to whether national self-determination means national government (a Chechnyan government in Chechnya), democratic self-determination (an elected government in Chechnya), or a combination of the two (an elected and Chechnyan government in Chechnya). National government need not be democratic (Romania under Ceaucescu), while democratic government need not be national (the Sudetenland was part of democratic Czechoslovakia after World War I, but was not ruled by a national Sudeten-German government).

The democratic school defines national self-determination as government by consent of the governed and not as national government per se. The nation according to the democratic school is defined by territory and not according to any ethnocultural criteria. National self-determination was perceived in essence as the principle which allowed “people of a given territory to determine their
own government” (Johnson and Singh 1980: 354). National self-determination was equal to democratic self-government. Hans Kohn argued that the American concept of national self-determination is based on democratic rather than purely national claims. Its major constituents – the “inalienable rights of man,” “consent of the governed,” and “no taxation without representation” – were more democratic than national (Kohn 1967: 12). In 1776 there was no distinct American nation to fight for national statehood. The Americans fought for democratic rights by demanding the people’s right to self-determination. Only after self-determination was achieved did they become a nation.

Elie Kedourie, too, regards the Anglo-Saxon definition of national self-determination as inherently democratic. Kedourie thinks the post-World War I Versailles system in Europe was based on a “misunderstanding” between the democratic version of self-determination of Woodrow Wilson and Lloyd George and the Eastern European variety which stressed “national” rather than “self-determination” (Kedourie 1960: 132). For the Anglo-Saxons, dictatorial government is government foreign to the people, whether the rulers are foreigners or local usurpers of power. For that reason, Wilson’s Fourteen Points talked about granting the peoples of Austria–Hungary the “freest opportunity for autonomous development” rather than about an automatic establishment of nation-states by the nations of the former empire (Umozurike 1972: 18–19). Amitai Etzioni also makes the point that in the decolonization era “the driving force behind wars of liberation was the desire for democratization and a responsive government” (Ronen 1979: 23).

The “national school” of self-determination defines the achievement of independence as the goal of national self-determination. National self-determination is perceived as fulfilled as long as the citizens of the nation are ruled by their “kith and kin.” In fact, many states in the world are independent but not free in the democratic sense. Many nationalists have cut the principle of national self-determination from its democratic roots. They are willing to accept “less autonomy with more flag” (Ronen 1979: 23). Hans Kohn conceded that these nationalists fought for liberty, but the “liberty worshiped was not so much individual freedom but freedom from foreign government” (Ronen 1979: 27). National self-determination according to the nationalist point of view is compatible with dictatorship as long as it is national. It could mean the rule of a minority nation that claims national self-determination over a majority that is seen as “another” nation (e.g. Apartheid South Africa). It could, however, also mean the tyranny of the (“democratic”) majority nation over national minorities (e.g. post-World War I Poland, post-World War II Iraq or contemporary Burma). It could also simply indicate a dictatorship within the majority nation (independent of whether there are national minorities or not), as long as the dictators belong to that majority (e.g. World War II fascist Croatia).

And indeed, Polish and Hungarian nationalists who fought for national self-determination before World War I saw nothing wrong in establishing national dictatorships after gaining independence. For German nationalists, freedom consisted in national sovereignty rather than Western democracy. The program of the
NSDAP stated that the aim of the Nazi party was the “unification of all Germans to form a Great Germany on the basis of the right to self-determination enjoyed by the nations” (Musgrave 1997: 59). When the Sudeten Germans in 1938 overwhelmingly supported a return to the Reich in the name of national self-determination, they in fact opted to leave democratic Czechoslovakia, where they had full democratic rights, in order to join Hitler’s Nazi Germany. For them, national self-determination meant being ruled by fellow Germans rather than living in a democratic state. Many of the nationalists of the 1990s who strove for independence – in the Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Central Asian Republics fought for national self-determination. In that sense they were similar to the post-World War I Polish, Hungarian, and Romanian nationalists and far away from Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, and Woodrow Wilson. Etzioni accuses some of the “self-determinists” in the former Soviet Union of sacrificing the chances for more democracy within a multiethnic state for the sake of “ethnic self-determination” (Ronen 1979: 23–24). Coulmas also says that although national self-determination was in the past associated with freedom and democracy, it has now become an ethnic tool to dismember multiethnic states (Coulmas 1993: 89).

The shift from national self-determination as a formula for democracy to national self-determination as a prescription for a non-democratic nation-state can proceed even further. It can start from a proposition that the people have the right to decide in which state they will live, even if that state is internally dictatorial (e.g. the decision by plebiscites of the Saar Germans in 1935 to join Nazi Germany), and it can reach a point where a national elite “determines” to which nation-state a specific people belongs without ever asking the people involved (e.g. the 1940 declaration by Nazi Germany that all the people of Alsace-Lorraine were Germans and part and parcel of Greater Germany). This completes a full circle from an arbitrary state system determined by kings and armies, via national self-determination and a state system based on the people’s will, to arbitrary “national determinism” by self-proclaimed national elites.

The confusion as to what constitutes national self-determination has its roots in the past association between democracy and nationalism, for both had in common the goals of popular sovereignty and participation. Later on, the conservative opponents of democracy and socialism discovered the potential power of non-democratic nationalism for undermining mass support for democrats and socialists through populist, extreme nationalist, racist and anti-Semitic appeals – also known as “socialism of the fools.” For example, in 1848 liberals and socialists fought alongside others in Germany for German unification. Their fiercest enemy was the oppressive kingdom of Prussia. Later, in the 1860s and 1870s, Bismarck adopted the goal of German unification and achieved it by “blood and iron.” That enabled the conservative and monarchical forces to do away with the liberal and socialist threat for more than half a century. Thus, the two notions of what constitutes national self-determination first diverged with the split between democratic and anti-democratic nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition to the two definitions of national self-determination which emphasize either democratic self-government or national independence, there is a third
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way to define national self-determination by combining the aspects of democracy, rejection of foreign rule and national independence. John Stuart Mill regarded national self-determination and the overlap between state and nation in the nation-state as a condition for liberty. He supported democracy (i.e. “self-determination”) to achieve the nation-state and supported the nation-state to safeguard and stabilize democracy. John Plamenatz also connected democracy and national self-rule when he argued that it was democracy which made foreign rule illegitimate. In recent history, those who fought for national self-determination very often fought for both national independence and democracy. In the 1950s and 1960s, anticolonial nationalism fought in Asia and Africa not only for independence and sovereignty, but also for human rights, freedom of the press, a multiparty system and free elections. “One man, one vote,” “no independence before majority rule” (NIBMAR) and “equal pay for equal work” had become national and democratic slogans. The Poles, Czechs, Hungarians and East Germans who struggled to topple the Communist regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s combined the liberal-democratic and nationalist ingredients of national self-determination as they fought both for true independence from indirect Soviet domination and for democracy and human rights.

The problem of the national “self”

National self-determination assumes the presence of a “national self,” but what is a national self? The UN Charter declares that “all peoples have the right to national self-determination,” but who is to decide what a people is and who are “all” the peoples? One may say a “nation,” or a “people,” has to be a “distinct” self, but who is going to determine what is distinct? Are the people of Belarus more “distinct” from the Russians than the Chechens and the Tatars? Are the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmen distinct peoples? Are their Republics national selves although the borders were artificially demarcated? Is it possible “to invent” nations as done in Central Asia after the establishment of the Soviet Union? There are no easy answers, but we can agree that “the determination of which ‘self’ is entitled to determine ‘what’ and ‘how’ remains the central question” (Jennings 1975: 82). The problem with the concept of national self-determination has much to do with the wide dissent as to what constitutes a true national self. Conflicting views of this question have led to many bitter struggles and bloody wars.

The British who opposed Irish independence recognized only one British national self, while the Irish nationalists regarded themselves as a separate nation. Lincoln believed in the unity of one American nation, while the Southerners identified themselves as a Southern nation. Corsican nationalists believe in a Corsican nation while French nationalists regard the Corsicans as an integral part of Nation Française. Bréznev very much believed that a Soviet People had been created and thus he would never have allowed the Soviet Union to dissolve on the basis of the right of self-determination of different “nations.” The same certainly applies to some of the nationalist and/or Communist leaders of
Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The conflicts in Great Britain (Ulster), Spain (Basque Country, Catalonia), Canada (Québec), India (Kashmir), Cyprus, Ethiopia (Ogaden, Oromia), and China (Tibet) also have something to do with differing definitions of the national self. Sometimes the terminology employed is designed to deny the very existence of a national self having the right to self-determination. The designation of the Kurds in Turkey as “Mountain Turks” by the Turkish government or the description of the Abkhaz as Georgians are good examples. Another example has been the refusal of the Israeli Right to talk about Palestinians. They preferred to talk about “Arabs of the Land of Israel” in order to deny the existence of a Palestinian people with a right to national self-determination. In the former Soviet Union there was an official differentiation between “nations,” “nationalities” (narodnost) and “national groups.” Only nations were formerly entitled to full national self-determination within a Union Republic or an Autonomous Republic while “nationalities” and national groups were only entitled to Autonomous Regions and Areas. In this way the CPSU leadership decided that the Azeris are a “nation” but the Chechens are not or that the Kalmyks were a “nation” until 1943, then became a “nationality” until 1958, when they regained their “nation” status (Kryukov 1996).

The emergence of a national self occurs, at least in the formative stages, through a process of differentiation from an opposing group. The formation of an American nation was linked with opposition to the British. The concept of a Pakistani nation does not make any sense without its differentiating stand against the Hindu-dominated Indian nation. The same is true with regard to the Ukrainians and Byelorussians vis-à-vis the Great Russians, the Croats and Bosnians vis-à-vis the Serbs, the Slovaks vis-à-vis the Czechs and Hungarians, and the Uzbeks vis-à-vis the Tajiks. The definition of the nation is intimately tied to the “struggle against foreign rule” (Smith 1975: 42). By deciding who is foreign, the nationalists decide also what is the national self.

The national self in much of Asia and Africa is most frequently defined as the former colony in its colonial boundaries. An overwhelming majority of the Afro-Asian political establishment affirms the importance and even decisiveness of colonial history in the building of nations. Anticolonial nationalism, in most cases, was a struggle for the independence of colonies as territorial units within their colonial boundaries. The governments of Burma, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Congo, Sudan, Iraq, Zambia, Kenya, Angola, Mali, Niger and the Ivory Coast fought secession by sanctifying the territorial integrity of the postcolonial state within its colonial boundaries.

Between 1945 and 1990 the ruling worldwide consensus was that only colonies “separated by salt water” from the colonial power had the right to national self-determination. Bangladesh is in this period the only example of a people and a territory who fought for secession from a postcolonial state and gained legitimacy and recognition by the international community. The fate of the Tibetans and Sikhs, the Nagas and the Kurds, the Ibo (Biafra) and the Lunda (Katanga), the Oromo (Ethiopia), the Southern Sudanese and Kenyan Somalis was very different because they were peoples within states and former colonies.
That was even true for the peoples of Eritrea and East Timor which were former colonial units swallowed by their neighbors before independence, but which were granted the right to self-determination and independence in the 1990s.

From a democratic point of view it is hard to explain why Nigeria should be granted the right to self-determination, while the Ibos should not; why it is democratic to have a free Iraq, and not an independent Kurdistan; why freedom for Sudan is acceptable, but a sovereign southern Sudan is not. (With regard to Sudan a major change may occur in 2011 when – according to the 2005 Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the SPLA – the Southern Sudan will decide on the question of its independence by plebiscite).

In the late 1980s the West attempted to follow this decolonization approach to self-determination in Eastern Europe. That explains the early opposition by Americans and Western Europeans to the breakup of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. When it became clear that secessionist self-determination was inevitable in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, a new post-decolonization concept of self-determination took hold in international law and politics. According to the new approach only federal units (e.g. Ukraine, Lithuania, Croatia, Slovenia, etc.) that had a legitimate political-administrative status enjoyed the right to national self-determination. Thus internal boundaries received recognition as if they were international boundaries. As in nineteenth-century Latin America and postcolonial Africa the doctrine of *uti possidetis* was applied also to these newly created states. That meant that within these new states, national groups, even if they were concentrated in certain territories, were not accorded the right of self-determination. In that sense the fate of the Chechens and Tatars in Russia, the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabah (Azerbaijan), the Russians in the Crimea (Ukraine) or Transsissitria (Moldova), the Ossetes and Abkhaz in Georgia, and the Serbs in Krajina (Croatia) or Bosnia-Herzegovina was similar to the fate of the Ibos in Nigeria, the Africans in the Sudan, the Oromo and Somalis in Ethiopia, the Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, and the Kashmiris and Sikhs in India. Similar to the African nationalist movements that insisted on self-determination within colonial borders, the nationalist movements of the titular nations in the former Soviet and Yugoslav Republics insisted on self-determination within the federal-republican borders. In both cases, the nationalists did not strive to achieve self-determination within ethnocultural borders. Similar to the Organization of African Unity which declared in 1964 the “sanctity” of the postcolonial (in fact colonial) borders, the treaty founding the Community of Independent States (CIS) declared the post-Soviet (in fact Soviet-made) borders to be “inviolable” (Brunner 1993: 27).

Thus ethnocultural peoples who certainly had “distinct” selves (e.g. Chechens, Krajina Serbs) enjoyed no right to secessionist self-determination. That right was recognized only where the ethnocultural group also had a definite political status within a state (e.g. Germans in the GDR) or a federal state (e.g. Slovakia, Slovenia, Armenia) and even in cases where the ethnocultural identity was questionable but where a federal state was in existence (e.g. Belarus, Moldova). An exception to this rule is Kosovo, which was granted independence in 2007, in spite of the fact that it was part of Serbia in the Yugoslav federation.
The European Union based this new “post-decolonization approach” on the legalistic thesis that the constitutions of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia recognized the right to self-determination of the federal states. The Badinter Arbitration Committee stated with regard to Yugoslavia quite bluntly that the right to self-determination did not encompass the right to change borders after independence. The Dayton Accords said the same with regard to the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Common to the decolonization and post-decolonization approaches is the sanctification of post-independence boundaries and opposition to further secessionist self-determination. The major difference between the colonies in Asia and Africa and the federal states of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia lies in the latter having in most cases a more pronounced ethnocultural core (Armenian, Georgian, Slovenian, etc.). Furthermore, the federal states were not colonies in the sense that they were part of a state and participated in one way or the other in its government and politics. This was not the case with the colonies (maybe with the exception of Algeria which was part of France and the Portuguese colonies which were at least nominally “overseas provinces” of Portugal). It has to be said that the new post-decolonization approach may have dire consequences for the future of multinational and multiethnic states because it establishes a disincentive to devise federal solutions to the “national problem” within states.

From a democratic point of view the postcolonial and post-Communist approach to self-determination is highly problematical. It delegitimizes classic nineteenth-century liberal-national self-determination. Its assumption that anti-colonial self-determination is “good self-determination against a bad state,” while ethnocultural, secessionist or irredentist self-determination is “bad self-determination against a good state” lacks any democratic basis (Stavenhagen 1996: 4). In colonial post-World War I and post-World War II Africa, the use of the term “tribes” (with its connotation of “primitiveness”) enabled the colonial authorities to continue colonial rule in the era of national self-determination, because they were ruling “tribes” rather than “nations.” The same holds true for post-independence governments that continued to use the colonialist jargon in order to delegitimize ethnocultural self-determination.

Postcolonial “statist” self-determination is also problematic from a democratic point of view because the non-democratic tyranny of the majority (whether “tribe” or nation) always looms around the corner. Arend Lijphart says that “majority rule works . . . where there is considerable consensus and majority and minority are not far apart” (Lijphart 1977: 28). This was not the case in Ireland in the 1920s, in India in the 1940s and in Palestine in the 1940s (and today!), where it led to partition (in Ireland and India, and probably in Palestine in the near future). But in Ulster, Cyprus, Sudan, Burma, Nigeria and Ethiopia, national self-determination did not lead to partition. In these latter cases, non-partition brought violence, and civil war, “democracy” for one section (Cyprus, Ulster) or outright dictatorship.

In the same manner, the post-Soviet approach to self-determination legitimizes self-determination for federal states (e.g. in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia
and Chechens and Tatars in Russia, Kurds in Turkey and Iran, and Tibetans and Mongols in China). The same holds for the distinction between peoples who enjoy autonomy (Kosovars in Serbia) and for those who do not (Serbs in Kosovo). From a purely democratic point of view this distinction between colonies, federal units and autonomies on the one hand, and stateless peoples, on the other, lacks any logic or moral content.

A different kind of self for whom the demand for national self-determination is sometimes voiced is the ethnocultural group. The ethnocultural group is difficult to define. For many people ethnicity evokes strong emotions and dominates their collective identity and solidarity. To Rothschild, “the ethnic group is somewhat analogous to Robert Frost’s definition of home – the place where when you have to go there, they have to take you in” (Rothschild 1981: 6). The ancient Greeks were fully aware of the distinction between polis and ethnos. The ethnocultural self may be based on language, religion, racial differences or the more vague concepts of culture, tradition and way of life. In Eastern Europe we have ethnocultural majorities (e.g. Russians in the Russian Federation, Georgians in Georgia, Serbs in Serbia) and minorities (e.g. Chechens in Russia, Hungarians in Slovakia). The ethnocultural “selves” may be defined mainly by language and culture (Russians in the Ukraine), civilization (Chechens in Russia) or religion (Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs in Bosnia). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the nation-state, as a state where state and nation overlap, became a universal ideal.

Very often, the nationalism of an ethnocultural group (“nationalism with nation”) can more easily mobilize a pre-existing, underlying mass sentiment than a state-based nationalism devoid of ethnocultural content (“nationalism without nation”) (Smith 1971). Today, as in the nineteenth century, “ethnic nationalism proposes a radical alternative legitimation and rationale for the world political system to the prevailing statist framework” (Smith 1981: XII). The tension between statist national self-determination and ethnic national self-determination follows the nineteenth-century European pattern of conflict between states (e.g. Austria–Hungary, Czarist Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Great Britain) and nations (e.g. Italians, Czechs, Serbs, Poles, Greeks, Irish). Ethnocultural selves who are in conflict with the existing state system may be either larger (e.g. pan-Slav, pan-Turkic, pan-Islamic, Greater Serbian, Greater Albanian) or smaller (Lithuania or Armenia in the Soviet Union or Chechnya and Ingushetia in the post-Soviet Russia).

As in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe, the majority principle is ill equipped to deal with the problems of a state containing dissatisfied ethnocultural groups who demand the right of national self-determination. Where there is a permanent ethnocultural majority and minority and the majority has no incentive to allay the minority’s grievances the minority will be disillusioned with a principle which condemns it to permanent exclusion from the levers of power and influence. Nordlinger says that the application of the majoritarian principle in a plural society may even contribute to conflict exacerbation rather than
facilitate conflict regulation (Nordlinger 1972: 12). If a minimal national consensus is missing, as in Czarist and Soviet Russia, Yugoslavia, Austria–Hungary, and pre-1921 United Kingdom, the preconditions for majority democracy do not exist.

A variant of ethnocultural self-determination is “communal self-determination,” which is defined as the aspiration of a communal group to determine the sovereignty of an area which contains other communal groups without absorbing them within the national self. While, for example, in Spain the ruling majority recognized Basques and Catalans as part of one Spanish nation, the same was not true in Czechoslovakia, or the Baltic States. In interwar Czechoslovakia the Sudeten Germans were not regarded as part of the Czechoslovak nation, but nevertheless the Czechoslovaks did not accord them the right of national self-determination as a separate nationality. In Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia the ethnic Russian “settlers” were not recognized as a legitimate part of the ethnocultural self, appropriate for self-determination. Most Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians regarded the Russian residents of their states as settlers who were moved there by the Soviet state in order “to solidify conquest” (Brilmayer 1991: 200; Dragadze 1996). From a democratic point of view any exclusion of a group from national self-determination within a given territory is certainly highly controversial.

Another self for which self-determination, independence, and reunification is demanded is a historical national self, whether real or mythical. Most nineteenth-century European nationalists understood the nation they fought for as a traditional–historical community. That is certainly true for traditional nationalists who conceived of the nation as a historical personality linking past, present, and future generations and as a group whose members share a “common cemetery” (Barres in Hayes 1948: 192). For conservative nationalists, a nation was characterized by institutions and customs which represented the accumulated historical wisdom and experience of past generations (von Treitschke 1968). Liberal nationalists also defined the nation as a historical community, as a community whose members have “done great things together” and experienced “common memories, sacrifices, glories, afflictions and regrets.” The nationalists understood very well that “you cannot instill in a people a sense of kinship and brotherhood without attaching them to a place they feel is theirs, a homeland that is theirs by the right of history” (Smith 1976: 3). The historical definition of the national self was not only characteristic for nationalists of all shades and persuasions but was also shared by non-nationalists like Hegel, Acton, and Marx (Shafer 1955: 25–26; Bloom 1967: 73–75; Acton 1955). The demand for national self-determination in the name of an historic self was a powerful ingredient of German and Italian nationalism in the nineteenth century and of Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Serb, and Croat nationalism after World War I. In all these cases, the demands for the restoration of an historic state within its historic boundaries would have led to an expansion of the state beyond the ethnocultural boundaries. It would also have led (and it indeed did lead) to the oppression of minorities in the “historical homeland” (e.g. Ukrainians in historical Poland, and Romanians in historical Hungary), in the name of (historical) national self-determination.
Sometimes the history on which nationalists base their claims may be quite recent. Armenian nationalists strive for the 1920 borders of the Treaty of Sevres, which comprised today’s Armenia, Nagorno-Karabach, and parts of Eastern Turkey (Toloyan 1995). Croatian and Slovak nationalists of the 1980s aimed to restore the “historical” nation-states of World War II and Russian nationalists of the 1990s want to return to the “historical” boundaries of the Soviet Union (or Czarist Russia).

Sometimes the national self is at least partially determined by geography. In many nationalisms territory plays a pivotal role. Belief in natural frontiers like seas, rivers, and mountains facilitates the crystallization of a national identity. A good example is Ireland: the fact that Ireland is an island facilitated the consolidation of a strong national identity. Sometimes geographic distance contributed to the creation of new nations by accelerating differentiation in culture, lifestyle, ideology, and economic interests. The growth of an American and an Australian nation are two striking examples. Some national identities are based on identifications with rugged mountains – the Maronites with Mount Lebanon, the Druze with the Jebel Druze, the Kurds with mountainous Kurdistan, and the Berbers with the Atlas Mountains. The geographic definition of a nation that “deserves” national self-determination also leads to non-democratic results because it meant that for Irish nationalists self-determination for Ireland as an island is legitimate, while for Ulster it is not; that self-determination for the Indian subcontinent was moral, while for Portuguese Goa it was not; that self-determination for China excludes self-determination for Hong Kong. Spanish nationalists also refuse to accept the right to self-determination of Gibraltar, while Moroccan nationalists refuse to grant the same right to Spanish Ceuta and Melilla. Nothing is democratic about “geographic” self-determination.

Nationalists very often regard the “national self” as something permanent and indivisible. The German nationalist Heinrich von Treitschke rejected any notion of self-determination for Alsace Lorraine: what mattered was the “higher right” of self-determination of the German people as a whole (Kohn 1965: 6). The notion – common to many nationalists – that the nation is indivisible, stands in startling contrast with historical–empirical reality. The perception of nations as indivisible is based on the fallacy that nationhood is something permanent. In reality, nations come and go, and national identity may expand, contract, or disappear. Perhaps the reason for the sanctity of the indivisible nation is rooted in the hidden knowledge that all nations are divisible.

In Eastern Europe the idea that the nation and the national territory is “une et indivisible” is common to extreme nationalists whether Russian (who want a Greater Russia), Serb (who want to see a Greater Serbia), and Pan-Turkists who reject any “partition,” “separation,” and “balkanization” of the Turkic-speaking Muslim peoples. The same belief in indivisibility is common to Hungarian, Romanian, Albanian, and Azeri nationalists.

Another democratic problem area with regard to who is the self concerns the differentiation between “natives” and foreign “settlers.” In 1918 the French rejected a plebiscite in Alsace–Lorraine because between 1871 and 1918 there
was an exodus of French natives and an influx of German settlers. The Turks perceived the Greek Cypriots as settlers on an island which they regarded as an extension of Turkish Anatolia. The Third World majority in the UN refused to grant the inhabitants of Gibraltar and the Falklands the right to self-determination because it saw them as foreign settlers on native Spanish and Argentinian territory. POLISARIO opposes the participation of recent Moroccan settlers in the Western Sahara in a plebiscite which would determine the fate of the territory. 

The problem of the legitimacy of recent settlers to be part of the national self is a “hot” political issue in the three Baltic countries and in some of the other former Soviet Republics. In all these cases Russian settlers are seen as intruding into an ethnic homeland and endangering the dominance of the titular nation. Even in Abkhazia where the Abkhaz are a small minority, the Georgians who make up the largest group were viewed as foreign intruders. Who is a settler with no legitimate rights to be included in the self and who is not? An important question to determine is whether there is a “critical date.” When does a settler cease to be a foreigner with no rights to national self-determination and become a native part of a self with full rights to national self-determination? Time is important, but on the question of the critical date there is no agreement. The Gibraltarians who have inhabited the colony for 250 years are considered to be “settlers” by the UN, while the much more recently settled Fiji Indians are accepted as part of the Fiji self.

The critical date for the Jews in Palestine appeared in the now defunct “Palestinian Covenant” that recognized only the presence of those Jews (and their descendants) as legitimate who were in the country before the Balfour Declaration (1917). Thus the right of all other Jews (indeed the vast majority of Israel’s Jewish population) to participate in Palestinian self-determination and even stay in the country was denied. In the Baltic States, many nationalists regard all the Russians who settled after the 1940 Stalinist conquest as foreigners who should leave or stay without having citizenship rights.

In recent years the issue of the right of indigenous groups (e.g. American Indians in the US, Inuit in Canada, Sami in the Scandinavian countries) to self-determination has loomed large in debates on the topic. While the “settlers” were often excluded from the “national self,” the indigenous population demanded to be recognized as a separate “national self,” or at least to be accorded a special status within the general national self. The UN Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (2007) declares that “indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (Daes 1966: 53). Erica-Irene Daes (1966) regards the right to national self-determination as largely “internal.” She recognizes the right of the indigenous peoples “to negotiate freely their people’s political status and representation in [emphasis mine] the states in which they live” (53, 55). From a democratic point of view this solves part of the problem, though not all of it. It does not solve the democratic problem if the members of the group do not want to be part of the state in which they live, a state that was founded without their consent and whose institutions
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and constitution were established without their participation. Many of them were and hence remain “involuntary minorities” in states they do not regard as their own.

The goals and means of self-determination

Sometimes people confuse self-determination and independence. The 1960 UN Resolution on Colonialism mentioned independence, free association, and integration as possible and legitimate goals of national self-determination, but Portugal’s misuse of these options during the 1960s and 1970s (when it argued that its African colonies chose integration with Portugal as “overseas provinces”) caused the UN to view national self-determination and independence as synonymous. Although national self-determination has, since World War II, mostly led to independence, it has sometimes led to different patterns and formulae.

Self-determination, of a colony for example, may take the form of independence, unification with another territory, attachment to an independent state, some form of association or complete integration with the mother country, or preservation of the colonial status. The examples are numerous: in free referenda, Puerto Rico voted again and again for association with the United States, thus granting its inhabitants US citizenship, democratic rights, an elected governor and legislature, and the option to vote for independence at any time. Alaska and Hawaii opted for statehood within the United States. Greenland and the Faroes have chosen autonomy under the Danish crown. The Falklands and Gibraltar voted to remain British colonies. Until 1958, French Africa’s leaders almost unanimously opposed independence and supported a federal or confederal French–African community as the proper goal of self-determination. They wanted liberté, fraternité, and especially, égalité for the Africans as French citizens within one political community. In the same way the leaders of the Central Asian Republics (with the exception of Kyrgyzstan) opposed independence at least until late 1991. They “backed Gorbachev in his demand for a strong center” (Gammer 2000: 125). We may conclude that “any political status freely determined by the people constitutes modes of implementing the right of self-determination” (Kiss 1986: 168).

It is democratic to offer a choice between different goals of national self-determination, but quite often the most popular goal was not presented as a choice. Cyprus in 1960 could choose between independence and the continuation of British rule. It could not choose enosis, unification with Greece. Dutch West Irian was offered the choice between continued Dutch rule or annexation by Indonesia, but the option of independence was denied. The British Cameroons could vote for “unification” with French Cameroun or annexation to Nigeria, but not for independence. British Togo, too, was denied the option of independence. It could continue as a British Trusteeship Territory or join Ghana, the former British Gold Coast colony.

Another question concerns the ways and means of ascertaining the wishes of a population. Almost all the means of self-determination are flawed from a
democratic point of view. Plebiscites in a clearly delimited territory are one tool for achieving national self-determination. They were widely used in Europe, especially after the French Revolution, during the unification of Italy between 1848 and 1870, after World War I and most recently in the early 1990s in Soviet and Yugoslav Republics who opted for independence. We know very well from the history of the twentieth century that plebiscites are very often used by dictators. Crucial questions – such as who has the right to vote, what the questions up for vote should be, who supervises the plebiscite and whether the plebiscite is irreversible or is a reversible plébiscite de tous les jours – can be (and have often been) manipulated quite easily.

A different method of achieving self-determination is through representative institutions or institutions claiming to be representative. Independence was granted to many colonies (e.g. Gold Coast, Tanganyika, Sudan, Nigeria) on the basis of an official request by the territory’s Legislative Council. The Soviet of autonomous Nagorno-Karabagh decided in 1988 to secede from Azerbaijan and join Armenia. In the same way the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia decided in 1994 on independence from Georgia. It was the “national congress of the Chechen people” which declared in 1990 the independence of Chechnya in the name of self-determination. In Czechoslovakia it was the parliament in 1994 which decided on independence for both parts of the federation. But there may be serious democratic problems with this method as well. We know that the Sudanese Legislative Council did decide for independence for the whole of Sudan, despite the fact that there were hardly any representatives from the African Southern Sudan. The Slovak parliament also voted for independence, though most Slovaks would have preferred to stay in a federation with the Czechs.

Sometimes non-independent governments made the decision to ask for national self-determination and independence. Most Francophone governments did so in Africa in 1960. The same is true for the governments of the Soviet republics in the early 1990s. The decision to secede in the name of self-determination was made by the state governments of Katanga (1960) and Biafra (1967). Can this be called democratic self-determination of a people?

Liberation movements themselves are often recognized as legitimate representatives of the “national self.” They are never elected to do so in any formal sense, but prove themselves to represent “the people” by waging an efficient political and military campaign. That holds true for the PLO, the FLN in Algeria, FRELIMO in Mozambique, SWAPO in Namibia, the EPLF in Eritrea, the ANC in South Africa, and most recently the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Kosovo. Some observers disputed the representativeness of some of these guerrilla movements. Though there is no point in refuting their representativeness, it is important to emphasize that their recognition is based on popular support gained by armed struggle, rather than on elections and plebiscites.

It is possible to differentiate between self-determination “from below” by elections, plebiscites, or mass-based guerrilla movements and “self-determination from above” by rulers, oligarchies, non-representative parliaments, and elitist movements. One may also start a guerrilla war with a small band “from above”
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and end up with mass support “from below.” That seems to have occurred with
the KLA in Kosovo. How many people have to support self-determination to be
considered true representatives of the popular will? There is no ready-made for-
mula or answer. Demands for national self-determination may often be coun-
tered by arguing that the proponents of self-determination are an unrepresentative
minority. All governments opposed to secessionist national self-determination
have argued in that way.

Another way to affect self-determination is by sending investigation commis-
sions. The Big Powers (in 1948) and the UN (in 1950) sent commissions of
inquiry to Eritrea. In 1961, the UN did the same with regard to Ruanda-Urundi.
Similar consultations were also conducted in disputed Asian territories (West
Irian, Bahrain) or where the UN wanted first-hand information about the wishes
of the people (Sabah, Sarawak). The British sent commissions of inquiry to the
Kenyan NFD in 1962 and to Rhodesia in 1972 (the Pearce Commission) in order
to consult the population of those territories. These commissions ascertained the
wishes of the population through public hearings, meetings with delegations, and
written petitions. The NFD commission, for example, reported it had met 40,000
people in public hearings, heard 134 delegations, and received 106 petitions. The
commission may come up with clear-cut evidence, as it did in the NFD case
when it established that 87 percent of the population would opt for Somalia if
they were given a free choice to attach themselves to either Kenya or Somalia.
The commission may also come up with an ambivalent and divided opinion as in
the Eritrean case when there was no conclusive evidence about the wishes of the
Eritrean population. The divisions in the Eritrean population were reflected in
the commission reports. The only option ruled out by the UN commissions on
Eritrea was partition, but all the other options – independence, federation with
Ethiopia, and complete fusion with Ethiopia – found supporters in the investiga-
tion commissions. Ironically, while the clear-cut findings of the NFD commis-
sion that the NFD population wanted to join Somalia did not lead to separation
of the NFD from Kenya and its fusion with Somalia, the UN decided to hand
over Eritrea to Ethiopia in spite of the strong opposition by the Eritrean Muslims
(and some of the urban Christians). From a democratic point of view, deciding
on the fate of a territory by consultation of a few and not the election of the
many may raise some eyebrows.

There are numerous other ways of achieving self-determination. One is self-
determination by petition, as was done in Eupen-Malmédy in 1920. Another is
self-determination by a ruler who supposedly reflects the wishes of the people.
In India (1947) this was how the traditional rulers of the princely states decided
whether to opt for India or Pakistan. In Kashmir and Hyderabad, this procedure
led to bloody conflicts.

In most cases, the carrier of the struggle for national self-determination is the
population, or part of the population, of the national self per se. But, sometimes,
third parties have a decisive say. Such is also the case when national independ-
ence comes through military conquest by a third party (e.g. the Indian inter-
vention in Bangladesh in 1971 or the British conquest of Ethiopia in 1941).
In the case of Libya in 1949, the UN had a decisive say in Libya’s becoming independent as “one whole.” The decision on Eritrea’s union with Ethiopia was, in final analysis, more a UN than an Eritrean decision. In many of the irredentist cases the major champion of national self-determination is not the population involved but the neighboring state. Examples are Somalia and the Ogaden and NFD, Morocco and the Western Sahara, Togo and the Victoria Region of Ghana, Zaire and Cabinda, or Lesotho and the Soho area of South Africa.

An important problem in ascertaining the wishes of the self is how to make the affected people aware that their votes or opinions may be crucial to their futures. There are indications that in Togoland and the Cameroons this was not always done.

The right of secession

In the twentieth century, many nations gained independence through separatist self-determination (e.g. Poland, Norway, Ireland, Iceland, Czechoslovakia in 1918 and Slovakia in 1993, Slovenia and Croatia, the former Soviet Republics, Panama, Pakistan, Eritrea, and Bangladesh), while many other movements for separation were defeated by the power of the state (e.g. the Southern Sudanese, Kurds, Sikhs, Tatars, and Tibetans).

It has always been disputed whether the principle of self-determination encompasses the right of secession. In the early twentieth century there was an interesting debate on the issue in the socialist movement. Lenin’s pre-1917 writings strongly supported the right of secession (Lenin 1951: 112), while Karl Renner, Otto Bauer, and Rosa Luxemburg argued for national “internal self-determination” within existing states (Bauer 1924: 291). For Lenin, self-determination could not have any other meaning besides “political self-determination, political independence, the formation of a national state” (Connor 1984: 40). Here lies the ideological root for the constitutional peculiarity of the USSR which, in its 1924, 1936, and 1977 constitutions, included the right of each Union Republic “to freely secede from the USSR.” What may have been lip service in the past made it easier for the Republics to realize the right of secession in the early 1990s.

Jefferson and Lincoln were in favor of the fullest democracy but opposed secession by self-determination. Many scholars argue that even Woodrow Wilson opposed separatist self-determination and that his Wilsonian principles were only intended to democratize the multinational states and to prevent territorial changes without the consent of the population involved. Thornberry says that to this day the American position is that “the existence of a sovereign and independent state possessing a representative government effectively functioning as such to all distinct peoples within its territory, is presumed to satisfy the principle of equal rights and self-determination as regards those people” (Thornberry 1989: 876). Communist China opposed any right of secession of its minorities by bluntly declaring that the right of self-determination is “that of national majorities and not minorities” (Thornberry 1989). Statist nationalists opposed ethnic separatism, arguing that the “national self,” which they defined as the
nation-state, is an indivisible organism. Documents published about the San Francisco Conference in 1945 reveal that those who drafted the UN Charter, which declares “the right of all peoples to self-determination,” did not support self-determination by secession. There was an understanding that the right to self-determination conformed to the purposes of the Charter “only insofar as it implied the right of self-government of peoples and not the right of secession” (Emerson 1969: 300). The 1960 UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries talked about “the right of self-determination of all peoples,” but regarded it as incompatible with the UN Charter to discuss “any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of a country.” The 1970 UN Declaration of Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States says that “the territorial integrity and political independence of every state is indivisible” and that nothing should be done “to dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity and political unity of sovereign and independent states” (Murphy 1980: 45–46). In the 1990s the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe while referring to the cases of Croatia, Bosnia, and Chechnya again denied the linkage between national self-determination and secession. They opposed the secession of the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs and of the Chechens but supported internal self-determination in the sense of linguistic and educational autonomy and the right to have their own “national” symbols (flag, anthem).

“Maximalist self-determination,” which includes the right of secession, is opposed by statists and supporters of the status quo as undermining international order and stability by legitimizing revisionism in international politics. That kind of argument was for years advanced by Israeli (and maybe also Arab) opponents of Palestinian independence by self-determination. That is also a major argument of the governments of Iran, and Turkey against national self-determination for the Kurds. Secession is sometimes also rejected because it may lead to “trapped minorities” in new “nation-states” (e.g. the Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo, the Russians in the Baltic States, the Ukraine, Moldova, and the Central Asian States or the Armenians in Azerbaijan) and “stranded majorities,” when wealthy minority regions secede in order not to share their wealth with less fortunate regions (Buchheit 1978: 30). Another argument against separatism through national self-determination is that “no truly objective criteria exist for establishing the identity or limits of the nation, or even for ascertaining unambiguously the national will.” For this very reason, “it is impossible to distinguish in general terms between those secessionist or irredentist movements whose rebellions against the established order are justified and those that are not” (Mayall 1983: 89).

There is no question that the doctrine of states’ rights has become a central principle of the international legal order, but it remains equally true that “nationalists have been destroyers of states as often as they have been associated with the construction of states” (Friedrich 1963: 565). Supporters of the right to secession argue that the right to national self-determination without the right to secession is like democracy without elections. They believe that the democratic values
which underlie the right of self-determination contain the right of a people to withdraw from a state if they wish to do so, particularly if they have faced discrimination and oppression in the state from which they want to secede. Arend Lijphart would argue that in plural societies where assimilation is resisted and elite cooperation (consociationalism) is impossible because of historical enmity, partition or separation become the only viable alternatives (Lijphart 1977: 44–45). The right to secession is seen as a variant of the right of self-defense from an oppressive system and as such it can convincingly mobilize traditional democratic principles like the social contract, “the consent of the governed and the right of rebellion.” Representative of this attitude is Connor Cruise O’Brien who attacked the sovereign legitimism, which treats the boundaries as more sacrosanct than the lives of stigmatized peoples (O’Brien 1971). Many supporters of the right to secession concede that not all groups can be granted that right, but that is no reason to oppose all groups who seek secessionist self-determination. In Buchanan’s words: “one doesn’t have to allow everything just because one allows something” (Buchanan 1991: 102). They would not deny that the separatist self-determination of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, Hungary, the Baltic States, and Ireland in post-World War I Europe has left many minorities in the newly created nation-states, but they would argue that it makes a difference whether 60 or 20 million people regard themselves as oppressed minorities. The same holds true for the recent independence by self-determination of states like Slovakia, the Ukraine, Moldova, and Kazakhstan. Usually, the supporters of the right to secession will limit this right to cases where there are “compelling reasons” to secede. “Candidates” who have compelling reasons to secede may be the Southern Sudanese, the Kurds, and the Chechens who suffered oppression in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey (the Kurds), the Sudan (the Southern Sudanese Africans), and Russia (the Chechens). The supporters of the right to secession totally reject the concept of the indivisibility of states and the notion that the integrity of the state is an absolute value. There can be compelling reasons for secession such as if the physical survival or the cultural autonomy of a nation is threatened, or if a population feels it would be economically excluded and permanently deprived. Michael Walzer would go further and grant the right of secession to any distinct community whose fight for separation enjoys overwhelming popular support (Walzer 1977: 93). There are even some scholars who regard all talk about anarchy and instability brought about by the right to secession as cynical rationalization of statist power interests (Forbes 1970: 677).

It is unclear whether self-determination and the right of secession are two sides of the same coin or different principles. Many attempt to reconcile the right to national self-determination with an insistent, though not always consistent, rejection of the right to secession. This “establishment approach” is strongly statist-conservative and opposed to secession. National self-determination is often perceived as a positive principle, while separatism has the reputation for being negative and disruptive. For this very reason, that which is positive national self-determination for one party frequently becomes negative separatism for the other. One way to support self-determination but oppose secession is...
simply to deny the logical connection between the two. Others go so far as to see in secession a distortion or even a negation of the principle of national self-determination, because it destroys the “national reality.” Another more practical way to avoid the intellectual embarrassment of opposing self-determination is to deny that the demand for secession is raised in the name of the majority and therefore to oppose the demand as a distortion of “true” self-determination. Thus the Serb government denied that the KLA in Kosovo in any way represented the Albanian population.

Emerson wrote that “the sword of self-determination is sharp when severing the colony from its metropolis. However, its reverse side is blunt and unavailable when minorities within the former colonies seek either their own independence or union with more desirable brothers across the frontier” (Emerson 1969: 300). That is certainly the experience of all secessionist or even autonomous minorities in the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans, and Central Asia. Leaders who oppose secession by self-determination do so without rejecting the principle of national self-determination. They argue at one and the same time that they support the ideas of liberty, democracy, and self-determination without being compelled to recognize the right to secession. As always, some are sincere and some are cynical about the possibility of reconciling self-determination and opposition to secession, but self-determination is too legitimate a value to be openly challenged.

Some leaders have come to the conclusion that the right to national self-determination may very well mean or include the right to secession. A major argument for secession is based on the notion that a people who did not consent to be included in a particular state has the moral right to decide by itself and for itself whether it wants to stay within the imposed boundaries. Another related rationale for secession is the denial of participation in government to a particular group. Albert Hirschman (1978) suggests the alternative of “voice” and “exit” for groups in a state. Those who have no voice may very well insist on their right of exit.

Separatism everywhere has been justified as a legitimate response to oppression. Such was the case in Ireland, Poland, the American colonies, colonial Africa, Bangladesh, the Baltic States, Eritrea, East Timor, and the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. That logic makes the demands of the Kurds and the Southern Sudanese for secessionist self-determination historically and morally right. One can argue quite logically that a group would not “wish to go through the very considerable trouble of disrupting the unity of a state” if it is not oppressed in one way or another (Beran 1984: 23).

On viability, irreversibility, and the domino theory

A major issue in the debate on national self-determination is the minimal or optimal size of the nation-state. Political philosophers since Plato have been divided over their preference for large or small states. Mazzini and Marx thought that only large nations should have the right to national self-determination. For
Mazzini, only a large nation could have a distinct mission, while for Marx, only a large nation based on a sizeable market and rapid capital accumulation could create economic progress. Others presented opposite views. Kant and Rousseau, for instance, denied that liberty and equality could be achieved in a large state. They argued that only in a small community could decision-making be democratic and the volonté générale ascertained. The basic disagreement between advocates of large and small states is reflected in attitudes towards the interpretation and implementation of national self-determination. The supporters of large states would be reluctant to legitimize small units to break up large states in the name of self-determination. Many opponents of the right to secession through self-determination argue that to confer the right of independent statehood to every people, however small, would create thousands of non-viable states. Basically, the opponents of small states argue that mini-states lack the military power to defend themselves, have insufficient political standing to make their independence meaningful, and cannot use economies of scale to achieve development and wealth. Boris Yeltsin argues that way against the secession of the ethnic minorities (e.g. Tatars, Chechens, Ingush) from the Russian Federation by saying that “people cannot live by sovereignty alone” (Coulmas 1993: 85). In his eyes, a host of mini-states will perpetuate instability, dependence, and poverty. There are presently dozens of independent mini-states (e.g. Barbados, Bermuda, Brunei, Kuwait, San Marino, Andorra, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Malta, and Luxembourg), and their proliferation is a nightmare for many supporters of big states (Blair 1967). They talk about the dangers of infinite divisibility and are haunted by “epidemic” separatism. Anthony Smith confirms that “there is a demonstration effect of other successful ethnic nationalisms” (Smith 1981: 151). The Pakistani UN delegate, who, in the Bangladesh debate of 1971 warned that “there will not be a Bangladesh only in Pakistan, there will be a Bangladesh everywhere,” represents this “epidemic” point of view (Buchheit 1978: 106). The opponents of secession approvingly quote Colonel Edward House, Woodrow Wilson’s advisor during the post-World War I peace conferences, who recalled that “no tribal entity was too small to have ambition for self-determination” (Buchheit 1978: 65). Basically, the opponents of secession who want viable states say that once “things fall apart,” and the “center cannot hold,” “mere anarchy is loosed upon the world” (Yeates in Young 1976: 460).

There is, however, a different point of view which says that small homogenous states have done quite well in history. The “small is beautiful” school of thought would see in large states more alienation, bureaucratization, and repression, and in small states, more potential for genuine self-government, participation, and spontaneity. In one of their studies, Dahl and Tufte came to the conclusion that there is no correlation between size, economic viability, and political survival (1973). To demonstrate how the viability argument may indeed be questionable, one could go back to Alfred Cobban’s classical work The Nation State and National Self-determination, first published in 1944. In this book, Cobban presented the examples of Iceland and Malta to show the absurdity of national self-determination for non-viable entities. Today both are legiti-
mate members of the international community, as are dozens of other states of a
similar size. Forbes represents an even more extreme point of view that even
mini-states like Monaco, San Marino, and Andorra do no harm to anyone. He
regards the call for “viable” states as irrational and insincere and as based on the
power interests of the larger powers and on their reluctance to grant their minori-
ties the right to secession (Forbes 1970: 670–679).

There is no doubt that nationalists frequently rationalized expansionism and
plans to “swallow” small nations by resorting to the slogan of “viability.” In the
nineteenth century, German nationalists like Fichte, List, and Treitschke thought
a united Germany could only be viable if it included sizeable territories of the
country’s neighbors. Hitler’s Germany rationalized expansionism as a quest for
Lebensraum, and so did Tojo’s Japan. The viability argument also serves oppo-
ents of secession in another way. They may argue that the whole is not viable if
the part secedes. The United Nations was ambivalent on the issue of state size.
On the one hand, the UN, in principle, rejected secessions and welcomed unions,
but, on the other hand, it refused to limit self-determination to territories with a
minimal size or a minimal population. Accordingly, the UN for many years, in
principle, favored national self-determination for colonies like Pitcairn, Tokelau,
and Nieu Islands that have a few thousand inhabitants, but rejected secessionist
postcolonial self-determination for Kurds or Southern Sudanese who number
millions.

Nevertheless, even the minimalists accept the need for a required minimum
size of territory and population. They also have to face the question of how small
is small and how small is too small? Otherwise, one may reach the absurdum of
self-determination for two individuals. To demand a minimal viability is quite
logical; the problem is that it is a sheer impossibility to reach consensus on the
viable minimum. Kamanu, an African scholar not opposed to secession, agrees
that “like individual freedom, collective freedom has its limits. The right to self-
determination cannot mean the freedom of every self-distinguishing ethnocul-
tural group to secede” (Kamanu 1974: 360). That means that even the most
generous interpretation of the principle of national self-determination leaves out
small peoples. The UN Charter promises national self-determination for all peo-
bles, but all peoples will never have the right to self-determination.

Another question inherent in the concept of national self-determination is
whether self-determination, once decided upon, is a “one shot affair,” (Pomer-
ance 1982: 75) or a plébiscite de tous les jours (Renan 1882: 58). Is the decision
of a people to belong to this or that nation and nation-state reversible or irrevers-
able? A recognized right to reversibility may bring about constant changes in the
international state system, an unending chain of border adjustments, and may
prevent the consolidation of a stable world order. The right of reversibility will
also immediately raise the question of how often the population of a territory
will have the opportunity to reverse its decision: once in a century, every decade,
every year, every day? If reversibility is denied for the sake of order and
stability, self-determination for one generation may very well mean the denial of
self-determination for future generations. If a people’s decision is irreversible,
does that people not become a prisoner within legitimate, self-determined bound-
daries with no way to escape once the conditions have changed? Kedourie cannot
resist asking if the right to national self-determination without the right of revers-
ibility is not, from the point of view of future generations, as arbitrary as con-
quests and secret diplomacy (Kedourie 1960: 62–91). In fact, it is not easy to
argue that in an age where divorce is permitted, employment relationships can
be terminated, and governments can be voted out of office, that people should
not have the right from time to time to reconsider under which sovereignty they
want to live (Beran 1984: 25).

In general, the status quo powers insist on irreversibility of self-determination,
while the revisionists demand reversibility. In 1792–1793 France annexed Nice,
Savoy, Avignon, and Vennaissin after plebiscites were held in these areas. Once
they became a part of France, it was deemed a crime punishable by death to call
for a reversal of that decision by a new plebiscite. In the American Civil War,
the North opposed the secession of the South because it regarded the decision by
the states to form a federal union as irreversible. In 1871, German nationalists
denied the population of Alsace–Lorraine the right to self-determination because
what mattered for them was that, in the past, the population had made an irre-
versible decision to attach the area to the German empire. Whether this historical
decision is true or fictitious is debatable, but what is clear is that, for the German
nationalists, the wishes of the people in 1871 were irrelevant. One may very well
conclude that irreversible self-determination is hardly more democratic than
non-self-determination.

Conflicting principles

Another problem area is the relationship between the principle of national self-
determination and other basic norms and values of international politics. Even
the staunchest supporters of the right of peoples to self-determination do not
claim that the right to self-determination is necessarily superior to other rights
and principles in all instances.

Both the UN and OAU Charters contain an inherent contradiction between
the principle of national self-determination and the right of states to preserve and
defend their territorial integrity. The UN Charter calls for the “right of self-
determination of peoples” and states its opposition to any attempt aimed at the
partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a
country” (Buchheit 1978: 86). The conflict between the right of states to territo-
rial integrity and the right of nations (or peoples) to self-determination has its
roots in the beginnings of modern nationalism in the late eighteenth century.
Two hundred years after the French Revolution, this basic contradiction between
states and peoples remains a fundamental problem of the international commu-
nity, whether we speak of Russia, India, China, Spain, Canada, Great Britain,
Sudan, Iran, and Iraq.

Sometimes, the very existence of the state – not only its territorial integrity –
is invoked as a higher value than national self-determination. In the mid-
nineteenth century, the Hungarian nationalist leader Kossuth told a Romanian
delegation, which came to plead for national self-determination for the Romanians in Hungary, that their demands were unacceptable: “Shall Hungary not then be a state? Shall each of the nations inhabiting it demand a separate state on its own account? With such principles either Hungary will break up or the sword will decide” (McCartney 1934: 17). How similar did Soviet and Yugoslav leaders sound when they declared any secession to be a mortal danger not only to the integrity but also to the very survival of their states.

Another international principle which may conflict with the right of peoples to national self-determination is the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states. The norm of non-interference clearly conflicts with external support for secessionist self-determination. Supporters of the principle of national self-determination and the right to secession argue that every people has to gain its own liberation without outside interference. Very often, however, nations cannot achieve secessionist self-determination without a certain amount of outside support, ranging from full military intervention (as in the case of India’s invasion of Bangladesh or NATO’s intervention in Kosovo) to international diplomatic recognition (as in the case of Slovenia, Croatia, and the Baltic States that achieved recognition by the Western powers). Without some outside intervention, the peoples of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires would not have gained their freedom, the oppressed peoples under Nazi rule would not have been liberated, and the process of decolonization would never have succeeded. The denial of outside support for secessionists fighting for self-determination constitutes support for the central government in its suppression of secessionist movements. This kind of non-interference is thus diametrically opposed to the principle of self-determination, at least in the eyes of the peoples fighting for secessionist self-determination.

The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states has always been of doubtful morality. Non-interference may have meant continued oppression whether in Hitler’s Germany, Pol Pot’s Cambodia, Amin’s Uganda, or Apartheid South Africa. In the nineteenth century it was regarded as perfectly legitimate for Palmerston’s and Gladstone’s England to assist peoples in the Balkans who rose up in arms against Ottoman oppression. Non-interference may not only conflict with national self-determination, but may actually mean the abandonment of peoples to an oppressive fate. Walzer has the moral sensitivity to justify intervention in cases of “enslavement and massacre” (1977: 90). Secessionists (e.g. the Kosovo Albanians or the Chechens) fighting for independence can often rightly claim to have suffered enslavement and massacre. Sometimes the principle of national self-determination is pushed aside because it conflicts with the security of a particular state or with the requirements of international peace and stability. After World War I, self-determination was not granted to the Southern Tyrolese, Sudeten Germans or the people of Alsace-Lorraine because the territories involved were regarded as vital to the security of Italy, Czechoslovakia, and France. After World War II the Soviets opposed any idea of granting the Baltic States the right to self-determination because they insisted on the
proven strategic importance of the Baltics for the defense of the USSR. In general, the right of nations to self-determination is very often diametrically opposed to the internationally recognized right of states to self-defense. Austria was denied the right to join Germany because a Greater Germany was perceived as a threat to international peace and security. Events in Central Europe in the 1930s illustrate the fact that national self-determination may indeed be exploited to undermine international peace and security. In the name of national self-determination, Hitler ordered his troops into the Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Lloyd George put it bluntly: “We should not push the principle of self-determination so far as unduly to strengthen any state which is likely to be a cause of danger to European peace” (Umozurike 1972:16).

Other principles which may collide with the right to national self-determination are nonviolence and the principle that international agreements have to be observed (pacta sunt servanda). In almost all separatist cases, the people fighting for self-determination can expect success only by resorting to violence against the military, the police, the courts, and the bureaucracy of the central government. Kedourie’s argument that any attempt to change the political map according to the principle of national self-determination of ethnocultural selves may be a “brutal and sanguinary affair” is certainly accurate. Sometimes, the wish to homogenize the population of a territory and to conform pro forma to the principle of self-determination may lead to expulsion of peoples from territories with mixed populations (“ethnic cleansing”), thus changing the boundaries of peoples instead of the boundaries of states. Robert Lansing was right that the principle of national self-determination has caused “enough despair, enough suffering and enough anarchy.” The question remains whether without the implementation of the principle there would not have been even more violence and oppression. Separatists are those who rebel against the legally recognized status quo. They are revisionists in the sense that they want to revise the legal order, including laws, constitutions, and international conventions. Their revisionism has to run counter to the pacta sunt servanda principle of international law.

The analysis of the concept of national self-determination has shown that a sweeping identification of the principle with democracy is simplistic. Questions arise as to what is the “national self,” who determines what it is, and what are the goals and means employed to determine national self-determination. Further queries relate to problems of viability, reversibility, and conflict with other principles. The overall picture that emerges is complex and often confusing. The results may be democratic, but they may also be non-democratic, and at times even totalitarian.

Note
1 On the post-decolonization approach which developed with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia see Blay (1994); Simpson (1996); Rady (1996); Giuliano (2000).
References


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5 Competing national identities and democratization
A theoretical and comparative analysis

Enric Martínez-Herrera

Most existing political systems face harsh conflicts, even existential doubts, due to failures in fostering identification among their subjects with the extant political community. In many contexts, such failures give rise to several well-known problems – ranging from

1 ethnic exclusion and conflict; to
2 social upheaval against alienation; and
3 subsequent social and political destabilization; to
4 sharp but stable political cleavages; to
5 racism and insurgent extreme-right movements; to
6 undermining civil rights and political liberties; or
7 providing obstacles to the democratization of political systems; or even
8 risks of involution in unconsolidated democracies.

These sociopolitical problems give rise to several questions. Is democracy viable in multicultural, multiethnic, and even plurinational political systems (that is, in the majority of existing countries)? Which definition of citizenship – e.g. ethnic or civic – best suits the democratic polity? In a related vein, should the political system be responsible for fostering a particular nationality in the first place? Furthermore, what type of legitimation predominates in the political system – namely, ‘national’ or ‘democratic’? – as some researchers ask themselves even in today’s Germany. Only some of these dilemmas will be examined here, but all of them suggest that identification with the political community is of great relevance for the functioning of a polity.

This chapter examines both theoretically and comparatively some implications of the identification of political elites as well as ordinary citizens with the political community for the prospects of democratization. It contends that this identification is a key dimension of political belief systems. It begins by surveying and further developing theoretical arguments that attribute to this dimension of political culture a causal impact upon such macro traits of political systems as regime type – democratic or otherwise. It thus provides some basic conceptual definitions that set the terms for the subsequent analysis, while simultaneously highlighting that, although identification with the political community is in fact a
basic dimension of political culture, empirical inquiry into its contours and content has been paradoxically neglected.

The chapter continues by drawing on international historical comparisons in order to theorize about the consequences of identification with political communities at a macro level. These consequences affect two general structural dimensions of political systems: the political community and the political regime. The first concern leads us to analyze the relevance of such identification for the persistence of political systems – i.e. their ability to survive, keeping territory and population intact.

Then this study turns to examine the impact of identification with the political community on the type of political regime, a less obvious implication that until recently was overlooked by the literature on democratization. It postulates that a weak identification with the political community – one challenged by other projected or already existing political communities (e.g. irredentism) – can explain, to a large extent, the reluctance of political, economic and social elites towards democratization in multicultural and/or plurinational societies. The hegemonic discourse since the fall of ‘real socialism’ tends to consider that liberal democracy will work well in every country, regardless of other conditions. Even so, there are solid, empirically based reasons for considering this to be little more than wishful thinking. However, more social-scientific research is needed in order to adequately answer this empirical question.

The chapter concludes with a reflection on a hypothetical causal relationship between both sources of legitimacy of political systems (i.e. ‘nationalist’ vs ‘democratic’). It postulates that it is possible to trigger a ‘virtuous’ circle between them: on the one hand, identification with the political community could facilitate the perception of a ‘common good’, which in turn could improve the performance of the political system; on the other hand, a good performance of the political system could foster collective pride, which in turn could strengthen such identification. It thus suggests that a process of democratization accompanied by accommodation to demands for self-government, in explicit exchange for loyalty to the polity, can trigger a process of reciprocal legitimation between a given political regime and the existing political community.

**Political community and identification with the political community**

We define a ‘political community’ as a group constituted by all the individuals ruled and represented by the structures of a political system (cf. Easton 1965). In a democratic system, the political community refers to the entirety of its citizenry, or *demos*, while in a non-democratic system, it refers to the entirety of passive subjects. We prefer the concept of political community to that of nation for two reasons: first, because it allows us to focus on real (i.e. material) rather than ideal (i.e. imaginary) projected political communities; and second, it allows us to avoid hair-splitting ideological, partisan quarrels about what a ‘nation’ is.\(^2\)
We build upon David Easton’s work (1965) to argue that any political unit, and especially a ‘sovereign’ political system, can benefit from having its individual members – particularly those belonging to the political class – identify with it; conversely, any political unit can face persistent problems if there is an internal challenge to its sovereignty. The legitimization (or lack thereof) of the existing political community can be considered a resource capable of being mobilized by political actors. It provides latent support in the form of predispositions that can be mobilized in certain circumstances, depending upon the needs, the organizational capacities, and the structure of political opportunities that political entrepreneurs and the citizens themselves face in a given political conjuncture.

The more common term, ‘national identification’, does not always encompass the above-described sentiment. The political communities of states – and other levels of government – can enjoy the support of their populations without being generally regarded as ‘nations’. For instance, survey research demonstrates that the British identify strongly with Great Britain even though, historically, the term ‘nation’ has been used in the British context in order to refer to England, Scotland, and Wales as often as to Great Britain. Similarly, survey research shows that most Spaniards identify with Spain, even though they are more likely to consider it a ‘country’ than a ‘nation’ – whatever these two terms mean to them. It is plausible that the political, propagandistic handling of the category ‘nation’ may help or hinder the development of support for a community conceived as such. However, the chief concern of this analysis is about potential support, tout court, for political communities, support that may exist with or without people imagining these communities as nations.

Identification with the political community as a basic dimension of political cultures

Identification (or not) with the political community is one central dimension of any political culture. Its core position within mass political belief systems stems from its ability to account for the dynamics of political structures and political processes (Verba 1965; Elkins and Simeon 1979). Influential authors have assumed that identification with the political community is a ‘fundamental assumption’ that should be fulfilled for a political system being able to be either stable (Verba 1965) or democratic (Rustow 1970). In Dankwart A. Rustow’s view, this implies, at least, that the existing political community is not challenged by any significant alternative. In the following sections I argue that the degree of loyalty and subjective commitment to the political community bears consequences for the processes of inclusion of demands, performance, stability, and persistence of the political system – both on its political community basis and on its form of regime.

It has been even suggested that identification with the political community can be considered as the main criterion of demarcation among political cultures because it is a primordial political asset (cf. Laitin 1988). An analogy can speak...
for this point of view. During the process of personality formation, identification with certain agencies (e.g. the parents) takes place first in relation to the adoption of the ideas they uphold – the identification acting, thereby, as a sort of filter to any further acquiring of other values (Percheron 1985, 1993). Similarly, it is plausible that many of the individual preferences stem from the prior identification with a social group – from among the several to which an individual usually belongs (Laitin 1988). Even more so when it is known, thanks to the research on political socialization (Percheron 1985, 1993; Erikson et al. 1991), that national symbols are chronologically the first political objects that receive children’s attachment in Western industrial societies. Primordial identification with – and affection to – a group or collective should lead, consequently, to the adoption of many of the political values shared within that collective.

Nonetheless, there are also scholars specialized in political culture research that entirely ignore this cultural dimension (conspicuously, Wildavsky 1987; and Lane 1992). Perhaps their neglect might obey an unconscious ethnocentrism, since that identification is usually taken for granted in the societies where those scholars work (the United States). It is also worrying that empirical validation of the relevance of this parameter has been much overlooked even by scientific schools regarding it theoretically. This state of the art comes out as negligent, especially when it is aimed to develop models of analysis with universal validity, and all the more so, external validity.

**Orientations towards the political community as potential support to the polity**

David Easton and Sidney Verba concur in postulating that the population perception of the political system as legitimate includes the attachment to its political community.¹ Let us recall Eastonian distinction between ‘diffuse support’ and ‘specific support’, where the former is made of a mainly affective nature, unconditional in practice, and long term, while the latter is instrumental, outcome-dependent, and short term (Kornberg 1990). According to this typology, diffuse support to the political system as a whole, based on the belief that it is the most appropriate morally, constitutes a reservoir of loyalty that allows the polity to overcome periods of wide population unrest due to a perceived bad performance. I shall slightly amend this proposition by considering that the reservoir of loyalty is there to be activated or not, as political resource, depending on the needs, the organizational capabilities, and the structure of political opportunity that political entrepreneurs and the citizens themselves face in every particular conjuncture.

Remaining in Easton’s analytical framework, support to the political system can be analytically decomposed as oriented to three types of objects: the political regime (rules of the political ‘game’), the political community (the set of ‘players’), and the authorities. The attachment to the political society over which the polity sustains itself and acts, is thus one of the pillars of that generic loyalty. For identification with the political community is one chief motive leading
groups with disparate political aspirations to readily accept their belonging to the
system when their demands are unsatisfied most of the time – all the more so
when disagreements crystallize in stable cleavages and those groups are recur-
rently, even structurally, in a minority, i.e. the side of the political losers (cf.

Following other distinctions (Verba 1965; cf. Elkins and Simeon 1979: 132),
attitudes concerning the political community take place on two dimensions. On a
vertical axis there is identification with its generic conceptual and symbolic rep-
resentations, since it is an ‘imagined community’ towards which individuals
develop affective feelings – despite the fact that individuals will never even
know more than a small portion of those who compose that community. Note
that I generalize the use of Benedict Anderson’s ‘imagined community’ (1983)
to any political community (beyond the self-perceived ‘national’ ones). This is
because, as said above, I assume that an attachment towards a given political
community can exist even if this is not named ‘nation’.

On a horizontal axis, there are the affective bonds between individuals and
between groups composing the community, namely, feelings of interpersonal
and intergroup trust and solidarity (Verba 1965; Elkins and Simeon 1979: 132;
Inglehart 1990; Putnam 1993; Muller and Seligson 1994). For the sake of delimit-
ing the study object, however, I will focus on the first dimension – the vertical
relationship between individual and imagined political community. However, I
do not rule out beforehand the possibility that the second dimension may hold a
place among both the causes and the effects of vertical identification.

This is, in essence, the approach to the subject of identification with the politi-
cal community from the socio-psychological tradition of political science. The
fact is that for 40 years practically nobody has challenged Easton’s point of view
on this regard. The almost innumerable studies quoting his work assume his view
without a single amendment, and only on very odd occasions try to refute it. Iden-
tification of subjects or citizens with their political community is attributed, at
least, that they accept its existence as well as their personal or group belonging to
it. Paraphrasing the definition utilized in reference to the legitimacy of political
regimes, support to the political community would consist of a moral conviction,
more or less elaborated and theoretically rationalized, held by the common people
as well as the elites, that it must be so (cf. Lipset 1981; cf. Linz 1978).

Identification with the political community and persistence

It has been said that nationalism is a contemporary phenomenon, coined in the
nineteenth century (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990). Since then, talking of
‘nationalism’ while referring to identification with the political community is
almost unavoidable – although that term covers only some varieties of the latter.
Nevertheless, identification with the political community – ‘national’ or other-
wise – has not ever had the same repercussion.

Before national states – as it is preferable referring to the usually called
‘nation-state’ (Brubaker 1996) – there were a large array of political formations.
We find commitment with political communities, for instance, in small democratic societies such as the San (Bushman), the Yanomama – where the community is not only ‘imagined’, but also daily experienced – or in political organizations closely associated to a religious faith, such as Islam during its periods of thicker unity. Yet there have also been historical political systems in which the existence of such a class of feelings was weak, diffuse support being essentially oriented to authorities and regime, such as the loyalty to monarchy, traditional institutions, or, eventually, the perceived ‘charisma’ of a given chief (Weber 1978) – this would be the case in medieval and modern Europe (Hobsbawm 1990).

Notwithstanding this, since the national revolutions and the spread all over the world of what we could denominate the ‘nationalist doctrine’ loyalty towards the political community tends to be omnipresent as the base of its persistence (Gellner 1983). Within this historical context, the surviving on the long run of a political system – inasmuch collective sovereign authority – depends largely on the loyalty to the political community. This is because other unifying factors are much more costly (coercion) or potentially much less sure (instrumental support, based on interested calculations, usually on the short run).

Nevertheless, there is not much satisfactory evidence bearing witness to this dependency of polity persistence on identification with the political community. Many processes of self-determination in which states have broken up are known. Of course, we can suspect (ex post facto) that the loyalty for the previous political community could not have been that strong. As a matter of fact, however, we do not know for certain which of the many varied reasons that could have made the ad hoc ‘self-determining electors’ show a preference for secession were those actually priming – nor even whether those electors had a strong affect to the will-be political community.4

Fortunately, a clarifying study on the vote in the 1995 Québec constitutional referendum sheds light on the question reinforcing our hypothesis. Paul Howe (1998) has demonstrated that, in that paradigmatic Canadian province, national identification is the dominant cause of support for ‘sovereignty-association’ (a concept, by the way, rather vague) vis-à-vis other factors recurrently considered by the literature, namely: retro- and prospective economic evaluations of this province, and the perception of an improvement of the situation of the French language in Québec (Martin 1994; Nadeau and Fleury 1995, inter alia). In other words, (affective) feelings towards the Canadian and Québécois political communities prevail over considerations of a rational-economic nature or, even, over the effect of an important cultural fact.

Howe’s research shows even more categorical results. With the support of suitable statistical techniques, he convincingly argues that linguistic and economic evaluations, actually, depend closely on national identification and the very support to independence. In other words, national preferences are also the cause – rather than the effect – of those judgements. Each of the sectors, the ‘sovereignist’ and the federalist, rationalizes a posteriori economic and linguistic evaluations that are actually the result of prior, ‘irrational’ affective attitudes.
Identification with the political community and democracy: a non-recursive relationship

Identification with the political community, moreover, can impinge on another basic and general characteristic of the political system – its political regime dimension. Dankwart A. Rustow (1970), Robert Dahl (1971), Juan J. Linz (1978), and more recently other authors have pointed out the difficulties that a feeling of alienation with relation to the political community involves for the instauration and survival of democracy. A fundamental question that emerges in many societies undergoing a process of democratic transition or consolidation is: Are nationalism and democracy compatible in plurinational political systems?

Dankwart Rustow contended that ‘national unity’ is the ‘single background condition’ for a transition to democracy. According to him, this means that ‘the vast majority of citizens in a democracy-to-be must have no doubt or mental reservation as to which political community they belong to’. His reasoning, somewhat imprecise, is that ‘[d]emocracy is a system of rule by temporary majorities. In order that rulers and policies may freely change, the boundaries must endure, the composition of the citizenry be continuous’. For further clarifying, he added that democracy ‘is the product less of shared attitudes and opinions than of responsiveness and complementarity’, it does not need ‘a consciously held opinion and deliberate agreement’, and it ‘is best fulfilled when national unity is accepted unthinkingly, is silently taken for granted’ (Rustow 1970: 350–352).

Thus, Rustow’s ‘political unity’ implies that the existing political community is not challenged by alternative political communities among its members, but also that national identification is not especially intense – in sharp contrast with the typical nationalist populism or authoritarianism ‘national unity’ discourse.

David Beetham further develops some of these arguments. ‘Certain measure of national unity’ could be necessary, in the first place, because for existing freedom of speech and association, a disposition to coexistence is indispensable. Second, because ethnic differences may easily be politicized and sharpened, since they constitute an accessible and profitable resource of political mobilization to win elections. The combination of intolerance, the ‘winner takes all’ formula (majority electoral system), and the existence of structural ethnic political majorities may lead to civil war and secession. Albeit this way of reasoning is quite simplistic, facing a risk of such a scope, autocracy may appear the only remedy (Beetham 1994).

For that very reason, the concern of a significant section of society – often actors with a considerable real power – about the state’s unity disturbs some scholars of the transitions to democracy in plurinational polities such as the Russian Federation. Echoing Rustow’s argumentation, Archie Brown (1996: 254) contends that ‘an authoritarian state or empire in which [there] is no agreement on the part of the overwhelming majority of citizens on [its] boundaries […] is, at best, enormously handicapped and, at worst, doomed to failure in an attempted transition to democracy’. In his opinion, a consolidated democracy can persist despite the challenges about its borders from minority nationalisms (Belgium,
Canada, Great Britain), while those very challenges can be fatal for a young democracy.

Facing centrifugal pressures perceived as a threat to the state integrity – especially if it is considered that democratic governments are handling them inefficiently – the actors with this preoccupation may well think of dictatorship as a better guarantor. For one thing, they can assume that an autocratic regime will be more efficient in the use of coercion means. Second, however, and more interestingly, they can well attach to the autocracy a greater legitimacy insofar as it is able to safeguard what is fundamental for them – the political community. This can look politically incorrect from a Western standard, but can make complete sense to them.

The reasons for this anxiety can be twofold: on the one hand, the very attachment of governmental and social elites to the existing political community, which can be expressed as identification with the political community. On the other, a more prosaic concern not about an abstract entity, historical, or even spiritual subject (say, ‘the nation’), but a practical, instrumental concern about territoriality and other sources of wealth and power. In a world of modern states the preoccupation for the integrity of a political community usually involves a concern with ‘territorial integrity’. It is plain that states’ territorial and population integrity implies keeping the scope of the political system jurisdiction (to begin with, its own territory and subjects) as well as some key sources of that power (economic and demographic resources). This second sensitivity can be either cynic or not, depending on whether its instrumentality is either oriented to preserve vested private interests or the interests of the political community somewhat understood.

To exemplify this, during the Spanish democratic transition there were, at least, two failed attempts of coup d’état towards authoritarianism – in 1978 (‘Operación Galaxia’) and 1981 (‘23-F’). The main cause seemed to be that many actors – among them the coupist military – believed that there was a process of disintegration of the political community (a scenario that had been announced by Linz in 1978). In that period, periphery nationalist claims, the territorial power transfers from the central government to the new ‘autonomous communities’, and a dramatic escalation of nationalist terrorism (whose aim could well be, precisely, the return of dictatorship) were accumulating (cf. Pérez Díaz 1993). Notwithstanding the national feelings of the Spanish coupist, it is also worth noticing that while in the ‘velvet divorces’ between Norway and Sweden and between Slovakia and the Czech Republic the ‘claimant part’ was the less wealthy one, in the case of Spain the strongest peripheral nationalism came from the Basque Country and Catalonia, at that time two of the three richest regions of the country.

However, in spite of the importance of conflicts on the political community in many scenarios around the world, the main literature on transitions to democracy overlooked them until democratization reached Eastern Europe. This was justified (to some extent) when almost all the countries forming the ‘third wave’ of democratization (in Southern America and Southern Europe) were undisputed
‘nations’ – with the notorious exception of Spain. Nevertheless, following the wave through Eastern Europe and Central Asia it is no longer possible to leave these conflicts aside, as several scholars have pointed out in an, alas, \textit{ex post facto} manner (Bova 1991; Schmitter with Karl 1994; or Bunce 1995).

Schmitter (with Karl 1994: 178) has admitted that sensitivity to what is different about Eastern Europe may provide a useful corrective to the [...] [transitologist and consolidologist] literature which is centered on southern Europe and Latin America. Most importantly, it may encourage comparativists to pay more attention to variables that have [...] been previously taken for granted, e.g. the existence of relatively established national identities [...].

Stressing now the importance of this factor, he contends that

\[\text{one thing is becoming abundantly clear [...] that without some prior consensus on overarching national identity and boundaries little or nothing can be accomplished to move the system out of the protracted uncertainty of transition into the relative calm (and boredom) of consolidation. This places the ex-Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in radically different sequences and it is not inconceivable that all of their ‘inheritor republics’ will be paralyzed by a similar imperative.}\]

Bunce (1995) also contends that national identity and nationalisms, as well as the issues related to the state’s borders, and the strength and international role of the state, are two of the crucial factors in the democratization processes. Although with significant variation within this group of countries, ‘ethno-politics’ seems to be a typical trait of Eastern European societies, often divided by various linguistic, phenotypic and religious cleavages with their respective ethno-identitarian correlates.

O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) focused on the agreements between the elites ruling the autocracy and those leading the main opposition. Hence Bunce contends that ‘the addition of Eastern Europe to comparative studies of democratization has [among other] one major benefit [...]. It introduces serious questions about the reigning paradigm of democratization’ – which she qualifies as ‘elitist’. From her point of view, the popular mobilization has been of chief importance for the demolition of the socialist autocratic regimes, and ‘ethno-politics’ and nationalism have stood out among the main resources for that mobilization.

Considering her criticisms, though, one may wonder whether the transitologists’ interpretations of the Spanish transition underestimated the mass nationalist politics at that stage or it is Bunce who undervalues the virulence of the nationalist conflicts in Spain – she alludes explicitly to Spain, arguing that those conflicts where not so serious as in the East – to avoid recognizing that the agreements among elites may channel the nationalist conflict accommodating it within democracy (Bunce 1995: 125–126).
No doubt, the conflicts about state borders, the degree of political inclusion of the various cultural groups, and the quality of the relations among them, as well as, quite often, the relations with other states concerned with ‘irredent’ minorities, may dramatically impinge on the outcome of the democratization process (Linz 1978; Offe 2000). The outcome can be a settlement of those questions either ‘from above’ – the agreements between leaders – or ‘from below’ – by popular pressure – enabling the consolidation of the new democracy. However, the outcome can also be an involution towards autocracy if the borders of the political system are at risk and the coercive power of the authoritarian coalition surpasses the power of democratic mobilization.

While, within this frame, contestation of the political community by minorities is a problem, no less of a problem is the duplicity in the definition of its identity and the identity of its subjects when the dominant nationality tends to consider that the political system is more its own than the remainder’s (Brubaker 1993, 1996). It is important to clarify institutionally the position of the political system vis-à-vis relations between nationalities or ethnies. In the 1990s there was great uncertainty in the Russian Federation due to the contradictions between the nominal anti-nationalism and the allegedly real Russo-ethnic nationalism of the autocratic period, as well as a tendency to govern in fairly unpluralistic terms.

The road towards democracy requires a clarification of the definition of the political community to be able to rule with clear criteria when handling serious problems: the fact that different national minorities reject the sovereignty of the state – Chechnya being the tip of the iceberg – and 25 million ethnic Russians reside in former Soviet Republics (out of Russia) is an habitual leitmotiv of chauvinist political parties. Hoffmann (1998) suggested a resolute non-ethnic conception of the Russian citizenship and the Russian state as a solution. The same would be advisable for countries like Hungary, the Baltic Republics, Romania, Ukraine or Kazakhstan, to mention but a few of many cases (see Brubaker 1993).

I have enumerated some of the problems democracies facing a challenge to their political communities may encounters. Nevertheless, some authors have suggested that democracy could be the most appropriate regime to settle conflicts within contested political communities. Schmitter with Khagram (1999) argue that

[The processes of democratization – especially those of consolidation – can make the de-escalation and management of racial/ethnic/tribal/national conflict possible and, thereby, contribute to the foundation of a viable multicultural unit in the longer term. […] Only a consolidated democratic form of governance is likely to assure enduring political stability in such multicultural societies.

They argue that as long as the challenging groups have access to channels of representation and accountability enabling them to express their demands, they will have fewer incentives to resort to force, and thus political leaders will find the negotiation of compromises easier.12
In contrast, according to my argument above on the autocratic rulers’ concerns about political community persistence, I would rather amend the view of Schmitter and Khagram. I would hypothesize that compromises about the political community should come before or, at the latest, during the very process of democratization. To begin with, the existence of autonomous territorial governments can be of assistance in local nation-building (Linz 1993; Brubaker 1993; Martínez-Herrera 2002). These policies can originate new problems of ethnic marginalizing, now affecting minorities within the minorities, which are simultaneously often a majority in the larger polity (cf. Linz 1981; Brubaker 1993, 1996). Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, peripheral nationalisms can employ territorial political institutions for advancing secessionist goals, as the former Yugoslavian and Soviet federal units have shown (Brubaker 1993; Linz 1993; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Offe 2000). Although multiplying the territorial constituencies may help buy time during the crucial period of uncertainty of the transition to democracy, these measures can easily be overwhelmed by subsequent political trends.

However, autocratic rulers can preview the risk of this sort of outcomes and thus be reluctant to open Pandora’s box. As a constructive alternative in the road to democracy, they need the possibility of secession to be at least ruled out – or minimized – beforehand by the means of ad hoc guarantees – i.e. a bounded uncertainty. As a minimum, these guarantees should include an explicit, formal and public renunciation of to secession claims by the organized peripheral nationalist opposition – acting in a vicarious fashion on behalf of their group of reference – in exchange for some of their demands (e.g. territorial and/or functional political autonomy over certain competences).

The considerations above relate individual feelings and behaviours – identification with the polity (or its weakness) and some individual behavioural consequences – with behaviours and outcomes at a collective level – the attaining and consolidation or the loss of a democratic regime. Those feelings can be considered as a resource for mobilization that could be used by the opposition, by the government, or by both of them. Depending on the distribution of those feelings and other factors of the structure of incentives in the current and foreseeable scenarios, those resources can be called (or not) into action by strategic oriented actors, or there can even be attempts of equally strategically oriented actors to cancel them out beforehand, by means of constitutional pacts (moving to democracy) or by impeding the risks of freeing their use (maintaining autocracy). Certainly, the involved political leaders can also hold their own feelings of collective identification, which impinge on their preferences and goals. In any event, the hypothetical linkage between identity and democratization has been put as a rather indirect causal chain.

The link between individual preferences and collective outcomes is always indirect, obviously complex, often the product of specific combinations of conditions (thus requiring statistical interaction, ‘contextual’ or ‘chemical causality’ explanations rather than additive ones). It is therefore difficult to capture this causal connection in a straightforward account. Nevertheless, I have sought to
show that identification with the political community meets enough requirements as to be taken into account in general theories of authoritarianism, democratization and democratic consolidation.

**Identification with the political community and attitudinal support for democracy: a virtuous circle?**

This section explores some causal linkages between identification with the political community and other background probabilistic conditions for democratization – attitudinal support for democracy. Subjective support for democracy is similar to identification with the political community in that it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for democratization. This is because sometimes it cannot be efficiently mobilized to ensure democracy whereas other times democracy is achieved despite an absence of that variety of support. However, it seems that this attitudinal basis makes this outcome more likely, again, as both an available resource and a constraint for political action. Thus, let us survey how support for the political community and support to democracy can influence each other.

The relation between both sources of polity support might form, under certain conditions, a ‘virtuous circle’, capable of being described with a circular diagram of arrows. A successful democracy might contribute to generating, in the long run, positive evaluations of the political community, and this pride, in turn, stokes identification with such a community. On the other hand, this identification could also produce images of common good enabling the citizenry to have faith in a good performance by the democratic regime, a confidence that would lead them to support democracy. To begin with, I argue for each of these hypothetical causal paths. Then I reflect on some additional conditions for the second causal chain – from identification with the community to the perception of a ‘common good’ and then to the preference for democracy.

Whereas in certain multiethnic or plurinational political systems a – latent or explicit – conflict is observable between the existing political community and democracy, on other occasions a certain harmony can exist. One of the key explanations for this divergence seems to rest on the conception of that community. The polities regarded as ‘belonging to a nationality’ (Brubaker 1996) push the members of the remaining ethnic or national groups towards a feeling of banishment, thus stimulating a separation desire (cf. Bloom 1990). On the contrary, the polities defined primarily in ‘civic’ terms, and purposively at least,
neutral with regard to ethnic majorities and minorities, respectful of multiculturality, can invite all their members to feel integrated (cf. Greenfeld 1992; cf. Keating 1996; Martínez Herrera 2002).

Although the German Federal Republic (GFR) does not portray a plurinational nature, it is integrated by conspicuous immigrant minorities (Turks above all) and autochthon minorities (Gypsies, Danish, Jews). It is divided, moreover, along regional and dialectal lines, more than it would seem from outside, even more so since the incorporation of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) Länder (Le Gloannec 1996; Jarausch et al. 1997; Offe 2000). Ethnic nationalism is in force among many Western Germans, who exclude both the traditional and the relatively recent minorities from their views of the nation. Their perception, however, does not exactly fit the pan-Germanism of the nineteenth century, since it often excludes the Eastern Germans. Nevertheless, there are also many that believe in a nation in constitutional terms, Europe-anist and multiculturalist, inclusive – there is also, of course, an array of intermediate positions; however, the closer to the ethnic pole, the vaguer and more concealed they usually are.

Notwithstanding these facts, the demoscopic studies by Noelle-Neumann have demonstrated that, from the 1960s to the 1980s, the relation between national identity and support for the democratic institutions and processes became increasingly strong (the constitution, the legislation, the governing bodies, the party system, etc.; quoted by Jarausch et al. 1997: 41). After Germany’s defeat in World War II and, especially after the denunciation of the terror committed in their name, the German people tended to appear humble, or at least very prudent in the expression of, and perhaps the feeling of their national pride. However, Noelle-Neumann’s findings suggest that the intensity of the Germans’ identification and pride in their political community has grown insofar as it has been able to be rethought as a democratic, pacific, prosperous and relatively equitable society. Thus, if the North Americans of 1960 based their national pride on their political institutions (Almond and Verba 1963), this could also be true for the Germans of the 1980s, convinced of the impossibility of going backwards. From this perspective, democracy might have rescued the political community, at least, until the reformulation of German identity by the 1990s.

The relation between individual democratic support and identification with the political community can be a non-recursive one, though. As said above, it can also be the case that attachment to the community can assist democracy. By means of international comparison, Noelle-Neumann also shows that ‘a sense of national identity and pride [in it] is an important determinant of social and political integration and stability’ (Jarausch et al. 1997: 41). While the effects of democratic stability and harmony on the prosperity of national feelings are plausible, it is also likely that identification with the polity helps citizens to willingly consent to government rule. Autocratic governments can use this property of identification with the polity, but democratic governments perhaps need it even more. Since democracies tend to minimize the use of coercion, they have greater need for a willing compliance more than other types of regime. The point is that a usual reason for willingly accepting collective rules of decision-making – be
they autocratic or democratic – might be a feeling of ‘common good’ (a quite polysemic term, as Dahl (1989) points out), the sharing of a solidarity deriving from the idea of political community.

The reasoning is straightforward: when someone feels that he/she shares some goods with the rest of the citizens, and with other political parties, regional, sectoral or class interest groups, it is easier for her/him to accept decisions that are opposed to her/his own desires. In Hoffmann’s plea advising a prompt resolution of the identitarian ambiguity of the Russian Federation, besides other above-mentioned issues, what stands out is the idea that politics and policies require a collective, public point of reference (the res publica). He considers of great importance ‘the authority deriving from collective consciousness’ – from identification with the polity. He relies upon collective identification as a way to overcome the problems of egoism, parochialism, nepotism, clientelism and, in short, corruption, which devastated Russian political and social life during the 1990s. Thus, he implicitly attributes to this identification the quality of throwing light upon the notion of something like a ‘common good’.

It is not infrequent to find those who rely on the identification with the whole society – a notion coming close to that of political community – as a solution to a number of trends towards anomie. One of the expectancies that social thinkers posit on support for the political community – usually understood as national identification – is a remedy to certain anomie and an instrument to invest political institutions and rulers with a greater moral authority. What is sought is that citizens coordinate and cooperate more so that society on the whole becomes stronger. Besides, the political system, as the structure articulating the public will of that society, becomes stronger with its members’ support. Inwards, society and political system should have the strength to be able to handle big projects of cultural, economic, politic or social reform; outwards, one thinks in terms of its projection between and through other societies. Identification with the community could help to achieve that collective consciousness and the subsequent belief that a common interest exists – although, to be truth, it does not guarantee this outcome. In actual fact, it is possible to feel an intense identification with an abstract notion of community while developing egoistic intra-communitarian relationships (typical paradoxical nationalist right-wing behaviour) (cf. Brubaker and Cooper 2000).

Another of the expectancies consists of producing ‘social mobilization’, in the sense that society develops more as such, acts as a fluent and dynamic collective, leaving back tendencies to fragmentation and particularisms of any sort. To attain this, it could seem necessary to orientate of its members towards common goals (e.g. Le Gloannec 1996, reflecting on Germany; Hoffmann 1998, on the Russian Federation). Not only does the political system require social support to undertake major projects, but society could also need that political system to be able to improve itself. The very society may need to feel itself more united around a common enterprise so that its inner relations become more fluent. Perhaps support for the polity can be useful as a palliative in the face of the scarcity of interpersonal and intergroup trust, informal reciprocity rules, and plentiful and wide institutionalized relationship networks. In the presence of
weak ‘social capital’ (Putnam 1993, 1995), the perspective of a general interest, although this maybe a much more abstract thing, could help to surmount the almost complete fragmentation, the ‘prisoner dilemma’, the ‘every man for himself’, the fiercer and most unscrupulous competence.15

Indeed, we face a problem of ‘cooperative behaviour’ – i.e. those forms of collaboration oriented to the collective provision of goods that benefit people regardless of whether they have contributed to their production or not (‘public goods) (Olson 1965; Hardin 1995). Although the political liberalism inspiring Western democracies tends to emphasize individualism, it seems that the longest-lived actual democracies are those in which certain levels of citizen predisposition to cooperate exists (Almond and Verba 1963; Putnam 1993), and more generally, in which citizens tend to think about political matters in a ‘sociotropic’ manner – i.e. in terms of what benefits the collective. Cooperation can develop, for instance, through voluntary associations – although it is possible also to argue that associational behaviour is a habit acquired through the experiencing of a democratic regime. It is reasonable to suspect that the logic of egoistic individualism that characterizes economic liberalism does not apply to political liberalism. It could be the case that liberal democracy requires another pattern that compensates that in the economy – a certain attachment to society, Aristotelian republicanism, perhaps.

One can wonder whether, besides the transversal and crosscutting predispositions and actual interactions that characterize Putnam’s ‘social capital’, a vertical subjective predisposition as it is identification with the polity could produce similar results with respect to cooperation with the political system. From political philosophy, Miller (1995) relies on ‘nationalities’ for supplying a sense of justice, similar to that of family, which affords the possibility to base, redistributive policies. According to him, ‘the conflict between morality and self-interest is softened, because in acting as morality requires, I am promoting the interests of communities whose flourishing has value for me; my action is not one of pure self-sacrifice’ (Miller 1995: 416). The analogy to family points to a situation of cooperation, with achievements benefiting their producers as much as others not contributing to their supply.

For his part, Keating (1996) contends that mutual responsibility is perceived in a family as ‘an extension of the responsibility towards oneself’. Thus, the redistribution of wealth within a political system could be seen as rational behaviour, inasmuch as within that frame mutual obligations cannot only be enforced (by means of sanctioning and rewarding institutions – another explanation for cooperative behaviour (Olson 1965)), but they can also be felt as obligations. This perception would be due to a sense of the common good and the reciprocal responsibility that flows from identification with the political community. Tackling the subject is explicitly a problem of public goods, Keating asserts that nationalisms, especially those ‘civic’ (vis-à-vis ‘ethnic’ ones), supply a sort of ethics able to unify a society that has been fragmented by the capitalist logic of the market, hence able to surmount the free-rider problem. Identification with the political community could engender affinity ties between individuals, a feel-
ing of solidarity that rationalizes (even if the genesis of this could be irrational) mutual exchange, collaboration and support, thus overcoming the logic of narrow-minded personal profit. Keating develops this argument in the domain of the legitimization of redistributive and social policies.16

I would not say, though, that these chained effects from identification with the polity to ‘common good’ perception to democratic attitudinal support have always to be positive. Again, it is possible to think that this will only be so wherever an agreement – or at least no challenge – exists about the political community. Otherwise, wherever that condition does not hold, the sign would be indeterminate (negative, positive or neutral). In this sense, some authors have suggested that in ethnically, nationally, class-wise or ideologically divided societies, cooperative behaviour can be high within each of the confronting groups. Then, the analyst should distinguish the joint work across social and political cleavages oriented towards unifying goals from the group work oriented towards partial values or interests that divide society (cf. Hardin 1995).

Conclusion

Let us conclude this chapter by highlighting its main contentions. It has emphasized that the identification of both common citizens and political elites with their political communities is a key variable of universes of political beliefs. The pioneers of inquiry into political culture and democratization placed this subject on the empirical research agenda, at least, from the coming of the ‘behaviourist revolution’. The consideration of such identification as a ‘key’ variable stemmed from its consequences for individual political action, and thus – through albeit somewhat ‘black box’ inferences about the mechanisms of social aggregation – on macro social and political phenomena such as ‘political stability’, ‘political persistence’ or ‘background conditions for democracy’. Notwithstanding such good intentions, the fact remains that empirically grounded inquiry on this hypothesis has been much neglected.

My aim here has been twofold. In the first place, to encourage political analysis to give up its wishful-thinking, positive prejudices about democracy and instead to pay the necessary comparative attention to latent or explicit ethno-political conflicts in the processes of democratic transition and consolidation. In the second place, to call for much more efforts on empirical research about this important subject. This inquiry enterprise should start from the very roots, that is, from elites’ and ordinary citizens’ political beliefs, and it must cope with the equally intricate matter of mechanisms of collective aggregation as well as the other individual and contextual factors involved.

This chapter has shown that important precedents exist that have attempted to address the hypothesis that identification with the political community has a relevant effect on the nature of the political regimes. However, these precedents have relied on indirect, often distorted information about that type of identity – e.g. proxy variables constructed out of ascriptive ethnic markers, which are not always related to identification with the political community, which is, by

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definition, a subjective trait. I have collected the main arguments in the mainstream literature on democratization in order to advocate more research in this field, and I have argued that elites’ concern about persistence of the polity –
based, to a large extent, on their own national identification – can be essential in explaining their reluctance to embrace democracy in multiethnic and plurinational political systems, and thus to account for their patterns of interaction with the democratizing forces.

Last but not the least, this chapter has proposed a hypothetical non-recursive causal relation between two main sources of system legitimacy in most contemporary democratic states – identification with the political community and democratic ideals. It has advanced a theoretical argument in favour of the hypothesis that a virtuous circle between both phenomena could be formed: on the one hand, the identification with the polity should help to produce the perception of a ‘common good’, which in turn should enhance the functioning and results of the political system; on the other hand, the good performance of a political system can foster collective pride, which in turn can strengthen identification with the polity. Consequently, I have suggested that democratization accompanied with pacts responsive to demands for self-government, especially providing that these pacts involve an explicit exchange for loyalty to the polity, can trigger a process of reciprocal legitimation between a given political regime and the extant political community.

Notes

1 Thanks to Philippe Schmitter for his comments on a previous draft, and Francesc Pallarès for his valuable insights at the start.
2 Political community also seems to be a useful term because of its applicability to multilevel government insofar as it refers to real political structures from the local to the supra-national level, whether or not they fulfil the formal requirements of sovereignty. Hence, there can be an overlap (or ‘nesting’) of political communities corresponding to various territorial spheres or levels (Martínez-Herrera 2002).
3 ‘Legitimacy’ in a descriptive and explanatory, not normative sense (see Lipset 1981 and Linz 1978).
4 I call ‘self-determining electors’ to those masses of individuals who were enabled to vote in the ad hoc self-determination referenda organized by the Allies after World War I.
5 Indeed, Beetham modifies the proposition somewhat, formulating it as ‘certain measure of unity is the more essential of the previous necessary conditions for democracy’.
6 Obviously, the rule ‘winner takes all’ should not imply a ‘tyranny of majority’, at least not in a liberal regime where individual rights have preference over collective decisions (the ‘negative freedom of Isaiah Berlin). Moreover, the existence of systems that guarantee veto rights or self-government over especially sensitive matters to minorities (e.g. Lijphart’s ‘consociational democracies’) is well known.
7 Mentioning the case of Spain, Brown (1996) argues that, in such circumstances, it was crucially important that none of the main political parties denied democratic legitimacy nor claimed a return, not even temporary, of authoritarianism.
8 See, for instance, the influential collection Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, helmed by O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986); a conspicuous exception is the work of Linz (especially 1978).
9 It is noticeable how, Spain having been a favourite or ‘flagship case’ of those studies, the question of its national integration has been overlooked.

10 Anyway, no former member country of the Warsaw Pact suffered during its transition to democracy from an either secessionist or peripheral nationalist ethnic terrorist activity paralleling that undergone by Spain.

11 Hoffmann (1998: 80) also contends: ‘The formation of a Russian national consciousness is a necessary condition, but by no means sufficient, for the emergence of a Russian civic culture’, adding that ‘The creation of a national identity in the [...] Federation is probably important for the short-term democratization as well as long-term democratization.’

12 Another optimistic view can be found in Saward (1998), who considers that democratization of political units can de-escalate ethnic and nationalist conflicts.

13 The second category seems to suit ‘ideal type’ rather than an empirical category, as it does not even seem in Canada to satisfy the major part of the Québécois francophone. Perhaps it is better suited to Switzerland.

14 Still in recent studies, such as the World Values Survey, Germans express lower levels of national identification and pride than other countries (Díez Nicolás 1999).

15 The dissemination of the values of capitalism is another reason to claim for greater collective identification – institutions such as the family and civil-society networks and cultural norms have enabled capitalism to develop, but capitalism tends to undermine them.


References


Part II

Case studies
Making and unmaking democratic opportunities in nationalist mobilization

A comparative analysis of the MLNV (Basque Country) and the BNG (Galicia)

Pedro Ibarra and Ramón Máiz

This chapter is intended to serve a dual purpose. First, to explain the main causes of success and failure of two nationalist political forces (MLNV, BNG) questioning the same nation-state (Spain); second, to elaborate such an explanation by taking into account the analytical tools of social-movement research.

So, on the one hand we want to use an analytical framework which has given excellent results in studies of social movements, but which has rarely been applied in studies of nationalism. This analytical model is expressed through the dynamic confluence of three instruments for measuring social movements from a qualitative and quantitative perspective: political opportunity structure (POS) (Tilly 1978 and Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi 1992; Della Porta and Rucht 1995; Rootess 1997); discursive frames and strategies (Goffman 1974; Snow and Benford 1992; Gerhards 1995; Gamson and Meyer 1996); and resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1987; McAdam et al. 1996). These are the three analytical tools most commonly deployed (individually or in combination) at an academic level for the conceptualization, empirical research and comparative analysis of social movements of all types: old (workers’) movements; new movements (ecologism, pacifism, feminism, etc.) and very new movements (antiracism, Third World solidarity, etc.).

The nationalist movement, however, has rarely been studied using these parameters. It is true that in the strictest sense of the term, nationalist movements are not social movements. The desire to occupy and thus exercise the political power of the state – which can in one form or another be seen in a section of many nationalist movements – is perceived as depriving them of the “purity”, in terms of objectives and organizational and strategic innovation, that social movements can boast. However, this exclusive approach is inadequate; nationalist movements are also social movements and in practice, they act like social movements; especially where their presence in the political institutions has little relevance in forming public policies, or this presence proves subsidiary to and dependent on processes of mobilization carried out outside the institutional political space by that same nationalist movement.

But as McAdam et al. (2001), point out we must also seek to go beyond an exclusive and static analysis of social movements. On the one hand, social move-
ments are just another expression of the processes of political confrontation; and these processes of political confrontation include social mobilization, national struggles, emerging conflicts in democratic transitions, etc. At the same time all these processes of confrontation have common rules and similar mechanisms and relationships in the confluence and impetus of different processes of confrontation.

And they act dynamically: these processes of confrontation have similar interrelations between players, resources and cultural and political opportunities. Certain mechanisms of connection of opportunities, identity changes, competition, polarization, intermediation, etc., connect the different dimensions (mobilizing structures, political contexts, discourses) of the life of the movements and make their action operative.

Consequently, we believe that the application of this dynamic analytical model to nationalist political movements is more than mere “loan-usage” of an external model (borrowed from social movements). On the contrary, we believe that it is a particularly appropriate model, because the national conflict is one of the most classic forms of political confrontation and national conflicts are characterized – very especially – by the fact that they establish dynamic and complex relations between an extensive set of variables related to the players and to the structures. For this reason, we think that the model is applicable to the two nationalist movements of which we wish to make a comparative study: the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG) in Galicia (Spain) and the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco (MLNV) in the Basque Country (Spain). The use of this triple framework and its interrelations may help us understand these nationalist social movements better. It may help us understand because, while both movements have emerged in the same state and have been affected by the same process of democratic transition and consolidation, the two have evolved very differently. The Galician movement has succeeded in advancing its demands, its relative position and its electoral support in Galician society. The MLNV, on the other hand, has not only failed to achieve these goals, but has actually lost electoral ground, becoming more and more isolated and encapsulated from the other Basque political forces, including the nationalist ones (PNV, EA).

The second point we want to address is directly connected to this previous statement. It is only possible for a social movement to achieve results, to make a self-favouring impact in the political system, if it can adequately tackle the dimensions referred to by these three analytical tools. In effect, political opportunity structure, discursive frames and resource mobilization explain why the movements do what they do; they are analytical tools. But at the same time, for a social movement to achieve its ends, it must use these referents properly; and they are thus also regulatory tools. Thus, a social movement (nationalist in this case) achieves its goals insofar as it knows how to adapt to (or create in its favour) a certain political opportunity structure; insofar as the framing of its discourse resonates and is in tune with the predominant social discourses; and insofar as it knows how to augment and utilize different resources (including organizational ones) which will increase its capacity for pressure and influence – and, in addition, insofar as it manages to articulate these three dimensions.
The whole concept of success – and the means of measuring it in social movements – is undoubtedly a tricky issue and one which has not been extensively studied, but it is also true that comparative “measurements” may be established of the relevance of the impact of the movements in different spheres or networks within the system (symbolic, interactive, institutional, substantive, etc.) which we shall set out in our conclusions.

1 The Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG)

The Bloque Nacionalista Galego [Galician Nationalist Bloc] (BNG) was founded in 1982 as a political front agglutinating various nationalist parties from Galicia, all of which supported radical calls for self-determination, self-government for Galicia within a confederate and sovereign perspective, as well as cultural and linguistic standardization. These small nationalist parties, which had been formed during the last years of the Franco dictatorship, were reactivated from 1978 under the auspices of the Spanish constitution. The Bloque contains nationalist parties of very varied ideological orientations, from the extreme left (Inzar) to the centre-right Partido Nacionalista Galego (PNG), with the middle ground held by the centre-left and social democrat Unidade Galega and Esquerda Nacionalista (EN). The front is controlled by Union do Pobo Galego (UPG), a hegemonic party which has completely dominated the fundamental levels of the organization since its foundation. In 1986, the BNG first entered the Galician parliament (where it initially held only a small number of seats), accepted the Spanish constitution and the “state of autonomous” contained therein and devised a strategy that included political mobilization and work in political institutions, within a wider political scenario overwhelmingly dominated from 1989 on by the conservative Partido Popular de Galicia (PPG) (with around 50 per cent of the popular vote). After 1995, the BNG became the only nationalist force in Galicia, concentrating an electorate which had previously been scattered among various nationalist parties and successively incorporating all these groups within the plural frontist organization.

Our hypothesis can be summarized as follows:

1 the BNG benefits from an opening up of the POS, but, unlike the MLNV, it has at the same time created its own opportunities by progressively adapting to the political context, through;

2 a flexible organizational format and a clear change in strategy, from an initially anti-institutional and disruptive one (“popular mobilization”) to an electoral approach and active involvement in parliamentary and local institutions; and

3 a change in framework strategy, abandoning the initially exclusive discourse (built around the “nationalism vs Spanishism” frame) of the 1970s, in favour of an inclusive frame (based on the “common project” rhetorical device) by the end of the 1990s.
The BNG is a fine example of how positive interaction between opportunities and availabilities and a strategic exploitation of the space they open up can lead, through complex organizational work and clear ideological moderation, to a progressive frame alignment which has been extended through electoral alignment at the expense of its most immediate rivals (the PSdG-PSOE).

1 A favourable political opportunity structure

The first factor – or set of factors – that explains the electoral growth of the BNG, and how it has gone from being a residual force in the Galician subsystem of parties in the 1970s and 1980s to become the second largest party in the autonomous community, is the existence, for the first time in the history of Galician nationalism (with the sole exception of the short and frustrated parenthesis of the Second Republic), of a favourable POS (Máiz 1994).

In effect, the BNG benefited from a twin opening up of the POS above all in terms of the institutions: a) the democratization of the Spanish state, the passing of the 1978 constitution and the development of the rule of law, which were to aid the organizational development of nationalism, radically reducing the costs of operating clandestinely; and b) the federalizing decentralized of the “state of autonomies” which provided institutional incentives for the reinforcement of nationalism (Máiz and Beramendi 2003; Máiz et al. 2002).

Thus, first, the emergence of a Galician scenario of competition: the Galician Xunta [government] and parliament which give substance to collective “Galician” interests, providing impetus to the “Galicianization” [galleguización] of the political forces in competition; i.e. it made structural demands for: organizational autonomy; solid leadership in Galicia as opposed to the central apparatus of the party in the case of Spain-wide parties; defence of Galician industries, etc.

Second, the regional public policies reinforced – or even created – Galician industries that had previously been broken up or nonexistent, allowing a regional aggregation of interests in fishing, the dairy industry, education, health, infrastructures, etc. In addition, this process brought into play an additional and explicit identity reinforcement: as the years passed – and even under the leadership of the Galician Partido Popular (PP) – regional Galician institutions implemented a number of policies promoting Galician culture and reinforcing the collective identity. These included the language policy; education system; defence of Galician industries against the regulation or conversion policies emanating from Madrid or the EU; calls for interterritorial solidarity and the “historical debt”; the demand for an infrastructure policy that would vertebrate the territory; the presence of public media such as TVG, with Galician-oriented programmes; the cultivation of identity symbols and myths – fiestas, music, recovery of the “historical memory”, ancestors and precursors, etc. – which all helped to create or reinforce a perception of belonging and a collective identity which had not previously existed (Máiz and Losada 1999). This underlying popular galleguismo, this sense of collective identity as Galicians, largely dual in character (see enclosed table), disseminated and reproduced by the media, set the stage
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on which all political forces had to compete, forcing them to establish a specific
response based on this common generalized area, in the heart of which the struggle for hegemony was waged. Those who stood within this area (the PPG from 1989 – when Fraga came to Galicia – and the BNG from the outset) found it much easier to compete than others, who were excluded by their lack of organizational autonomy (the so-called “branchism” [sucursalsimo]), credible autonomous leadership and defence of Galician interests against Spanish policy and this was certainly the case of the PSOE-PSdG during the 1980s and much of the 1990s.

In addition, there was the growing bilateralism of the “state of autonomies”. The crystallization of a dynamic of bilateral competition between the individual autonomous regions and “Madrid” for resources and powers as the Spanish “state of autonomies” developed, reinforced and highlighted the advantage of having non-state, non branchist forces, free from the ties of state forces, which could defend the interests of the region unhindered. The potential for blackmail exploited by the PNV in the Basque Country and particularly CiU in Catalonia underscored for the electorate the usefulness of regional forces that would defend the interests of the community, and encouraged the development or generation of such forces. The result was the emergence of the phenomenon of an additional, institutionally induced, nationalism or regionalism (Máiz 1999).

This summary of the institutional dimension of the POS also requires a particular reference to the players, as here too there were elements which proved beneficial to the BNG, above all, electoral dealignments. In effect, the BNG was to benefit from important electoral dealignments in Galicia: first in the heart of the nationalist field itself, with the successive crises and electoral collapse of all of its competitors on the nationalist ticket: Esquerda Galega, Partido Galeguista (PG), Partido Nacionalista Galego, etc. This collapse – the result of internal disputes, schisms, leadership crises and, above all repeated electoral failure – freed up the initially small but qualitatively important electoral weight of these forces, favouring the BNG’s position first as a hegemonic force and eventually as the sole one. By gradually concentrating the vote, the Bloque managed to incorporate a previously fragmented nationalist electorate (Rivera Otero et al. 1998).

But in addition, the BNG was to benefit significantly from the crisis and electoral collapse of its main rival, the PSdG-PSOE, in the 1990s. In the late 1980s, the Galician PSOE went into a period of progressive decline as the result of a range of different circumstances: lack of stable regional leadership, multiple internal conflicts (between “Guerrists” and renovators⁴), an endemic organic crisis and the multiplication of localist tensions, in addition to the patent strategic desgalleguización [de-Galicianization] of the party and its support for policies dictated by the PSOE in Madrid (in government since 1982), such as the restructuring of heavy industry and shipbuilding and the dairy quota, which harmed Galician interests and had a severe impact on the region’s weak industrial base. In addition, the party gradually abandoned its role in the world of Galician culture and the media, where it was replaced by both the PPG and the BNG. Thus the BNG, with its increasingly moderate platform, was in a position
to partially attract voters who abandoned the PSOE in the 1990s (while others swelled the abstention figures).

The BNG, nonetheless, came up against a barrier to the number of available votes it could appropriate, in the form of the Galician PP’s electoral strength of leadership, its clientelist organizational structure, and, no less important, the “Galicianization” [galleguización] of its image and discourse. From the outset, the party performed a volte-face, espousing regionalism (“Galego coma ti” [Galician like you]), gradually appropriating myths, symbols, precursors, etc. of Galleguismo and implementing “Galicianized” cultural policies (“No one can play at being more ‘galleguista’ than us”). This formula of organizational clientelism combined with its regionalist galleguismo in symbols and in the media was to prove highly effective under the strong charismatic leadership of Manuel Fraga, who managed to keep the local and provincial networks of the party united. Its electoral effectiveness was unequivocal: the Galician PP managed to gain 52 per cent of the vote, turning it into the region’s dominant party.

In addition to the political opportunity offered it by electoral disalignment in adjacent voter groups, the BNG has also benefited – albeit to a lesser extent – from the availability of allies. The party benefited from the successive availability of circumstantial allies, who explicitly or implicitly strengthened its image in public opinion, to the detriment of other forces. In the early 1980s, for example the PSOE backed the BNG – or at least did not compete openly with it – against the successful centrist nationalism of Coalición Galega, which led a surprising emergence in local and regional elections, attracting electoral support from the defunct UCD. Finally democratic-centred nationalist parties from Catalonia and the Basque Country, CiU and PNV, in a series of meetings in the late 1990s, revolving around the “Barcelona Declaration,” etc., afforded the BNG increased visibility with an important political presence statewide and – very importantly in view of the BNG’s initial left-wing platform – an image of moderation on the left-right axis.

2 Making new opportunities: discourse, organizational work and mobilization

The existence of a favourable POS does not in itself guarantee the success of nationalist mobilization; suitable political organizational work is required to activate and exploit this situation. The BNG developed a formula of supra-partisan organization in the form of a “front”, which gradually incorporated different parties, groups and independents, closely coordinated with a wider multi-organizational field.

Thus the BNG crystallized a spectacularly effective organizational format: a flexible, very politically heterogeneous, frontist structure, ranging from left-wing formations such as Inzar (the remains of Maoist and Trotskyite parties), through Esquerra Galega (EG) and Esquerra Nacionalista (social democrats) to the conservative neoliberal PNG. But this catch-all nationalist amalgam is structured and rigorously controlled using mechanisms of democratic centralism and a
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sophisticated territorial structure, by the UPG (the party with most members), which has the greatest weight in the real leadership of the party, despite the charismatic and media-friendly figure of Xosé Manuel Beiras (EN). This structure was to grow reticulately through penetration, with the progressive incorporation of the BNG’s old rivals with their original names – the PG, the PNG, EG, Inzar (MCG+LCR), etc. – under the undisputed leadership of the UPG “colonels” who adopted increasingly pragmatic positions, without at any point revising the party’s statutes or its original platform.

The BNG’s large and highly active membership achieved not only far-reaching mobilization through a varied repertoire of protest, but also generated a broad “area of uncertainty”, an extensive multi-organizational field of varied presence in civil society: cultural associations, the Catholic Church, education, environmental movements, and above all a powerful trade-union movement (CIGA) encompassing industrial workers, farm labourers and seafarers, which openly competed for membership with the statewide unions, UGT and Comisiones Obreras.

In addition, the BNG enjoyed the stable, charismatic leadership of Xosé Manuel Beiras, a media-savvy, strong parliamentarian, who cultivated an effective oratory, radical but of calculated ambiguity, and a plurality of tailormade discourses for each sector, thus projecting a powerful public image of defence of Galician interests and of belonging firmly to the galleguista tradition. Moreover, the BNG was quite successful in changing (2000) this historical leftist leader from the 1980s for a new, more moderate and centred one more appropriate to the new pragmatic turn (Anxo Quintana), facilitating in this way the negotiations and tradeoffs with the socialist party in Galicia and Madrid.

The organizational effectiveness of the BNG was therefore reinforced with the progressive abandonment of its maximalist “super-offer” strategy of the 1970s and early 1980s, expressed through popular mobilization and a disdain for local and regional institutional work, and a gradual integration into institutional parliamentary and municipal work, thus presenting itself as an increasingly moderate government alternative for Galicia in the different decision-making areas of the autonomous community, as well as in the forums of the Spanish and European parliaments.

The favourable POS was also extended not only by the strategic change and the organizational effectiveness we have seen above, but also by a radical change in framing strategy. In effect, in the 1970s the “nationalism vs Spanishism” frame proved to be sectarian and exclusive, preoccupied as it was with distinguishing “true nationalists” from “closet Spanishists”, with an extreme-left Marxist–Leninist or Maoist and anticolonialist ideology. This radicalism on the left/right axis was complemented with radicalism on the nationalist axis through an unequivocal lexicon: pro-sovereignty, confederation, even occasional rhetorical pro-independence, anti-Spanishism, self-determination, explicit sympathy for Herri Batasuna (HB), Sinn Fein, etc.

In the mid-1990s, though, the framework changed radically with moderation on both the left-right axis – there was talk of social democracy, of “the party of
the workers and middle class” of Galicia, of “centring” the country, “defence of the Galician industries,” etc. – and on the nationalist axis – the “state of autonomies” was accepted as being “capable of improvement”; sovereignty and self-determination were abandoned in the public and electoral discourse (remaining for internal consumption exclusively); all trace of separatism disappeared and the centralism of the Galician parliament as representing the interests of the country was accepted; bilingual messages were issued (“because we are interested in this country”), etc.

Let us take a closer look at this process, examining the framing strategies, i.e. the use of labels, interpretative schemas and the basic dichotomies through which the political discourse is implemented. It is important to remember that frames seek to establish a nexus of communication between transmitter and receiver, between party and public opinion, linking knowledge and recognition, echoing the preferences of the audience, and tuning in to their needs and interests. If this frame alignment is achieved, broad sectors will feel themselves to be in tune with the party’s analysis and its solutions to the problems. Success depends on the existence of a benevolent circle from a certain point in which the proposed framework is viewed as generally held common sense, an analysis shared by broad sectors as evidence (master frame) that facilitates narrative fidelity, i.e. the immediate connection between the party’s discourse and the predisposition of public opinion to accept its message. If it fails (frame dealignment), an insurmountable gap develops between the party’s discourse and proposals and the perception and common sense of the electorate, and the latter tends to wash its hands of the project. In this particular case, we shall see how initially, a purist nationalist discourse of exclusion, centring on drawing the distinction between “us” and “them”, and to an even greater extent between “authentic” nationalists and “pseudo-nationalists”, generated a spiral of purge and schism, which ignored the moderate and dual identity perception that Galicians have of themselves. The subsequent abandonment of this radicalism favoured a rapprochement and ultimately a connection with broad sectors of the electorate, and even a relative hegemony in setting the terms of the debate, so that even voters of other parties came to understand that the BNG represented the best defence of Galician interests.

We will examine the three basic tasks fulfilled by the interpretative frames used by the BNG’s discourse in the 1970s/1980s and in the 1990s: diagnosis (the identification of an event or situation as a problem, a suggestion of its causes and the element responsible for these causes – the protagonists); prognosis (the suggestion of an alternative, a solution to the problem); and motivation (repertoire of stimuli to mobilization through the dramatization of antagonism, the “us and them”, the possibilities of success, the protagonists of change and the repertoire of suitable contention, etc.) (Snow and Benford 1992; Hunt et al. 1994).

a The first stage: radical and exclusive nationalism

In terms of diagnosis, the problem of Galicia was postulated by the BNG of the 1970s to 1990s in terms of internal colonialism and imperialism: the problem
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was rooted in the colonial nature of Galicia (“an internal colony”) and the blame lay with the “Spanish imperialist state”, responsible for the cultural oppression and economic exploitation and for draining human and material resources from Galicia. The structural cause was the Spanish state itself, which, even when it was reformulated as a “state of autonomies” (“grotesque”, “opium of the stateless nations”) was still viewed as a centralist and oppressive metropolis. The EU was viewed in similar terms, as the Europe of the States, oppressors of nationalities. And the list of actors included the Spanish political parties, the Spanishist and branchist forces in Galicia and, even the “ostensibly nationalist” parties – i.e. other moderate nationalist forces (such as Esquerda Galega), guilty of erroneous analyses and policies which contributed to a perpetuation of the Galician national problem.

In terms of the frame of prognosis, the solution proposed was certainly “nationalism”, but only “authentic nationalism”, and not that of the “pseudo-nationalist forces”. It was understood, too, that the expression of the Galician nation (“Una” [One]) must lie with a single nationalist political force, representing the various interests and sectors not involved in the colonial exploitation of Galicia, in a broad front (BNG) – in other words, with that political force which, once the correct diagnosis – internal colonialism – had been made and the decisive antagonists (the Spanish state/Spanishist forces and pseudo-nationalists) had been determined, postulated the appropriate alternative model: self-determination, full sovereignty, confederations of nation-states, Europe of the peoples ... as compared to the Spanish constitution, the “state of autonomies” and the European Union. All this in an ideological contextualization marked by Marxism, or Marxism–Leninism, against Third World colonialism, in addition – in certain sectors at least – to “Lusismo”, i.e. cartographic reintegrationism favouring linguistic unification with Portuguese.

Finally in reference to the BNG’s frame of motivation and repertoire of contention in the 1970s and 1980s, we have already seen how the protagonists are the authentic nationalists, through an antagonism between Galicia and Spain (the Spanish state) and a fundamental political dialectic between nationalists and Spanishists, including “closet Spanishists”. The reference point of opposition, the “them”, thus reinforces the “us” – Galicia as a homogenous ethnic and cultural community, not culturally and linguistically plural but uniform. The subsequent repertoire of mobilization is one of confrontation, of national vanguard, and for that reason it is overtly anti-institutional (using terms like “parlamentiño” [derogatory diminutive of parlamento], “institution occupied by Spanish political forces”, etc.). The organizational format was the anticolonial and radical nationalist front, which attracted allies and references from radical Irish nationalism (Sinn Fein and the IRA) and, in the Basque Country, Herri Batasuna.

b Recent years: increasing moderation and inclusiveness

However, since the late 1980s, following successive electoral and organizational disasters (a result of increased sectarianism and schisms) this framing strategy,
following in the steps of the plural reformulation of the front (albeit ultimately against it), and the growing returns derived from moderation and ambiguity, began slowly but irreversibly to change. Moving away from its exclusive nationalism, articulated in the “nationalism/Spanishism” confrontation, the BNG now began to postulate an inclusive nationalism through a framing strategy of a “common project” for all Galicians, with or without nationalist credentials. This new discourse involved a radical moderation of the previous one, on both axes (nationalism and the left/right dimension).

First, the frame of diagnosis was drastically reformulated to exclude the anti-colonialist vocabulary. The problem was now assessed more in terms of the economic and political marginalization of Galicia, the crisis in its industries (heavy industry, shipbuilding, farming, fishing), and its comparative grievances with other nationalities and regions. Nonetheless, the essential cause remained the same – the Spanish state – although there was an emphasis on the PP’s attempts to trim down the “state of autonomies” from 1993 on. In addition, blame was also laid on the Galician Xunta, and its clientelist policy – which was seen as squandering resources – and on the EU, in terms of the Europe of the States, which institutionally marginalized the interests of regions. In terms of the players – the protagonists responsible for the problem – once again we see the Spanish political parties, but to an increasingly limited degree: above all the PP, while the PSOE occupied a progressively more ambiguous position, although there were plenty of criticisms of its federalist and autonomist stance.

In terms of the prognosis, the solution was once again seen to be Galician nationalism, although in a less exigent form, since there was no longer any mention of the pedigree of authentic nationalism, as opposed to pseudo-nationalism, but rather a broad diffuse Galleguismo, intended to incorporate even those who were not nationalists, did not speak Galician, and had no “national awareness”. The proposed alternative, although it retained the vocabulary of sovereignty and confederation, was less radical and more toned down, and however much it alluded to confederation, in electoral circumstances, it pragmatically adapted to building on autonomy and the statute of autonomy, now viewed as a useful form of political decentralization for advancing self-government. It continued, however, to postulate a Europe of the Peoples as against a Europe of the States. There was a patent reformulation of the ideological context, with the disappearance of Marxism, not to mention Marxism–Leninism, and opposition to Third World colonialism, which were replaced by the more ambiguous language of “defence of Galician industries”, the need to “centre the country”, postulating a more modulated vision: “the country in positive”. Finally, at the beginning of the 2000s, the dimension of internal pluralism emerged; a national project for “a plural country”.

Lastly, the frame of motivation, postulated by the plural nationalist front of the BNG, has abandoned the nationalism/Spanishism antagonism with a view to attracting new sections of the electorate, not only from the PSOE but even from the Partido Popular. It still, however retains the idea of a culturally homogenous Galicia, and promotes policies of linguistic standardization and espouses mono-
linguism. In the repertoire of mobilization, the extra-parliamentary “popular mobilization” was definitively replaced by “electoral mobilization” and institutional work both at local and regional level, and in the Spanish and European Parliament, in a patent effort to present the BNG as a “government alternative”. The organizational format continued to be that of a front, although tensions began to emerge between the UPG and other parties and even with the trade union, CIGA, with accusations of manipulation and control levelled against the UPG. Traditional militant assemblies were abandoned in favour of representative criteria in its functioning (2004) in the evolving increasingly party-like structure of the BNG. All this was reflected in a radical change in allies, with the termination not just of contacts with, but also references to Sinn Fein and HB, and the emergence of new agreements with centre-right nationalist parties – the PNV and CiU.

In short, the fact that the BNG went from being a marginal force to becoming a regional force in Galicia with 20 per cent of the voting average, and a party in public office from 2005 onwards, was due both to a POS favourable to nationalist parties in the institutional context of the “state of autonomies” and to the collapse of its immediate rival, the PSdG. But it was also due to its capacity for organization and leadership, together with the adaptation and moderation of the nationalist discourse, which allowed it to connect with the superimposed and dual-identity consciousness of broad sections of the Galician electorate.

2 The Basque National Liberation Movement (MLNV)

We will divide the analysis of this movement into two broad stages. One, the most important, to which we will dedicate nearly all of our account, refers to the period 1970–2002. Over the course of this long period, the MLNV gave shape to its basic discourse, its national and identitarian conceptions, its strategies and alliances. However, the most recent years, from 2003 to 2008, demand special and differentiated treatment as the circumstances have been exceptional. Starting in 2002 nearly all of the organizations of this movement have been outlawed. This has brought a significant adjustment, the scope of which we shall see, in the movement’s discourse and strategy.

The MLNV is a family of movements, a set of groups which over time have changed name or in which one name has been more common than another. The origin of this conglomerate can be found in the late 1970s when Herri Batasuna (HB) was created as an electoral platform. Over the last 20 years HB has participated in all electoral processes. The radical Basque nationalism represented by the MLNV has always been much more than just HB. It is a conglomerate in which different social groups participate, all of which are very active in a wide range of different actions: prisoners’ support groups; a trade union, environmental and feminist groups, a youth organization involved in ongoing street-based confrontation, etc. This movement/network also has a very special partner: ETA, the terrorist organization, which, among other violent actions, has killed over 550 people in the last 35 years. The organic relationship between ETA and
the rest of the MLNV is not clear; but ETA really continues to be a basic refer-
ence point in the strategy of the whole.

The MLNV asserts itself as a left-wing nationalist movement. Its aim is to
gain the independence of the Basque Country and also to establish in this new
national Basque state a social system in which the public sector and a participa-
tive democracy would have a particular importance. However some more should
be said about the nationalist project of the MLNV and its strategic consequences
and its adaptation or rejection of existing political, cultural and material
resources. Our examination of this group will be somewhat different to that of
the BNG, because the MLNV, almost without exception, has disdained any use
of these resources. For this reason our description will pay less attention to the
interactive relationship between organization and context and devote more space
to analyzing the MLNV’s rigid and non-negotiable set of convictions.

1 Nationalism and exclusion

The MLNV has opted for an exclusive form of nationalism. It proposes a nation
whose defining national borders are clear, firm and timeless; the Basque nation
is what it is; and it has always been thus. One of its political documents – “Bate-
ginez” – contains the following propositions: the Basque people has certain per-
manent signs of identity – linguistic, cultural and historical. These are the signs
that constitute it as a people. This people has been, is, and must be a nation; a
community which by reason of its signs of collective and differentiated identity
forms a collective political subject; a subject which as such asserts that for its
survival as a differentiated community, for the survival of those identity features,
it needs self-government, non-dependency and political sovereignty.

At the same time the establishment of full self-government, of independence,
expresses the achievement of national fulfilment from two perspectives: a) as a
guarantee that the constituent and differentiating features of the national com-
community will not be lost; b) as the culmination of one of those same features. In
this definition of the Basque community/nation, the feature of not wanting to be
dependent on other peoples or other nations/states is another defining feature of
the community. Claiming to be Basque and to be a member of the Basque nation
involves sharing with the other members of that nation a language and a culture
which are distinct to those of other peoples/nations (whether or not those other
peoples have their own states); and also involves sharing the desire and the will
not to depend as a people/nation on those other peoples/nations.

This means that the historical Basque territory (that which the MLNV has
decided is the historical territory) is the space where those perennial signs of
national identity occur, where that ethnic community has lived and continues to
live; a community which has transcended its ethnicity in favour of a conscious-
ness of being a nation and the corresponding demand for sovereignty. Thus the
Basque territory is the territory defined in a specific and delimited fashion
because it belongs to a specific and delimited ethnic community … and that par-
ticular ethnic community is defined as being differentiated insofar as it is resides
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in a specific and delimited territory. Consequently, if other people exist in that
territory who does not share the MLNV’s signs of national identity – the signs of
identity by which the territory is differentiated as a unique and unrepeatable
space and the signs of identity of those who claim the ethnic ownership of the
territory – then those people are only occupying that space. It is not their
territory.

Let us look then from, this conception, at the MLNV’s strategic national
options; those which are functional to its purpose and for which it appears to
have opted. We should start by stressing that in these options the treatment des-
ignated for those others who – as the MLNV sees it – only occupy the territory,
plays a central role.

The first proposal could be that of building a common identity; one which
makes these “occupants” participants in a national identity superimposed on
their other identities and compatible with them. Such strategies are complex and
make it necessary to strike difficult and unstable balances between different
identities. In any case the MLNV does not seem to have considered this strategy:
the proposed electoral process in the 1990s for its “Constituent National Assem-
bly”6 appears to confirm this renunciation, not so much because it is quite clear
that the “occupants” will be excluded from this electoral process, but above all
because the MLNV knows that neither the occupants nor many Basque national-
ists (other Basque nationalists) will join that electoral process, since the project
is associated with the project and definition of a country and its identity features
held by a specific group: the MLNV.

In this sense, this constituent project is not formulated as an inclusive project,
intended to build a national identity and a corresponding common nation, com-
plementary to other identities, involving all sectors – or at least all political
forces – in its design and practical application. Rather it is presented as the
project of a few, of a few who moreover seem quite content (or at least they do
not state otherwise) to allow their youth wings and military allies to threaten or
murder those “occupants”. We said that the MLNV already knows that those
occupants are not going to participate, because it would be madness to particip-
ate in a project protagonized by someone who seeks your disappearance. But
perhaps it would be more exact to say that they are not at all interested in their
participating.

This situation implies that, from the beginning, the MLNV has decided not to
devise an integrating nationalist project. That means that they are not concerned
that the nationalist option involves the exclusion of other “belongings” or identi-
ties. And thus their objective is not to incorporate, within a common project,
peoples, many of whom already have certain identity options (and very deep-
rooted ones in many cases) or to make them see that such options can be com-
patible with certain nationalist options (and mutually enriching). Nor of course
do they believe that their national definition must be made more flexible
(reduced or moderated), by presenting a project of the national Us consisting of
certain but in no way excessive – and much less rigid – signs of identity
conformation.
The MLNV has chosen to maintain the integrity of its features of national identity, and continues to do so, thus preventing the development of any pact that would favour a more flexible nationalism. Insofar as the MLNV has renounced the possibility of having a functional nationalist proposal, a national proposal/definition of very generic and integrating features, it might be considered to be interested in reinforcing its national option.

Consequently its particular electoral process towards the Constituent Assembly is intended to give political consistency to a national community within another community. What it seeks is to award itself a series of institutions and thus to reinforce its signs of identity.

The third option might involve functional success but would result in a serious attack on democracy. It consists of trying to impose “its” nation on the Nation; of taking a leap forward from that, “particular”, Constituent Assembly ... or at least seeking to do so; from being a space for the recognition and political reflection of the nationalist left to imposing itself as an authentic political power; as an authority that imposes its rules throughout the territory. It seems very unlikely that the MLNV has the strength it would need to impose “its” nation as the Basque nation or state. In any case if this did occur, the democratic breakdown would be so great that the result would be no less than a fascist state.

2 A strategic choice: politics and violence

There are many reasons why the MLNV in principle has not opted for the first and integrating strategic path. I will only examine one here, which I shall come back to later: the role of ETA. In this regard, it would be mistaken to take an instrumentalist view of ETA in its relationship with the other groups in the MLNV; to consider that the latter have their philosophy, their discourse, their way of seeing things and of deciding the world in general and the Basque nation in particular, and that they use ETA (or are backed by it) as an instrument for getting that discourse, that national conception, underway. This is not the case. The national conception of the MLNV is derived from the fact that it is (to the extent that it is) linked to ETA. Because this patrimonialist conception – exclusivist and anti-pluralist in national terms – of the Basque nation, is formed by the swansong discourse of ETA.

This is the discursive masterframe at stake: ETA kills because its country – its eternal and “objective” country – is dying. In the same way, the MLNV – insofar as it accepts ETA’s moribund view of the world and its lethal consequences – cannot negotiate its country. One cannot negotiate with death and one cannot negotiate something with a vocation for eternity. There is no compromise about the homeland. And with this aim in mind, anything goes: from disdain for the impure occupants of the country ... to killing them.

3 Unmaking political opportunities and discursive closing

The MLNV has articulated its discursive frame, its use of the POS and the way it has mobilized resources to achieve its objectives. With certain qualifications
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(noted below), the MLNV has not varied its discourse; it has not entered political institutions or formal alliances, and it has maintained very non-inclusive organizational structures. We must now fit these clearly immobilist options within the three hypotheses (inclusion, isolation, imposition) we have formulated for the nationalist strategies of the MLNV.

At first sight it would appear that these options fall under the second or third options (isolation or imposition), but the situation is not entirely clear. We might consider the possibility of a fourth strategy. The MLNV basically opts for isolation, through the reinforcement of its national signs of identity, but at the same time it believes that the testimony of such firm – and therefore such militant – convictions will eventually convince other political forces (and particularly the other nationalist groups) and society in general, of the rightness and fairness of its proposals. This option, which we could call testimonial isolation, remains apparently constant over the entire period. In effect, statements from the different groups in the MLNV (including ETA) systematically include calls to nationalist groups and parties to embrace its cause, moved by the purity of its nationalism and the dedication of its militants, and between all of them (radical nationalists and moderate nationalists) to begin a process, somewhat more inclusive, of national construction and sovereignty.

Nevertheless we have to note some brief juncture deviations of this dominant strategy and discourse:

• The most important came in September 1998, beginning with the Lizarra Agreement and the ETA ceasefire, when there was a real turnaround towards a process of opening up. The MLNV changed its discourse, changed its use of the political context and changed its alliances. And all this was made possible by the fact that ETA had ceased to operate, meaning that the change occurred because one of the signs of identity – the legitimacy of violence – which formed the MLNV, had disappeared. During this brief 15-month period (which ended when ETA began killing again in January 2000), the strategy of testimonial isolation incorporated some more inclusive options.

• The second deviation, and that which is still operative, makes the third strategy, that of imposition, seem more likely. The MLNV no longer seeks to convince from a stance of isolation (the predominant trend) or to open up from that position (the trend of the ceasefire and the Lizarra pact) but to impose its position from that stance. The MLNV appears finally to have understood that so long as ETA continues to be active, it will be unable to convince anyone of anything; that the continued existence of ETA and the MLNV’s connection with it has not only prevented it from developing an inclusive strategy, opening up its discourse, entering the political context and making use of the opportunities it offers, but that it has also disqualified it from the testimonial strategy.

Insofar as the MLNV in general and Batasuna, its political wing, in particular, does not appear willing to distance itself from the violence of ETA, we could
consider that it has opted for the strategy of imposition. According to its most recent proposals, it no longer seeks to convince others that it is necessary to exercise the right to self-determination in which all are supposed to participate. The MLNV is now committed to its Constituent Assembly, an Assembly elected by its people, which will be presented as the Constituent Assembly of the Basque Country. Clearly the MLNV cannot believe that it has sufficient strength to impose the decisions of its Assembly on all citizens in practice, but it may believe that through the unbearable violence of ETA and the “street violence”, the other nationalist and non-nationalist political forces, may come to an agreement with them and accept that Assembly created (if it ever is created) by a few as a representative organ of all. This is another possible scenario which we shall analyze in greater detail.

3 Testimonial isolation: history of a repeated political failure

As we have said above, there has been practically no evolution at all. This means that the period of change is different to that of the BNG. In effect, only for a few short months (1998/2000) did any sign of a change in direction appear in the MLNV – as a result of the ETA ceasefire and the subsequent pact of Lizarra. But very quickly, the initial change is halted, and replaced by more reactionary positions of even greater isolation.

If we succinctly assess some aspects of events, we might consider the following:

• *Diagnosis framing*: The scenario of Evil and its actors (good and evil) remains similar. The interesting thing to note in this supposition is that very recently there has been an attempt to extend the category of “Us”, to include the other nationalists (PNV and EA) among the “good patriots”. The scenario is not so much one of HB against the rest of the world (including all of Basque society; and including therefore Basque nationalist traitors) but Basque nationalists against Basque non-nationalists. The purpose was to try to frame the message in a (nationalistically speaking) broader system of beliefs, but the attempt failed; and it failed because of ETA. The violence of ETA realigned the game of friends and enemies back to the original positions, and once again led HB/EH into isolation.

• *Prognosis framing*: In this field we can see more attempts to create a less Manichaean discourse (independence or bust). Proposals have been developed which are more acceptable to the nationalist world at large. But once again it is ETA that prevents the development of an effective frame; ETA’s radicalism makes the discourse of the MLNV as a whole seem radical (“the friends or protectors of the radicals must have a radical discourse”).

• *Motivation framing*: The old motivating signs, those which symbolize both the strong signs of identity and the dominant motivating message, persist: “it makes sense to continue fighting because those who are fighting will win”. In this regard the world of the ETA prisoners plays a central role.
From the perspective of the POS the ETA factor has had similar consequences on occasional attempts to exploit the different political contexts: a) HB’s institutional input in the Basque parliament (when it came close to sharing governmental tasks) was frustrated by ETA’s return to violence; b) The breakdown in the system of elites, mainly between the PNV and PSOE, which worked in EH’s favour at the time of the Lizarra pact, is now of little benefit to EH, given its break with the PNV as a result of ETA’s return to violence. Thus HB, because of ETA, has once again lost the few potential allies it had gained during the ceasefire; allies on the left and nationalist allies. Despite all the more recent changes in discourse and attempts at tactical or strategic change in the MLNV, ETA has brought the process back to the original – identity and political – positions and continues to do so. In synthesis, if we assume the dominant strategic trend to have been one of testimonial isolation, then this strategy has been a complete failure, because their nationalist project is defended ever less by them, as election results show⁉ and because it is defended ever less by the others.

In addressing this last scenario, we are referring to a situation in which the isolation of the civilian part of the MLNV is accompanied by an especial intensification in unconventional mobilizations of civil groups and groups involved in violence – the violence of ETA and that of the direct street-action groups. As we said before, this strategy of radical confrontation could be considered to be intended to generate a situation of unbearable pressure and subsequent non-governability, which would oblige governments and parties either to negotiate with ETA – or with the MLNV as a whole – on the introduction of the Constituent Assembly or a similar body. Certain situations of non-governability caused in some way by ETA (political agenda exclusively dedicated to the subject of violence, systematically and inevitably unstable political alliances, overt social confrontation, etc.) may be considered as favouring the designs of ETA. If they are to work, there must exist or have existed a situation in which the only possible solution, the only “salvation” that will break the deadlock in such a dramatic situation, is to negotiate directly and politically with ETA or to negotiate ETA’s demands with its civilian champions (the leaders of the MLNV) but with ETA remaining active. We believe that such a situation has neither existed nor does it exist now; not because difficulties in governability generated by ETA’s actions do not exist, but because they do not involve a crisis of governability of such magnitude as to require a process of negotiation of this kind.

At the same time, though, more recent events and practices are generating other reactions. Over recent years there has been a spectacular rise in violent attacks – the kale borroka [street struggle] – against Basque non-nationalist politicians and other individuals.

In addition, and especially in recent years, ETA has extended its killings to politicians, journalists and intellectuals who are not linked to Basque nationalism. This situation has heightened the general fear among society and in practice, it has specifically depleted the possibilities of exercising certain political freedoms, while at the same time introducing a fascist practice and culture; the culture of claiming the right to liquidate or intimidate the political opponent.
Until more or less the mid-1990s, ETA’s victims were members (of greater or lesser relevance) of the state security forces, or were chosen because of the relative weight of the victim (leading politicians) or number of victims (massacres with car bombs) in forcing the state to negotiate. Without abandoning this strategy, ETA has now also situated its enemies within Basque society. It seeks not only to attack the state, forcing it to negotiate, but to eliminate non-nationalist political or cultural proposals within Basque society; not, evidently, through the elimination of *all* the bearers of that political culture, but by intimidating them and forcing their silence by threatening or killing significant individuals from that ambit.

It is very improbable that ETA can force Basque society to be governed by fascist principles; in other words that it can constitute (impose) a society in which political projects or identity conceptions other than those of ETA or those “permitted” by ETA do not exist, because they cannot be expressed. However we must consider that in the face of these impositional practices, contrary responses may arise – and indeed do arise; responses of categorical rejection . . . of confrontation. Thus, from this other perspective and in the short term, this culture led by ETA and supported or tolerated by organizations, groups or people in the MLNV may create processes of social fragmentation in Basque society, with corresponding confrontations. Whether these confrontations can generate a climate and a real situation of permanent and accepted social confrontation and whether the MLNV in general and ETA in particular can benefit from this situation are still premature hypotheses.

Since 2002, a weighty new circumstance has further exacerbated the MNLV’s failure. The Spanish government has initiated judicial proceedings with the purpose of outlawing Batasuna, the MLNV’s political organization, on charges of being at the service of ETA. From that year up until now (2008), the courts have systematically banned all of the social and political groups of the MLNV considered to be close to ETA. This happened to Batasuna (the central political organization of the movement), to Segi (the organization), to Askatasuna (the support organization for ETA prisoners) and the political organizations ANV (*Acción Nacionalista Vasca* – Basque Nationalist Action) and PCTV (*Partido Comunista de las Tierras Vascas* – Communist Party of the Basque Lands). The latter two organizations were also banned because the courts considered them to be continuations of Batasuna.10 That decision, to some extent, must be considered to be a consequence of the link between ETA and the other sections of the MLNV, including Batasuna. While it is probable that any such link has been neither organic nor logistical, in the public opinion, all organizations within the MLNV, including ETA, appear to form part of the same single social and political movement. Thus, although the outlawing process has been – obviously – an unwelcome result for the MLNV, it was also a foreseeable outcome of the misguided strategy of unlimited confrontation and self-isolation designed by the movement itself.

This new situation has obliged the MLNV to change its discourse and strategy. More precisely, this has not been so much a change as a reduction. In recent
years, the discourse of the MLNV (today only known as the Izquierda Abertzale/IA as we have said) has been hardly more than a discourse of survival, a discourse of resistance facing its dramatic situation. To be sure, at a political rally in the year 2004 (the meeting in Anoeta in November 2004), Batasuna began a certain process of delinking itself from ETA, with the affirmation that only the political forces (and therefore not ETA) should negotiate the political future of the Basque Country among themselves. However Batasuna was unable to take this process of separation to its final consequences. Indeed, during the year 2006 ETA declared a truce. This lasted until December that same year, when the terrorist organization restarted its actions, “arguing” that its political demands in the negotiations with the Spanish government had not been heeded. Batasuna and the rest of the organizations of the MLNV/IA (and among them ANV and PCTV, the new “substitute” political organizations of Batasuna) not only failed to reject ETA’s demand to play a leading political role in the negotiation of institutional changes for the Basque Country, but also accepted the continued violation of ETA as explicable. This subjection to ETA accelerated the process of outlawing practically all of the organizations of the MLNV/IA.

As a result, the discourse has been substantially reduced in recent years. It is a discourse and a political practice of resistance, of struggle against the omnipresent repression. Perhaps the identitarian and political proposals appear to be less exclusive, more plural and flexible. However, we could also say that what has happened in reality is that the underlying political discourse, the more ideological proposals, have disappeared. All that survive are practical, concrete, urgent slogans. Hence the rising demands for self-determination, and the calls for struggle against the political and judicial repression.

Conclusion

We will conclude by describing the achievements of the different political options. On the surface, this assessment does not seem to hold many nuances. One group, the BNG, has triumphed, becoming a party – with more than 20 per cent of voting – in public office and reaching the autonomous government in coalition with the socialist party; and the other, the MLNV, has failed, becoming more and more isolated from voters and other Basque nationalist forces. There are, however, nuances to the issue, deriving both from the fact that on occasions there are differences between positive results and successes, and from the fact that a social movement is not guided only by strategic or political interests. Thus with regard to the relationship between results and successes and failures, it may be the case that the movement achieved the results it intended in certain public policies, but that these same results and the means that it has had to use to achieve them have led to a profound crisis in and a weakening of the identity of the movement; a crisis which in the medium term prevents it from mobilizing for new political objectives.

A social movement is something more than a group organized to obtain certain collective advantages or benefits from political power; we must not forget
The identity dimension of the movements. Social movements are distinguished from interest groups in that their members share a specific culture; they build and experience a certain view of the world. Clearly social movements are not born to build an identity; they are born because they seek to achieve certain objectives. But they do not seek to obtain these collective interests by any means whatsoever. Nor is this the only thing they seek. They also strive to assert themselves as a group which describes, interprets and relates to (and in) reality in a different way; to reality/the world in general and to that part of the world in particular which they wish to change. Social movements build that identity in the struggle to achieve and in the process of achieving those common interests. And that identity thus comprises the form (and also the force) by means of which those objectives are achieved. For all of these reasons, a social movement can, as we have said, achieve results that undermine or dissolve its identity and also, evidently, can fail politically and nonetheless preserve or even reinforce its collective identity. The BNG has used the three dimensions (POS, discourse, resources) of mobilization appropriately and dynamically, opening new opportunities through a self-transformation process, and the MLNV has systematically wasted them (if indeed it has really sought to use them), closing the available opportunity windows:

1 The political results of the nationalist mobilization are sharply divergent. The BNG has managed to achieve a high level of political protagonism – through, inter alia, a self-transformation process of initial strategies, discourses, organizational formats and leadership – the development of an inclusive process of political alliances and increasing its coalition potential. It has generated changes in the structure of political representation and in the systems of alliances in its own favour. Likewise, and as a consequence, it has also achieved substantial changes in certain government policies, first at the local level, than at regional level from the autonomous Galician government.

In the case of the MLNV the result is clearly the opposite; its civilian front (Batasuna) has ever-decreasing political protagonism and today lacks even have a legal status. The reinforcement and encapsulation within it of sectarian and exclusive features have increased its political isolation. Its electoral results have gone from bad to worse. And as a result, its political pretensions appear ever more distant. This distancing might be considered not to be excessive, given that other Basque nationalist parties have accepted the political demands of the MLNV and have therefore brought them closer, making them more possible. It is probably true that this scenario occurred during the Lizarra phase, but we should also remember that during this stage it was the MLNV that changed one of its constitutive features of mobilization (and identity): the violence of ETA was halted. In other words there was an alignment of pretensions because the MLNV had also changed. In any case, today that process of replacement no longer exists. Indeed, the opposite is true: the Basque nationalist parties accept neither the use of viol-
Democratic opportunities in nationalism

ence nor the aims of the MLNV, precisely because of the strategy of the MLNV itself; because of its continued support for violence.

2 From a symbolic perspective too, we could make the same assessment. Effectively it appears that the BNG has managed to extend galleguista identity references in Galicia: not so much as a political culture expressed in terms of an orthodox nationalism but as a sense of belonging to a community that feels itself to be different, and which demands greater recognition and defence of its collective interests.

In the Basque Country, the MLNV has achieved the opposite. Undoubtedly the nationalist demand, derived from a certain national identity, remains, but it has lost the profiles of a radical demand for independence. The MLNV, through the identification that many groups within the Basque population have made between violence and radical nationalism, has managed to moderate that nationalist demand from a qualitative perspective . . . a complete failure given that what it sought was exactly the opposite.

3 Let us conclude with a brief look at the success or failure of the identity dimension, especially in terms of an essential defining feature of that identity: the nationalist feature. Discursive or tactical/contextual positions or readjustments not only enable or prevent changes in the political status of the player (changes in its position in governance), they also – deliberately or not – affect its identity; its national identity in this case. At the outset of the process both formations defined their identity in terms of resistance/conflict; in the Basque case this meant: “a Basque is someone who fights to achieve the independence of the Basque nation; being Basque means opposing (resisting) by all means those who seek to destroy the Basque community and its desire (and historical destiny) to be independent”. This means that only those that belong to that community of resistance fighters are Basques. And this also implies that the concept of the Basque nation, of the nation that must be “revived”, reflects that feature. The Basque nation – now and in the future – is also a community characterized by struggle; it is a community of inward and outward tensions. The real Basque nation is a national community in which conflict and collective mobilization will be permanent constituent national features . . . inwardly and outwardly. In the case of the MLNV, that original identity does not appear to have been changed to any great extent, given that the discourses and tactics used have sought to preserve it. On the contrary, the discursive and strategic resources used by the BNG seem to have modified its identity, which was originally close to that of the MLNV, in its projection of what the Galician nation is (and is not), and of what they themselves are in relation to that nation. This modification has been targeted at more inclusive and more pluralistic features, which are less demanding in terms of political incorporation (“nationalism of proximity”).

Changing and unchanging stances can have different consequences. Thus we could postulate divergent – and in this case inverse – results for each political/social formation. The adaptability of the BNG’s discourse and
action could weaken its identity. And on the contrary the rigidity of the MLNV’s discourse and action could help to maintain a strong and united identity. But if we examine the issue in greater depth, and above all if we consider that the search for interests and identity are two overlapping and interdependent strategies, we might conclude that it reproduces the original watershed between success and failure. The BNG offers an identity which is not “weak” but open and inclusive, and which in turn allows it to continue increasing the impetus for its political progress. The MLNV has reinforced its closed and sectarian marginal identity, increasingly leading it away from its political goals.

Finally to sum up, we seek to demonstrate that an inadequate use of the political dimensions of mobilization described cannot be replaced, for the purposes of achieving positive results, by a strategy of unconditional confrontation, i.e. by a strategy that deliberately dispenses with the democratic use of those strategic instruments. A social movement has, in principle, the option of two large strategies. One involves entering into governance – with greater or lesser intensity and greater or less stability; either from the solitude of the movement or by forming critical networks with other movements, mobilizing in order to be in the policy networks. And the other involves remaining (and deliberately remaining) outside that governance by relating to it only through confrontation. We believe that the option of remaining radically outside, of not using the three instruments we have cited functionally, and above all of not knowing – or not wanting to know – how to combine them effectively leads, at least in terms of the nationalist social movements, to failure.

Notes

1 It is not easy to select an appropriate name for the totality of radical Basque nationalism. The Batasuna group expresses predominantly political options and the term MLNV (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Vasco – Basque National Liberation Movement) is hardly used today. The most common name, which is employed to describe the network of groups making up the Basque radical left, is the Izquierda Abertzale (IA – Patriotic Left). However, the term MLNV has the virtue of describing certain features of the movement which are of particular interest to this study: its clearly movementist nature; its inclusion of a varied set of organizations; and of course, the presence within the movement of the terrorist organization ETA – a presence which, as we shall see, has been a determining factor for the movement.

2 Although we have opted for a dynamic analysis of the relations between the different analytical dimensions and frameworks of the movements, we are aware that in this work this dynamic dimension is more implicit than explicit. These processes of relationships between different players and different resources (discourses, contexts, organizations, etc.) are not always described, but those relations exist and it is they that determine the success – or failure – of the movement. We will set out the relational mechanisms in greater detail in another, more extensive, comparison between these nationalist movements currently in progress.

3 Some excellent work has been carried out in this area, but it has been very largely analytical – that is to say it addresses the issues that should be taken into account
when considering the results, rather than establishing what the specific results obtained have been. See Gamson (1990); Kriesi et al. (1995); Rucht (1992); Sztompka (1995); Giugni et al. (1999).

4 Supporters of the opposing visions of Alfonso Guerra and Felipe González, deputy leader and leader respectively of the PSOE.

5 The bibliography on the MLNV as a whole is scant and imprecise (although this is not true of ETA in particular). The following references, although they represent incomplete analyses, may help in understanding this movement: Arregi (2000); Gomez Uranga et al. (1999); Letamendia (1994); Llera (1994, 1999); Mata (1995); Onaindia (2000); Villanueva (2000); Zallo (1998); Ibarra (2005).

6 In synthesis, this would be an assembly elected by those who have previously stated themselves to be Basque nationals. Its mission is to call a referendum on the sovereignty of the country and then to draw up a constitution for this new sovereign nation (it is presumed that the referendum will give complete backing for the sovereignty proposal).

7 It is debatable whether Lizarra marked a strategic change, or simply a tactical one, for the MLNV as a whole or for ETA. The only certainty is that even if just a tactical option, any long period of ETA inactivity would have transformed it, in practice, into a strategic decision. In any case, the short length of time the ceasefire lasted made any such transformation unfeasible.

8 Certain other specific contents of the MLNV’s discourse and resources are presented as being different at different points; this does not, however, imply a change in trend, but merely a development or deepening of the previous strategic options.

9 The decline in the MLNV’s vote was only halted in 1998, precisely when it had adjusted its strategy by disassociating itself from the violence of ETA; and was made patently clear again in the elections of 2001.

10 At present a large number of the leaders of the illegal Batasuna organization are in prison.

11 For a social movement the network should ideally be shaped as an issue network, in order to be able to participate operatively in it (Marsh 1998) – an open and flexible network.

References


Democratic opportunities in nationalism


7 Xenophobic parties and the making of exclusionary etatized nationalism

Cases from Western and Eastern Europe

Ray Taras

The relationship between state nationalism and democratic practices is contested. Some experts argue that nationalism can serve as a state-building exercise that allows a country to become a viable candidate for membership in a democratic community, such as the European Union. In this scenario, state nationalism can produce a democratic outcome, as the case of the Baltic States illustrates. In contrast, those academics skeptical about nationalism’s consequences contend that state nationalism may justify non- and even anti-democratic practices. Raison d’état – for reasons of state – is a principle that makes clear how a state can under certain conditions assume the prerogative to suspend democratic processes where the interests of the state so warrant. Many of the weak, fragmented, or collapsed states in the developing world appeal to the power of state nationalism and the principle of raison d’état to prop up authoritarian regimes.

This chapter examines whether state nationalism – more specifically, an etatized nationalism – can itself be the product of undemocratic values. The causal chain leads from the rise of undemocratic illiberal values in a society to a nationalist exclusionary discourse appropriated by the state. In this way the undemocratic illiberal orientations of a section of society become the nationalism of the state itself.

Political parties are central to this process. When parties with xenophobic agendas influence a country’s parliament or perhaps even form part of a governing coalition, they have the potential to construct a state nationalism that is exclusionary and discriminatory – in these ways leading to anti-democratic practices.

Within the EU, nationalist and/or anti-immigrant movements have grown in importance since EU enlargement: Austria, Belgium, and Denmark in the West, and Croatia, the Czech Republic, and Estonia in the East are examples. The chapter focuses on two cases of etatized nationalism – one in Western European (France), the other in Eastern Europe (Poland). Over the past two decades politics in these countries have become shaped by hostility to particular types of “foreigners.” Such attitudes have been embodied in right-wing political parties, in particular, Front National in France and the Law and Justice party in Poland.

The importance of Islamophobia is given special attention. This chapter concludes that the EU faces a new and different democratic deficit. Even as it
attempts – by way of the prospective Lisbon Treaty – to incorporate democratic practices into its governance, more exclusionary-driven nationalisms in individual member states may undermine any new EU-initiated democratic gains.

**Identities and in-migration**

Xenophobic attitudes in a society can make its state lurch towards illiberal undemocratic practices. This is never truer than when such citizen attitudes are aggregated by political parties. Much of the xenophobia in Europe today represents an anti-immigrant backlash. But it is also a backlash against Euro-elite discourse that is perceived as privileging civic rights over civic obligations for immigrants; by contrast, for the populations making up the ethnic majority in EU states, this discourse from Brussels appears to emphasize their civic obligations while paying little attention to their rights (of identity, language, lifestyle, and values).

The controversy over accommodating immigrants has been particularly intense in Italy. After an Italian woman was brutally killed in 2007 by a Roma from Romania – one of a series of violent crimes committed by Romanian citizens – an emergency session of the government was held. It enacted a decree that empowered regional prefects – who are the representatives of the interior ministry – to summarily expel citizens of other EU states if they are judged a threat to public security. The prologue to the decree made it explicit that it was aimed at Romanians: “In the last few years the proportion of crime committed by foreigners has increased, and those who commit most crime are the Romans” (Hooper 2007). A year later, the Italian parliament passed a measure requiring children of immigrants who fail an Italian language and history test to be placed into “bridging classes” to reach a satisfactory standard of knowledge about Italy. Instead of debating accommodation of immigrants, as EU elites preferred to do, many Italians had decided it was time to debate conditions for the exclusion and even expulsion of immigrants. Even with the agreement of an EU Pact on Immigration and Asylum in late 2008 that would produce a more coordinated EU response to migrants arriving in Europe, member states like Italy were finding compelling reasons to retain as much control of immigration policy as possible.

The negative reception given in receiving societies – Italy, Austria, France, Germany, and others – to calls for expanding immigrant rights has resulted in a turn to nationalist discourse. As one scholar put it, “Today, the increasing power and visibility of ethnic minorities and the accompanying social problems which growing migration is producing, have raised concerns over what has been described as ‘cultural pollution,’ ‘overforeignization,’ or ‘minorization’” (Demetriou 1999: 9). More practical concerns deal with the economic costs of receiving immigrants, the capacity and carrying weight – both economic and environmental – to absorb future numbers, the fraudulence occurring in refugee and asylum claims, and the perceived lukewarm commitment of newcomers to their host societies.
Cultural values are, clearly, very important in shaping attitudes towards foreigners. “Immigration remains tinged with cultural or societal considerations that correlate with more affective than instrumental evaluations of policy preferences.” Indeed, “The primacy of cultural values is particularly pertinent to issues related to identity, such as immigration, asylum, and citizenship” (Lahav 2004: 224). Put in more dramatic fashion, “identity is the dangerous area where the [integration] project can destruct if it challenges the nations in an overly confrontational manner” (Waever 1995: 439). Highlighting the power of culture is consistent with Ronald Inglehart’s finding that culture ultimately underpins those societies which have achieved freedom and modernization (Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

The cultural dilemma that Europe faces in trying to harmonize the EU integration process with 27 national identities and a myriad of immigration groups was summed up by Gallya Lahav: “Should the European public succumb to the threat of losing their unique cultures and identities for a viable European Union to exist or should the potential of this supranational force be dismissed for the preservation of national identity” (Lahav 2004: 104)? This national identity, evidence suggests, is regularly anchored in exclusionary attitudes towards others. And such illiberalism has been picked up by opportunistic radical right political parties.

The changing nature of xenophobia

Is the proposition that xenophobia has become widespread across Europe accurate? Eurobarometer survey results from 1988 to 1997 did not find high levels of xenophobia among Europeans. No more than 15 percent of respondents asserted that the presence of people of other nationalities was disturbing to them personally. A pecking order existed, however, of desirable immigrant groups. Of all migrant groups, respondents were most favorably disposed to Northern and Southern Europeans, in that order. The groups viewed most unfavorably were Turks followed by North Africans and Asians (Standard Eurobarometer 30 1988; 37 1992; 39 1993; 48 1998).

A survey of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) found that they, too, regarded the last three mentioned groups as the least desirable. There were some national variations, however: German MEPs identified Eastern Europeans as least desirable while Greek MEPs named Turks as least desirable (Lahav 2004: 116). In a 2007 survey, MEPs and EU officials surveyed placed Turkey in the middle of a “thermometer” measuring feelings towards others – well below their warm feelings for the EU and well above their cool feelings towards Iran. On the question of immigration, British and Slovak MEPs were most likely to say it was a threat that could affect them personally; Portuguese MEPs were least perturbed by it (Center for the Study of Political Change 2007: 12, 15).

Explaining such survey results Lahav noted that “Elites in general preferred the more economically competitive, yet culturally more similar Eastern European immigrants to those from developing countries” (Lahav 2004: 91–93).
Xenophobic parties and exclusionary nationalism

Those who did favor decreased immigration from Eastern Europe were more concerned with the issue of unemployment whereas those who believed immigration from the Third World should be restricted were more alarmed by racial problems (Lahav 2004: 91–93). A counterintuitive finding of a Eurobarometer survey was that there was no significant correlation between being unemployed oneself and harboring xenophobic or racist attitudes (Standard Eurobarometer 47 1997).

Why citizens come to fear and even hate foreigners has been the subject of considerable research. Often the fear of foreigners is less self-induced than incited by those in authority so as to serve their interests. Even defining a group as foreign can be an insidious act leading to xenophobic attitudes towards it. This understanding resembles Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of “official fear” – an offshoot of the cosmic fear felt by impotent humanity in the face of Nature (Bakhtin 2004: 46–53). Political elites everywhere know the power of spreading fear among their citizens.

Fear of foreigners affects the politics of hospitality offered by a host society to strangers. According to Jacques Derrida, hospitality is contingent in nature because it is circumscribed by a country’s legal system, especially its immigration laws. The legal system places limits on the immediate, infinite, and unconditional welcoming of the other (Derrida 1999). As elaborated by sociologist Meyda Yegenoglu, “conditional hospitality is offered at the owner’s place, home, nation, state, or city – that is, at a place where one is defined as the master and where unconditional hospitality or unconditional trespassing of the door is not possible.”

In short,

The law of hospitality is the law of oikonomia, the law of one’s home. Offered as the law of place, legal-juridical hospitality lays down the limits of a place and retains the authority over that place, thus limiting the gift that is offered…. In this way, the foreigner is allowed to enter the host’s space under conditions determined by the host.

(Yegenoglu 2005: 141–142)

Having the status of stranger frequently invites hostile reactions. As Georg Simmel contended, “a stranger is not one who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather is the person who comes today and stays tomorrow” (1950: 402). It follows that, as Bauman believed, strangers are “always uninvited guests” violating the basis of the host–guest relationship (1997: 6). Yegenoglu added:

Because they trespass over the allowed borders of guest status, migrants engender uncertainty and ambivalence. By refusing to accept the termination of their allowed period of stay and thereby turning their temporary status into an unexpected permanency, they remain ‘stubbornly and infuriatingly indeterminate,’ to use a phase from Bauman.

(Yegenoglu 2004: 143–144; Bauman 1991: 65)
Part of the European public finds pretexts to dislike the strangers that have overstayed their welcome.

Immigrants, and particularly foreigners, are presented as the persons responsible for the deterioration of security conditions, terrorism, unemployment and increased public expenditure. This process of stigmatization and criminalization provides a breeding ground for racial discrimination towards this part of Europe’s population.

(European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2006)

The nature of xenophobia is different in the former Soviet bloc. Xenophobia is linked less with immigration than with historical interethnic rivalries and hatreds, such as anti-Semitism. As Balibar contended, all of Europe suffers from phobias “profoundly buried in the collective unconscious that trace back to centuries of religious and colonial conflicts” (2004: 231). But for a long time there was no discernible anti-immigrant bias in the countries of the Soviet bloc because they were not permitted to become immigrant societies. Paradoxically, this did not prevent the emergence of antipathetic attitudes to outside groups. Recent influxes of immigrants from the poorer countries of Eurasia and the Far East, together with economic dislocations at home, have exacerbated ethnic competition and xenophobia in Eastern Europe.

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman associated the rise of xenophobia with the replacement of structures of solidarity by competition:

Xenophobia, the growing suspicion of a foreign plot and resentment of ‘strangers’ (mostly of emigrants, those vivid and highly visible reminders that walls can be pierced and borders effaced, natural effigies, asking to be burned, of mysterious globalizing forces running out of control), can be seen as a perverse reflection of desperate attempts to salvage whatever remains of local solidarity.

(2004: 99)

When the line between the included and excluded in a society begins to disappear, it can paradoxically lead to more open xenophobic attitudes because of the weakening of “national” solidarity. Accession into the EU for post-Communist states can be interpreted, then, as the replacement of a structure of solidarity with one of competition.

In this process a country’s longstanding minorities can be othered and transformed in public perceptions into strangers. The term minority has several possible meanings. It can refer to officially recognized minorities (Catalans in Spain), officially recognized immigrant communities (Moluccans in Holland), or ethnic kin returning to the homeland (German-speaking groups in Germany who originate from outside the country, e.g. Volga Germans). The European Convention on Human Rights’ definition of a minority is straightforward: “a group inferior in number to the rest of the population and whose members share in their
will to hold on to their culture, traditions, religion, or language” (European Convention on Human Rights, art. 29, para. 1).

Minorities subsume diverse groups: indigenous peoples, yesterday’s immigrants, guests, settlers, sojourners, strangers, stranded diasporas – that live in a host society but may be viewed by it as outsiders. They are seen as not really belonging regardless of their citizenship status or length of residence in a country. In Western Europe, Muslims above all constitute these “others,” these “strangers.”

**Xenophobia and party politics**

A comparative study (but one that excluded Eastern Europe) focused on how political parties exploit voters’ xenophobic attitudes for electoral gain. Beginning in the 1970s right-wing politicians capitalized on voter resentment of ethnic minorities to win legislative seats. But they used citizen xenophobia to advance another agenda as well – to limit welfare programs for the disadvantaged. By appealing to voters who had conservative views on race and immigration but were liberal on economic issues, right-wing parties were able to advance a regressive social agenda. One study quantified this effect: if all voters held non-racist views, liberal and conservative parties alike would have pushed for levels of income redistribution 10 to 20 percent higher than they did under current levels of xenophobia (Roemer et al. 2007).

This raises the question of how xenophobic contagion can spread from single-issue right-wing parties to established, mainstream ones and cross the cordon sanitaire established between the two. In 2005 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance warned that xenophobia as a “type of argument is no longer confined to the sphere of extremist political parties, but is increasingly contaminating mainstream political parties” (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2006).

Does this warning apply to Eastern European states in the EU? In a study of racist extremism in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Cas Mudde observed that “If one compares the state of racist extremism in Central and Eastern Europe to that in Western Europe, the differences seem less striking than is often assumed” (Mudde 2005: 281). Differences in levels of such extremism were more profound within the region than between it and Western Europe.

Table 7.1 shows that the least troublesome areas in CEE were the Baltic states; the racist troublespots were Poland and Slovakia, with the Czech Republic and Romania close behind. The latter had the only extremist political party in CEE – the Greater Romania Party (PRM). Active extremist organizations existed in Poland (the League of Polish Families, which actually was a party represented in parliament, and its influential radio station Radio Maryja); Slovakia (Matica Slovenská and the National Movement); and Romania (Liga Mareşal Antonescu). Racist and violent subcultures made up of skinheads were found in Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Finally, in terms of the frequency of racist incidents, often perpetrated by skinheads with Roma as the chief target, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic again led the way.
We can advance four main conclusions on the basis of Mudde’s comparison of the ten CEE cases with Western Europe:

1. Racist extremist parties were not really a major force in CEE when compared to their Western European counterparts;
2. Mainstream political parties in CEE were less willing to denounce racist extremism than their Western counterparts;
3. The international community has largely ignored racist extremism in CEE (not to mention Russia) and has focused more on its manifestations in Western Europe; and
4. Anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial are more common phenomena among the party elites of CEE than among their Western counterparts (Mudde 2005: 267–282).

A political party’s policy on a particular issue like immigration can be assessed in a number of ways. One approach is to take at face value what parties say their policy is, e.g. as written in their manifestos. Another way of identifying party policy is to look at how parties behave, e.g. how they vote in the legislature. Surveys of party leaders, members, or supporters can lend further insight into policy preferences.

Conducting surveys of specialists on particular countries is another way to gauge parties’ policy orientations. Using this method, a study of 47 countries was carried out in 2002–2003. Close to 1,500 expert responses were analyzed, locating 387 parties on scales measuring 37 different policy dimensions (Benoit and Laver 2006). The dimension on immigration policy contrasted experts’ evaluations of whether parties supported full integration of immigrants and asylum seekers into their societies (assigned a score of 1) with assessments of whether

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**Table 7.1** Strength of racist extremism in Central and Eastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Extremist organizations</th>
<th>Racist subcultures</th>
<th>Racist incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak or few</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Baltic states, Bulgarian, Baltic states, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Latvia, Romania</td>
<td>Latvia, Romania</td>
<td>Baltic states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland</td>
<td>Hungary, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Slovenia</td>
<td>Romania, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong or many</td>
<td>Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Romania</td>
<td>Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: table developed and compiled by the author from data found in Mudde (2005).
parties supported returning immigrants to their countries of origin (given a maximum score of 20). The higher a score a party received, the more anti-immigrant it was.

In addition to a party’s policy position, experts were asked to assess the importance of that policy dimension to each party on a 20-point scale. A high score here combined with a high score on removing immigrants signified a party strongly committed to a xenophobic policy.

With few exceptions, at the time of the survey (2002) economic policy (taxes/spending, de/regulation) obtained the highest importance scores in most Western European countries. Immigration policy was ranked of highest importance in Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Netherlands (Table 7.2, column 2). The highest mean xenophobic score for all parties in a country was recorded in Denmark followed by Luxembourg and Switzerland (column 1). The most anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe were the Vlaams Belang in Belgium and the National Democratic Party in Germany (column 4). The largest vote-getting parties with the lowest xenophobic scores were found in Spain and Sweden; by contrast, Switzerland’s electorally strongest party, Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP), registered the highest xenophobic score (column 3). Finally, anti-immigrant parties in governing coalitions were found in Austria, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Switzerland.

This analytic framework was not used to measure parties in post-Communist states. Instead other policy dimensions were introduced. The results were nevertheless surprising. Nationalism, often seen as a major issue in CEE, was ranked the most important policy dimension only in Bosnia, which was a fragile state held together by Western peacekeepers. Nowhere in the region was religion ranked highest. The most important policy dimension in all EU candidate states in CEE in 2002 was joining the EU. While these findings do not necessarily contradict Mudde’s more pessimistic evaluation of Eastern European xenophobia, they do suggest Western observers have exaggerated the salience of religious and nationalist politics in the region.

How have right-wing politics changed since these findings were recorded in 2002? Anti-immigrant parties have increased in electoral strength in a number of Western European states. National elections held in Austria in fall 2008 led to significant gains by two far-right parties, the Austrian Freedom Party and the Alliance for Austria’s Future (whose leader, Jorg Haidar, was killed in an auto accident a short time after). In Italy, national elections in early 2008 led to the return to power of Silvio Berlusconi for a third time. His right-wing People of Freedom party could also count on the support of the nationalistic Northern League, which also performed well. In Denmark, the ultra-right Danish People’s Party led by Pia Kjaersgaard kept its place as the third-largest party after the 2007 parliamentary elections and became an unofficial partner in the governing coalition. Its popular appeal increased significantly following the publication of controversial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad by a Danish newspaper in 2006. Swiss elections in 2007 led to a repeat victory by the anti-immigrant nationalist party (the SVP), which won the most number of seats in parliament.
Table 7.2 Importance of immigration policy and degree of support for repatriating immigrants in Western European states in 2002 (based on experts’ evaluations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration policy dimension</th>
<th>Mean score on issue</th>
<th>Rank in importance</th>
<th>Score of party with most votes</th>
<th>Party with highest score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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<td>13.6</td>
<td>OVP</td>
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<td>A. People’s P</td>
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<td>Freedom P of A</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>12.9</td>
<td>VLD</td>
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<td>Fld Libs &amp; Dems</td>
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<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>Lab</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>AKEL</td>
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<td>NEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>Venstre</td>
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<td>Dansk Folkeparti</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>12.4</td>
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<td>Rassemblement pour la Republique</td>
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<td>Front National</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.7/14.6</td>
<td>SPD CDU/CSU</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
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<td>ND</td>
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<td>Iceland</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>X-D</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>Forza Italia</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>CSV</td>
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<td>Christian Social</td>
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<td>Pensions Justice</td>
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<td>Malta</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Nationalist Party</td>
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</table>
Xenophobic parties and exclusionary nationalism

(62 of 200). There are notable exceptions to this pattern: Spanish voters in 2008 did not shift support to the right nor was immigration a polarizing issue in electoral politics.

The strength of anti-immigrant politics can be measured in ways other than the electoral performance of the far right. In some countries xenophobic discourse has been transposed to the center of the political spectrum and has become mainstream and “respectable.” Centrist and center-right parties have borrowed the rhetoric of the far right to win more votes and even gain power. This phenomenon was discernible in France: even as the electoral performance of Front National weakened, its anti-immigrant rhetoric was being stolen by centrist political figures such as Nicolas Sarkozy and even the Socialist party (as in the 2007 presidential elections) – thereby contributing to the FN’s electoral decline.

Table 7.2 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration policy dimension</th>
<th>Mean score on issue</th>
<th>Rank in importance</th>
<th>Score of party with most votes</th>
<th>Party with highest score</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Christian Dem Appe’l</td>
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<td>18.3</td>
<td>LPF Lijst Pim Fortuyn</td>
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<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>Dem Unionist Party</td>
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<td>9.3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>PSD</td>
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<td>CDS/PP</td>
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<td>People’s P</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>PSOE</td>
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<td>16.6</td>
<td>Partido Socialistista Obrero Espanol</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>Socialdemokratiska Arbearepartiet</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>Moderata Samlingspartiet</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP)</td>
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<td>19.7</td>
<td>Schweizer Demokraten</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>Milliyetci Hareket Partisi (MHP)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Benoit and Laver (2006). Compiled by author from Appendix B, pp. 178–271. A scale of 1–20 was used by experts to rank parties: 1 signified a party seeking full integration of immigrants into the host society; 20 signified a party seeking to repatriate immigrants to their country of origin. Anti-immigrant right-wing parties that were in government at the time the research was carried out are listed in bold font.
By contrast, in CEE after 2002 it is clear that the salience of nationalism and religion has increased. Poland while under the leadership of the Kaczyński brothers furnishes the best example. To be sure, the assertion of nationalist and religious identities cannot be used as proxies for xenophobia and anti-immigrant orientations. But the strong electoral showings in 2005 of right-wing exclusionary parties in Poland such as Law and Justice as well as League of Polish Families does point to a similar xenophobic tendency as in nearby Austria.

The rise of the ultranationalists within new EU member states was confirmed with the 2007 accession of Bulgaria and Romania. European parliamentary elections in Romania resulted in five members of the Greater Romania Party – an anti-Roma, anti-Hungarian, anti-Semitic movement – being elected into the European Parliament. This pushed right-wing parties already in Strasbourg over the threshold needed to gain official recognition as a parliamentary bloc. Recognition guaranteed the bloc more speaking time, funding (up to €1 million), and political influence. The new bloc, calling itself “Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty” (ITS), claimed the backing of 23 million Europeans. Internal disputes, however, led to the bloc’s quick disintegration. Chief among these was the rift between right-wing Italian MEPs who supported the expulsion of Romanians who committed crimes in their country and right-wing Romanian MEPs who defended their compatriots.

Whether in Western Europe or CEE, the pivotal role that a number of ultranationalist parties have gained in the political system highlights the potential they have for inserting aspects of their xenophobic agenda into the official nationalist discourse of the state. If illiberal anti-democratic rhetoric becomes more “centered” as a result of the successes of right-wing parties, the EU will have a new “democracy deficit” to confront.

The sources of Islamophobia: the case of France

In the Western world being prejudiced is considered one of the most damning sins, a humiliating faux pas. Just the opposite – to be free of bias – is posited to be the basis of modernity: “The ideal of life without prejudices, stereotypes, preconceptions, and pre-existing authority is … regarded as a proper, indeed, a noble one” (Dalrymple 2007: 100).

There are good reasons to be prejudiced against prejudice. As British psychiatrist Theodore Dalrymple contended “There have been so many negative stereotypes that have been false, demeaning, and cruel, and that were made a justification for injustice or barbarity, that the very idea of stereotyping any group negatively has been discredited” (2007: 104).

A French psychiatrist concurred. Patrick Declerck argued that

in these times of programmatic tolerance and a vacuity in respect required a priori, ‘to hate’ is not done anymore. It is even practically illegal…. Democracy has located man in exactly the same place that was occupied by a
Xenophobic parties and exclusionary nationalism

Divinity in the earlier architecture of Christian theology, and our political and religious dogmas forbid us to think of, conceive, or represent an enemy. In short, to hate.

(2004a, 2004b)

But can all prejudices be eliminated from the human repertoire? “To overturn a prejudice is not to destroy prejudice as such. It is rather to inculcate another prejudice. The prejudice that it is wrong to bear a child out of wedlock has been replaced by the prejudice that there is nothing wrong with it at all” (Dalrymple 2007: 25).

In short, it appears that “no system of ethical propositions, or any other system of propositions, can exist without presuppositions, that is to say, prejudices.” An appropriate syllogism capturing the real human situation is the following:

The distinction between good and evil is both inevitable and necessary for the exercise of virtue.
The distinction between good and evil can be based only on prejudice.
Therefore, prejudice is necessary for the exercise of virtue.

(Dalrymple 2007: 122–124)

Declerck applied this logic to Islam. “I hate Islam. Yet one does not criticize Islam unless it is with a prudent obsequiousness and a thousand linguistic safeguards… It is not Islam but Islamism that is targeted. Not religion but fanaticism. Not racism but communitarianism.” While it is claimed that the majority of Muslims disapprove of organizing terrorism, throat cutting and decapitations, Declerck persisted in hating Islam because as a system of thought it countenanced holy war and shari’a law (2004).

Accordingly, “I publicly proclaim this hatred of Islam and the right to express it. In public, even if it involves violating the laws of the Republic. Because today to denounce the ferocious stupidities of religious beliefs is more than a pleasure. It is an obligation.” And, we might add, it is a virtue (2004).

After the terrorist attacks in the US in 2001, in Madrid in 2004, and in London in 2005, political elites began to make passing, then ever more direct references to the threat posed by Muslim fundamentalists. One 2006 assessment put it starkly: “Europe appears to be crossing an invisible line regarding its Muslim minorities: more people in the political mainstream are arguing that Islam cannot be reconciled with European values” (Bilefsky and Fisher 2006). Political leaders seemed to be taking their cue from public attitudes. “For years those who raised their voices were mostly on the far right. Now those normally seen as moderates – ordinary people as well as politicians – are asking whether once unquestioned values of tolerance and multiculturalism should have limits” (Bilefsky and Fisher 2006).

In 2006 Pope Benedict XVI called aspects of Islam “evil and inhuman.” After the staging of Mozart’s opera Idomeneo had to be called off in Germany that
year for security reasons because it included a scene showing Muhammad’s severed head, Chancellor Merkel complained how “Self-censorship does not help us against people who want to practice violence in the name of Islam.” Former British foreign secretary Jack Straw wrote that he felt uncomfortable addressing women whose faces were covered with a veil – a “visible statement of separation and difference” (2006).

The fear of an Islamicization of Europe arises not simply from psychological factors but existential ones as well. Eurostat predicts significant decreases in the size of European populations by 2050. Historian Walter Laqueur explained that in the past it was the naivety of European governments seeking to accommodate the arrival of large groups of Muslim immigrants that was responsible for an Islamophobic backlash.

The host governments were quite unaware of the social, cultural, and political consequences of welcoming people whose customs and values were so different from their own – immigrants who thought their values were superior and would want eventually, as their numbers grew stronger, to impose these values on the host countries. Nor did the Europeans foresee that these ambitions on the part of the immigrants would generate opposition, strengthen radical xenophobic parties, and add greatly to domestic tensions. (2007: 79)

Islamophobia has been fed by popular stereotypes and the profiling of Muslim immigrants. The Muslim migrant as parasite is a popular caricature. An example from Denmark reinforces such a caricature: while only 5 percent of the Danish population is Muslim, 40 percent of social assistance expenditures go to them.

The Muslim community as a powerful lobby is another popular caricature. Historian Walter Laqueur wrote that “Turks in Belgium and Arabs in Britain have acquired influence out of proportion to the size of the ethnic group to which they belong” (2007: 209). The fear of the emergence of Eurabia – whether across the continent, in individual countries, or even in particular cities – is being taken more seriously (as shown by such popular books as Londonistan and Brussel: Eurabia.)

Let us examine popular perceptions of Muslims in France. The Muslim population may be as high as four million, of whom half originate in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. In a 2005 national survey, about 5 percent (slightly over two million) of respondents identified Islam as their religion of origin or membership. Some 80 percent (about 35 million people) identified Catholicism as their religion of origin or membership – a high figure given France’s emphasis on secularism and the decline in numbers of practicing Catholics. About 2 percent (just under one million people) identified themselves as Protestant – about the same number as those identifying as other faiths (there are close to 600,000 Jews in France). Finally 11 percent (five million) stated that they did not belong to any denomination (L’Institut national des enquêtes démographiques cited in Yegenoglu 2008).

Vincent Geisser, a CNRS specialist on Islam, explained the distinctive nature of Islamophobia in France:
Xenophobic parties and exclusionary nationalism

If in other European countries attacks on Muslim people and property still largely arise from traditional registers of anti-immigrant xenophobia and the rejection of the stranger, Islamophobia à la française is transplanted onto a contentious history in which Islam is considered at one and the same time a religion in the process of francisation and a national problem.

(2003: 10)

As in many other European nations, anti-Muslim views can be traced back centuries. A leading nineteenth-century scholar of the nation, Ernest Renan, gave a celebrated lecture at the Sorbonne in 1883. He stated: “Any person with a bit of education about current affairs clearly discerns the actual inferiority of Muslim countries, the decadence in states ruled by Islam, the intellectual nullity of races which behold exclusively their culture and education to this religion” (2003).

France’s unique recent experience with the Muslim world has made its response to fear one of greater fear. The 1979 Iranian revolution, the Algerian civil war throughout the 1990s, and the permanent threat of international Islamic terrorism have given French people a one-sided impression of the Muslim world.

In not recognizing minorities, France has limited its room for maneuver: it cannot offer concessions such as wider political representation for religious, racial, and ethnic communities. Put differently, there cannot be affirmative action where there is no recognition of diverse groups. To be sure, the Mitterrand years offered a degree of positive discrimination that in some ways contributed to a sense of power and even invulnerability among some young Muslims. French society underwent a kind of “internal balkanization” (Geisser 2003: 88).

In terms both of its demographic makeup and geopolitical position France has found itself on the front line in the conflict with Islamic fundamentalism. The 9/11 terrorist attacks led to the spread of crude popular perceptions about the Muslim world in the place of informed views. One popular perception was that many of the radical youth from city outskirts were not recent emigrants from the Maghreb but youth which had been “re-Islamicized” by fundamentalist movements, including by Algeria’s GIA (“Armed Islamic Group”). These radicals often held French citizenship, even though they were represented in the post 9/11 security architecture as originating in an international Islamic threat.

The bizarre “reversal” process of transforming French Muslim nationals into immigrants and foreigners has been taking place. Popular xenophobia is now directed at French people of Muslim background who constitute both an internal and external danger at the same time (Blanchard and Bancel 1998). For Geisser, then, “Islamophobia is not simply a transposition of racism that is anti-Arab, anti-Maghrebi, and anti-jeunes de banlieues, it is also religiophobia” (2003: 11). What has happened in France is “a progressive abandonment of traditional anti-immigrant and anti-stranger registers in favor of exclusively Islamophobic registers, as if the hatred of Islam and Muslims becomes the rallying point of ultranationalists” (2003: 12).
There is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of French Islamophobia:

even though the vast majority of children originating in African, Maghrebi and Turkish immigration are today French nationals, taxonomies continue to designate them as ‘young Arab Muslims’ – a process of stigmatization that simultaneously combines an ethnic referential (Arab) with a religious one (Muslim).

(2003: 11)

Referring to their youth further demeans them. In addition, Muslim attitudes and behavior undergo a process of homogenization, essentialization, and communitarianization. It is as if Muslims think and act as one on all issues that affect them.

The 2007 report of the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights (CNCDH), first set up by the French legislature in 1990, noted that incidents of racist and xenophobic threats and violence had declined from their peak in 2004 (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme 2008). Some 42 percent of all racist violence was attributable to extremist right-wing movements. The report noted that as in the past people of Maghreb origin were the primary targets of racist violence – 68 percent of the total of violent acts – as well as racist threats (60 percent). About one-third of violence and threats against Maghrebs had a specifically Islamophobic character, with mosques, memorials, and believers as targets (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme 2008: 35–38).

In a 2007 national survey 46 percent of respondents claimed that North Africans and Muslims are victims of racism. This compared to 27 percent for immigrants in general and 26 percent for Africans/Blacks (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 296). These proportions had held steady since the 2002 survey, though Africans/Blacks were increasingly identified as victims.

The survey reported that while 82 percent said the insult “dirty Black” should be condemned by the courts compared to 78 percent for “dirty Jew,” only 69 percent asserted this for “dirty Arab” (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 316–318). Moreover, while 90 percent considered refusing to give a job to a Black as a serious matter, only 83 percent agreed this was the case for someone of Maghreb origin. Finally, 67 percent said it was a serious matter to oppose a child’s marriage with a Black compared to 58 percent for someone of Maghreb background (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 320–321).

Islam evokes a positive connotation in only 28 percent of the national sample compared to 38 percent for Protestantism, 39 percent for Judaism, 50 percent for Catholicism, and 71 percent for laicite (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 322–323). Some 48 percent say Muslims form a community apart – twice as high as the figure for Blacks; 43 percent say Maghrebis form a group apart. For each of these groups, only 24 percent
said they were open to others (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 302–303). Only 69 percent agree French Muslims are French like everyone else (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 311). Forty-six percent of respondents agreed (only 16 percent strongly) that immigration was the principal cause of insecurity (Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 310).

Reasons differ as to why sections of French society want to distance themselves from Islam. In a typology of hostility towards Islam, the majority group represents traditional ethnocentrism that advances a global rejection of different cultures and groups. These people are the most intolerant of others, are on the right of the political spectrum, and are often themselves socially disadvantaged. As religious identities become more salient today, a second group embraces Catholicism and its values, in the process distancing itself from Muslims. Finally, a small group on the left rejects Islam even though it displays little ethnocentrism and is sensitive to discriminatory practices. This group accepts the private practice of Islam but rejects recognition of Muslim practices in the public sphere (Mayey et al. in Commission nationale consultative des droits de l’homme, Annexe, La lutte 2008: 119, 123).

These attitudinal data suggest how Islamophobia is constructed in France. They help explain why xenophobic politics have an appeal to parties located at different points of the political continuum. Exclusionary, illiberal, anti-democratic values at the grassroots have trickled up to establishment parties and politicians.

**New Europe’s old fears: the case of Poland**

In mapping European cultures, French philosopher Etienne Balibar drew a system of concentric circles that led from the “true” Europe (the advanced Western states) to an “outer” one asking to be Europeanized (the Eastern part) (Balibar 2004: 169). The notion of an outer Europe seems particularly applicable to Poland when the Kaczyński twins briefly held the posts of president and prime minister in 2006–2007. Celebrated Polish intellectual Adam Michnik – a vigorous critic of the communist regime – turned his sights on Poland’s nationalist turn under the twins:

Rather than seize on its European Union membership to catapult the country forward, Poland’s coalition government finds itself looking, and moving, backward. In a speech in the European Parliament, a politician from one of the coalition parties praised the dictatorships of António Salazar of Portugal and Francisco Franco of Spain; he also published an openly anti-Semitic booklet. During a dry summer, a group of coalition legislators called upon the Parliament to pray for rain. A similar group proposed that the Parliament vote to declare Jesus Christ the King of Poland.

(Michnik 2007)
For Michnik, then, Poland’s “governing coalition employs a peculiar mix of the conservative rhetoric of George W. Bush and the political practice of Vladimir Putin” (Michnik 2007). If anything qualifies as a characteristic of an outer Europe, this combination certainly does.

A physical altercation in the European Parliament in 2005 between right-wing Polish MEPs who had put up a graphic anti-abortion exhibit and Western European MEPs was symbolic of “an incipient culture war in the heart of Europe, a clash of values that has intensified since countries from Central and Eastern Europe that are experiencing an increase in the influence of the Roman Catholic Church joined the European Union.” One MEP from Britain described how “New groups have come in from Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Catholicism is certainly becoming a very angry voice against what it sees as a liberal E.U.” (Cashman quoted in Bowley 2005).

Poland’s Catholic conservatism – inspired loosely, at best, by John Paul II’s papacy – came into play during the drafting of the European constitution in 2003. Initially supported by Spain and several other Catholic nations, Poland argued for the inclusion of a reference to Europe’s Christian heritage. In the end the idea was rejected partly because Spain – its own culture a mix of Catholic and Islamic heritage – lost its enthusiasm.

In 1798 Immanuel Kant had offered a critical evaluation of Poland’s distinctiveness. The advocate of a perpetual peace, he remarked: “Poland: that is a very strange country…. With them, there are no middle classes and, thus, they have little culture” (Kant 1991: 182–183). Poland’s exceptionalism after joining the EU was demonstrated in other ways than its strong identification with Catholicism. In particular, its willingness to support the Bush administration’s invasion of Iraq to the point of agreeing to manage one of three occupation sectors (the other two under the command of American and British forces) created tensions within the EU. Poland’s relations with both Germany and Russia suffered, partly as a consequence of its support for the Bush administration, partly because of the Kaczyński’s personal distaste for these two large neighbors and historic protagonists of Poland.

Were average Poles exceptional when measured in terms of xenophobia? A longitudinal analysis of survey results indicates important trends in the changing national likes and dislikes of Poles. In 1993 Italians, Americans, and Italians (in that order) were bunched at the top of Poles’ favorite nationalities. By 2007, however, 11 EU cohorts, headed by the fellow Catholic Irish nation, ranked higher than Americans (Table 7.3). Americans had become 18 percent less popular in 15 years of Polish democracy.

Poles’ least preferred nationalities changed only slightly over this same period. In 1993 Romanians were the least favorite: a −57 percent net difference between those saying they liked and saying they disliked them. When Romanians were added to the survey the next year they immediately overtook Romanians (−69 percent net negative rating for 1994). Three largely Orthodox nations, Ukrainians (−53 percent), Serbs (−45 percent) and Russians (−39 percent) came next, and Belarussians did not fare well either (−28 percent). But they were still comfortably ahead of Germans (−53 percent) and Jews (−36 percent).
In 2007 Poles’ least favorite “nations” (neither was really a nation) were Roma with a –45 percent differential between those saying they liked them and those saying they did not, followed by Arabs (first included in the survey in 2002) with a –43 percent differential. Other highly negative ratings in 2007 were reserved for Romanians (–35 percent), Turks (–28 percent), Vietnamese
(a visible minority living in Poland, at −23 percent), Russians (−22 percent), Serbs (−21 percent), Jews (−17 percent), Chinese (−16 percent), and Ukrainians (−14 percent). Germans also earned a negative rating (−9 percent) though they were less disliked than in 1993. The Kaczyński twins’ xenophobic politics, especially those directed against Germany and Russia, were in large measure a reflection of the national fears of the average Pole.

It is significant that the two predominantly Muslim “nations” (Turks and Arabs) ranked close to or at the bottom of Poles’ ethnic hierarchy. But largely Orthodox nations (Romanians, Russians, Serbs, Ukrainians, and Belarussians) were not much liked either. These results suggest that Islamophobia exists without the presence of Islam in Poland. A distancing from Eastern Orthodoxy, which Samuel Huntington had identified as a distinct civilization in *The Clash of Civilizations*, was also perceptible in Polish attitudes (Huntington 1998).

Among nations that Poles had a dislike for, how many represented minorities in the country? Poland is one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world with 98 percent of the population considered to be ethnically Polish. If xenophobic politics play a part on the national scene, it has to be assumed that they are directed primarily at foreign countries, not at the insignificant numbers of minorities living in the country. In the 2002 census close to 175,000 people declared their nationality as Silesian – a community in the southwest of the country whose population spills over into Germany and the Czech Republic. Next came Germans numbering about 150,000. Some ethnic Poles might conflate Silesians with Germans, which would put the size of the German minority at just over 300,000. There were also 50,000 declared Belarussians, 30,000 Ukrainians, 11,000 Roma, 6,000 Russians, and only 1,000 Jews.

If Orthodoxophobia was a genuine phenomenon in Poland, then, it targeted a community of less than 100,000. Polish Germanophobia had a larger potential target but it was aimed less at the Silesians and Germans living in western Poland and more at the Federal Republic of Germany. The clearest example of xenophobic politics being directed at a foreign country rather than at a minority is Russophobia. Shortly before the 2008 Russian attack on Georgia, a survey found that 54 percent of Polish respondents believed that Russia was trying to regain influence in Eastern Europe; just 20 percent said it was not (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej 2008). Finally we can add that Islamophobia and Judaeophobia have only tiny local communities in Poland to be directed against. Arguably they constitute a Catholic population’s general dislike of two non-Christian religions.

**Conclusion**

France and Poland are hobbled by phobias. Their party politics have directly reflected their fears. In the case of France, the *cordon sanitaire* between mainstream responsible parties and the radical right has been breached. Some of the anti-immigrant positions of the *Front National* have become articulated by political leaders of the center and left. In Poland’s case, xenophobic right-wing par-
ties have recently formed part of governing coalitions and have been behind much of the politics of President Kaczyński.

It is premature to conclude that a more exclusionary state nationalism is emerging in France and Poland. Especially in the former case, its leading role in EU institutions serves as a check on the rise of an anti-democratic culture. Poland has been an EU maverick in many areas and is normatively less under the EU’s influence. The EU’s democratic legitimacy is tainted by the theocratic impulses of recent Polish leaders. Data presented in this chapter indicate that the Polish public expresses different national fears without needing the presence of non-Polish minorities in the country. This stands in contrast to France where Islamophobia and a growing Islamic presence have gone hand in hand. It is the trend line that gives most cause for concern. As Cas Mudde suggested, the populist radical right has become a “pathological normalcy” (Mudde 2007: 297). Europe’s fears are becoming more politically salient, and they mock Euro elites’ mantras of integration and tolerance.

Note

1 For a comprehensive comparative study see Bauböck et al. (2006). Data and additional analyses are available at www.imiscoe.org/natac.

References


Democratization in the post-Soviet countries of Eastern Europe and “nationalizing” politics

Elena Meleshkina

The experience of new independent states since the disintegration of the Soviet Union has shown that alongside many obvious divergences among them there have been some very prominent similarities. In particular, all of these countries encountered difficulties during the process of democratization. Nation- and state-building in these countries have been characterized by domination of one ethnic and/or cultural group of people and the assimilation of others, by the broad use of “nationalizing” (Linz and Stepan 1996) or “pathological” (Rae 2002) politics or even by the incipient “nationalizing” state (Brubaker 1995). This article focuses on the relationship between democratization and nation- and state-building in post-Soviet countries and the causes of widespread “nationalizing” politics.

Relationship between boundary consolidation, institutional building, political structuring and democratization

Understanding common features of nation- and state-building and democratization in post-Soviet countries requires a broad analytical model. To this end a universal logic of analysis has been proposed by Norwegian political scientist Stein Rokkan and his colleagues. One of them, Stefano Bartolini suggests that the formation of every territorial polity can be analyzed in terms of the relationship between centers and peripheries, boundary consolidation and criteria of membership definition and political structuring (2005). Such logic allows a description of nation and state formation in every country as a process of territorial consolidation, institution-building (including normative essential principles) and the construction of sociocultural mechanisms of integration.

Rokkan and his colleagues resorted to the concepts of well-known economist Alfred Hirschman – exit, voice and loyalty as variants of behavior toward formal rules in unfavorable conditions. Hirschman regarded exit and voice as alternative variants of expression of dissatisfaction by people which fluctuates depending on the possibilities granted by an organization (1970). Hirschman interpreted statelessness as the atrophy of voice emerging when there are the possibilities for exit. In other words, statelessness is the absence of institutional channels of voice that have not developed because of the possibilities of exit.
Rather than voice, loyalty and exit, Rokkan and his colleagues describe macro-systems using the notions of boundaries, system-building and political structuring. The application of Hirschman’s concepts allowed Rokkan to explain interaction between a center and its peripheries as well as between different centers in the process of nation and state formation. He elaborated a few empirical models of this process and used them to develop a conceptual map of Europe. The conceptual map shows that state formation and the shape and consolidation of communities were produced by establishing boundaries by creating possibilities for exit within strategies of boundary-building, and by the existing international order. Different periods of nation and state formation have been characterized by various types of exit. For example secession had been widespread during the earlier stages where many states had been threatened by disintegration (Finer 1974).

The use of exit and voice correlates with state and boundary formation. The boundaries determine the particular configuration of actors and public resources (i.e. services necessary for consumption) that are “locked” within the territory. Since they are locked there are no possibilities for exit. In this situation non-state actors tend to conceal their private resources or to resort to voice. The possibility of political control and the complexity of hierarchy increase after political boundaries are locked. Their competence, accessibility and complexity depend on restrictions that control of exit requires. Control over boundaries and the resulting restrictions for exit generate processes of political production, promote the legitimization of a central hierarchy and determine the functions assumed by the state and political structuring (Bartolini 2005: 29). With the consolidation of political boundaries, the larger are the abilities of dominant structures to stabilize their position.

The representatives of Rokkan’s scientific tradition discovered that the internal structuring of the state depends on how boundaries have historically been consolidated (political, economical, social, cultural, etc.). They analyzed both the territorial and membership aspects of this dependence (for example: Rokkan 1987). Membership refers to the attachment of actors to a political community and possibilities of external exit are determined by the control of the center over both territorial and sociocultural boundaries. This implies two types of exit: territorial (secession, etc.) and functional or membership (emigration, refusal of taxes, military service, etc.) (Finer 1974: 82). According to D. Caramani “from an evolutionary perspective, functional exit (emigration) replaced territorial exit (secession), since control over the territory and boundaries, as well as the degree of national integration, became strong enough to make geographical separation “unthinkable” (2004: 25).

The degree of center control over boundaries greatly increases its abilities to develop both state and democratic institutions. The latter “were largely the unintended results of situations of equilibrium in resource control among different institutional, political and social forces” (Bartolini 2005: 408). Preference for voice rather than exit in political systems presumes an appropriate structuring of channels of organization representation and development. These channels reduce
the costs of voice for individual actors, providing them with institutional rules and infrastructural support in the spheres of social, cultural and political equality. Such spheres establish additional (non-territorial) boundaries within a polity and define the limits of legal deliberation. Stefano Bartolini distinguishes two ideal types – one of overlapping and full closure of boundaries and another lacking overlap and closure. The consequence of the full closing of boundaries is the reinforcement of the control of the center over different peripheries and actors. This situation implies a concentration of resources in the center or in the hands of one actor. It creates unequal conditions for political actors and leads to domination by one of them. Significant political inequalities and the vagueness of boundaries increase the possibilities of exit and reduce incentives to structure the channels of voice. Furthermore, it restricts the spheres of political production at the center and makes the state dependent on special-interest groups (for example on big economic actors which are advantageous taxpayers) (Bartolini 2005).

This overall logic allows us to draw a number of conclusions which are important for understanding nation and state formation and democratization in post-Soviet countries. We can presume that it is useful to consider democratic institutions to be instrumental in the construction of a civic nation. However the correlation between nation-building and democratization is ambiguous. As Galbreath notes, “while we can define democratization as a redefinition of the nation-state, there may indeed be circumstances where the democratization process and nation-building project disagree” (2005: 35).

One conclusion concerns the correlation between “founding questions” (questions about the nature of the state, its boundaries and membership criteria) and political structuring (the formation of a system of sociopolitical organizations and channels of their interactions with the state including the institutions of representative democracy). Political structuring could be successful when “founding questions” have been resolved and equal political criteria for membership and civic identity have been established. Therefore the institutions which allow for civic political functions (e.g. elections, elective and accountable government, etc.) and symbolic actions of civic identity (e.g. political festivals) are very important. If these identities do not prevail and equal political criteria for community membership are not universal for all residents, dangerous contradictions between different identities and membership criteria as well as alternative political projects (including projects of territorial organization) can emerge.

To solve “founding problems”, equal criteria of membership, shared civic identity and a balance of interests are required. To this end, the consent and balance of interests of different groups is necessary. In turn, political structuring plays a very important role. In cases where the organized expression of interests is prohibited a balance could be hardly achieved. Such interests are not involved in attainment of consensus (even if consensus is assumed) and thereby are encouraged to choose other forms of political action and thought including radical and illegal forms.

Linz and Stepan distinguish four different ideal types of relationship between state-building and nation-building vis-à-vis minorities. This typology is founded
on two dimensions. The first one concerns the policy toward the rights of minorities and could be exclusive or inclusive. The second one reflects the ideological strategy of national leaders in terms of the extent to which the nation and demos overlap.

Linz and Stepan note that the first and second types of nation-building strategies are not compatible with the contemporary democracy. The first one conceives that the state turns to coercive policies that may lead to civil war or other conflicts. The second type could be characterized as “ethnic democracy”6 which does not satisfy the criterion of inclusiveness for polyarchy.5 The third type could also be problematic to future democratic development, which depends on the success of assimilation policy and the readiness of minority groups to give up their identity, language and culture. Linz and Stepan note: “When the intensity of the demand of the minority is great and the unwillingness of the majority to take any accommodation is also great, type III becomes unstable and unviable; if democracy is not to be destroyed, some moves toward type IV are likely to be desirable and even inevitable” (1996: 431). The fourth type of nation-building could be the least problematic for perspectives of democratic development.

However the correlation between nation-building and democratization is ambiguous even with the fourth type of nation-building strategy. While “founding problems” have not been resolved yet (for example, when boundaries have not been consolidated or there are discrepancies about membership criteria, constitutional bases, etc.) democratic institutions are often regarded by single groups, which have their own positions on “founding questions” (for example, on the secular character of the state), mainly as instruments to use in the pursuit of their own interests. This “privatization” of the state could result in a threat to stability, security and democratic development.

Imperial legacy, contemporary development and “nationalizing” politics in post-Soviet countries

Despite significant country differences which became ever more prominent in the current decade the post-Soviet states still retain a very important common feature. They have all gone through an imperial transition (Skak 1996: 18, 21). They all have a common imperial “institutional identity” (Ieda 2005: 21), which has resulted in problems of institution-building, boundary consolidation and political structuring. These problems are mainly brought about by the Soviet power structure and policies.

The Soviet Union consisted of “segment-states”.6 Many of them were created in their contemporary form only in the Soviet period. The most obvious example is the construction of the Asian Soviet republics. Their borders had been determined voluntarily however unlike African states, Asian Soviet republics had no provision for languages circulation, and political recognition of subnational regions, clans and tribes (Slezkine 1994; Lieven 2002). Some new independent republics had not existed prior to their creation by the Soviet Union. For exam-
Democratization in the post-Soviet countries

ple, historical Moldova had never included Transnistria. We can see a similar situation in the Ukraine. As Wilson notes “the various regions that make up modern Ukraine have moved in and out of Ukrainian history at different times, but have never really interacted together as an ensemble” (Wilson 1996: 25).

A common framework (legal, regime, partly cultural, for example the unification of education) had existed under the Soviet Union. Linguistic standardization played an important role in the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of 1978, concerning “further improvement of studying and teaching of the Russian language in the republics of the Union”. Attempts to form a common “civic” nation were undertaken under the slogan of a “new historical community of Soviet people”.7

However, such a policy was carried out inconsistently. The principle of division into the national republics and other administrative units provided the basis of territorial organization of the USSR and the Communist Party. Promotion of representatives of original ethnic groups in the power structure including scientific and cultural elites (corenizatsia and titul’nost’) was common. The policy of corenizatsia promoted the formation of a Soviet ethnic intelligentsia and its engagement in the process of political government of the territories. The Soviet state tended to rely on this group to control the national periphery (Tsutsiev 2006). The institution of titul’nost’ was an informal system of ensuring the collective rights of some groups and their domination over the rights of other groups. This system assumed the status inequality of different ethnic groups in the “segment states”. Russian scholar Markedonov notes that

in fact the Soviet state has institutionalized the ethnic groups as a major subject of politics and state law.... In practice it has meant the formation of ethncal property of ethnic groups on the territory marked as “national republic”. Consequently, these units were deemed illegitimate by many because the representatives of other “untitular” ethnic groups could not regard this territory of “titular” groups as their own.

(2006: 18)

Wide-ranging territorial experiments, forced resettlement, repressions and displacement of the titular national groups into the periphery of the Soviet empire were quite common. One example of the territorial experiment is the transfer of Crimea from the RFSFR to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954. The most striking example of displacement was the large-scale deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944.

Another example was the relocation of the native ethnic population from Baltic republics. The most massive deportation took place on 25–29 March 1949 in Estonia and Latvia when 42,133 and 21,000 people were deported and on 22–27 May 1948 in Lithuania when 41,000 people were exiled (Budryte 2005: 42). From 1944 to 1953 200,000, 213,000 and 150,000 Russian people and representatives of other ethnic communities had been moved into Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania respectively. Ethnic purges in the national communist Parties had
also been carried out. In Estonia, the general purge occurred between 1949–1952 and in Latvia – in 1959–1960. In 1970, there were 40.2 percent, 52.3 percent and 67.1 percent representatives of titular nations in the Latvian Communist Party, Estonian Communist Party and Lithuanian Communist Party respectively (Budryte 2005: 59). Lithuania was the most homogenous among Baltic republics. As a result of these policies some common “family” traits of the post-Soviet states have emerged.

The first common feature is the ambiguity and indistinctness of administrative, political, ethnical, linguistic, cultural and other boundaries. By the collapse of the Soviet Union most of the former Soviet republics were multiethnic and multilingual. Eastern European republics are no exception (see Table 8.1). The demographic policy of the Soviet government created a conflictual situation. As Dominic Lieven notes (2002), empires often lose territory that fail to colonize. However, it usually occurs easily and without bloodshed. Empires that colonize territories generally incorporate them forever.

The uncertainty of political boundaries over time has resulted in a large part of the population of newly independent republics and especially in unrecognized

Table 8.1 Dynamic of ethnic composition of former Soviet republics (Moldova, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia)

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Notes
* Internal disputes with ethnic Slavs in the Transnistrian region.
states having dual citizenship. For example, according to a 2000 census, 7 percent of Estonian residents were citizens of other states. Estonian citizens totaled less than one-half the population of several Estonian cities: 21.3 percent in Sillamäe, 36.4 percent in Narva, 41.8 percent in Kohtla-Jarve, 43.2 percent in Maardu, 43.2 percent in Paldiski, 44.3 percent in Loksa, 47.2 percent in Narva-Jõesuu. The greatest part of the population of these cities consisted of apatrides or Russian citizens. For example 42.7 percent of residents of Kohtla-Jarve were apatrides and 13.4 percent were citizens of Russia. Some 33.6 percent inhabitants of Narva were apatrides and 28.9 percent were Russian citizens. Among Russian residents of Estonia 20.9 percent were Russian citizens (Population 2001).

Romania’s entry into the European Union and its readiness to grant rights to Moldovan citizens induced applications for Romanian citizenship. According to the Romanian consulate 20 percent of Moldovan family members had applied by the end of 2006. Some 300,000 Moldovan citizens were given Romanian passports (Yaz’kova 2007: 117). In spring 2007, Romanian authorities asserted that they had received 800,000 applications. According to the 2004 census, 19.4 percent of the residents of Transnistria were citizens of Moldova, 10.1 percent of the population were citizens of Russia and 8 percent of inhabitants had Ukrainian citizenship.

Many people living in the new independent republics work outside their countries. For example, according to official estimates in 2004, 352,000 Moldovan citizens legally worked abroad (RIA novosti, 27 September 2004). According to non-official estimation, 600,000 Moldovan citizens were labor migrants.

The incompleteness of the formation of the civic nation in the USSR, the absence of clearly defined internal boundaries, and state weakness meant that in many former Soviet republics, disagreements on “founding questions” include questions regarding the nature of the state and membership criteria. Competing identities were widespread. For example, according to the poll of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Science in 1988 50 percent, 25 percent and 7 percent of the residents of Tallin considered their homeland to be the USSR, Estonia and Russia respectively. In 1991 the ratio changed; 20 percent, 35 percent and 22 percent believed that their motherland was the USSR, Estonia or Russia respectively (Tishkov 1993: 116). The poll conducted in Tallin in 1992 by the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of Estonian Academy of Sciences showed that most of the population had several equal identities. A total of 40.6 percent of Russian-speaking respondents felt themselves to be Russian citizens and 33.1 percent, citizens of the USSR. Some 12.1 percent of the respondents wanted to become Russian citizens and 26.3 percent also wanted to become Russian citizens with permission to work in Estonia.8

The vagueness and arbitrariness of the boundaries created during the Soviet era led to the emergence of “transition” territories. Obvious examples include Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea, Transnistria, Nagorny Karabakh and
Chechnya. Their relatively conflict-free existence while a part of the USSR was possible due to the common framework. After the disintegration of the USSR various borders became weaker. The ethnic and interregional contradictions became aggravated. The potential of exit became actual. “Transitional” zones have developed into seats of territorial conflict or even civil war. Secessionist political projects appeared in these zones. In the Eastern European part of the former Soviet Union several alternative projects emerged. The circumstances of the conflicts in Transnistria, Gagauz and Crimea are well known. Besides those conflicts some other alternative projects have emerged, not all secessionist. For example, the national referendum on Ukrainian independence on 1 December 1991 was supplemented by a referendum in Zakarpattya oblast on “the status of a self-governing territory”. Some 78 percent of participants supported this idea (Solchanyk 1994: 62–63). The demands of administrative autonomy were widespread in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine. In 1994 a local referendum in Donbas region contained a question on the federalization of Ukraine. In July 1993 a referendum on territorial autonomy of the region revealed 97 percent support for autonomy for the Estonian cities of Narva and Sillamäe, cities inhabited mostly by a Russian-speaking minority.

Vagueness and uncertainty of the boundaries led to the weakening of the position of new states’ centers, an absence of political structuring and to the privatization of the state by different economic and political actors. The disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in the narrowing of the sphere of political production and contributed to the weakening of the institutions of the state. In 1990s, the weakening of the state was accelerated by well-positioned oligarchs who used the state machinery in pursuit of personal or group interests. The major political and economic actors tended to privatize the legal space. This situation created the illusion of liberty but it did not favor the development of democracy.

We can also identify the problems of imperial transition in the Eastern European countries of the former USSR. Approaches to these problems depended largely on geopolitical peculiarities, and the historical and political traditions of these countries. All of them could be regarded as a double periphery of dynastic centers (Russian empire, Habsburg empire, Ottoman empire and Prussia). The territories of these states historically played the role of buffers between Eastern Europe and Russia. In this regard, they could be compared to the Rokkanian city belt. Eastern Europe has played this role for a long time. The boundaries of countries which have emerged in this area have never been especially stable. Their constituent territories have often been reshuffled among other states. This factor has resulted in conflicting cultural, linguistic, confessional and political identities in specific territories of Eastern European post-Soviet states. Naturally, the influence of different external centers on the process of state- and nation-building after the collapse of the Soviet Union continued to be quite strong.

For example, two external centers were influencing internal political development in contemporary Moldova. The Moldovan principality that emerged in the fourteenth century included some of the territory of contemporary Romania and only a part of Moldova. In the sixteenth century, Moldova became a subsidiary
of the Ottoman empire. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Bessarabia, historically a part of Moldova, was absorbed into the Russian empire. In 1918, Moldova became an independent republic for a very short time. Then it became a part of Romania, which tried to assimilate it until 1940, when it was annexed by the USSR. Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, Transnistria was a territory between Poland, Crimean khanate and the Moldovan principality. At the end of the eighteenth century it was incorporated into the Russian empire. After the 1917 Revolution, Transnistria and some other regions of contemporary Moldova were included in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) as the Moldovan autonomous republic. After World War II, the government of the USSR integrated both territories together in order to enhance the formation of Moldovan identity and to counterbalance the interwar Romanization. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in Moldova three major groups of people remained, with different ethnic, linguistic and political identities. The first group was made up primarily of representatives of the intelligentsia. These people felt themselves to be Romanian. The second group includes residents of the republics who identify themselves as Moldovan. The third group consisted of those who identify themselves as citizens of the Soviet Union. Among this group were Russian speakers.

There have historically been different identities in highly regionalized Ukraine. Until the seventeenth century, a large part of contemporary Ukraine belonged to the Polish–Lithuanian commonwealth. After 1667, Poltava, Chernigiv and Kiev came under the jurisdiction of the Russian empire. The territory of today’s regions of Lviv, Ternopil and Ivanovo-Frankivsk stayed in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth until the end of the eighteenth century. From the end of the eighteenth century until 1918 this region was a part of the Habsburg empire. After a short period of independence between 1918–1919 these territories came under the rule of Poland and only in 1939 were Galicia and Volhynia integrated into the Ukrainian SSR. Northern Bukovina belonged to Romania between 1918–1940. Zakarpattia had been a part of the Habsburg empire and Hungary before it was incorporated into Czechoslovakia in 1919, and then again in 1939 into Hungary. Only in 1945 did it become a part of the Ukrainian SSR. Crimea was transferred from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954. The different historical experience of various parts of Ukraine resulted in different ethnic, linguistic, cultural and even political identities. For example, the Polish legacy was and still is an important influence in western Ukraine (and Lithuania). Recent research on Eastern European post-Soviet countries shows that ethnic identification is losing ground to social identification. Only in the Western part of Ukraine and Lithuania is it still quite significant (Hrytsak 2005: 58). Historically, the southern part of contemporary Ukraine, Novorossia, had few cultural, linguistic and political traditions in common with Malorossia, and especially with western Ukraine. The cultural and linguistic tradition of Novorossia was bound up with its imperial legacy. In the cities of Novorossia, Russian language and culture dominated and Russian was the domestic language of both Russians and Ukrainians.
Still, Eastern European post-Soviet countries differed significantly from the European city belt in a number of ways. New independent post-Soviet republics emerged not from a number of independent polities and identities but on the basis of segment-states. There are not as many different centers as in the city belt. Unlike the city belt, post-Soviet countries of Eastern Europe used to be agricultural peripheries with a less developed network of cities capable of competing for power. Despite interwar and socialist economic and social modernization, some Eastern European countries remained economically peripheral. Intensive communication links are lacking compared to the city belt.

Eastern European post-Soviet countries also deviate from the city belt by traditions related to the division of power. As Berglund et al. note, “in political terms the eastern part of Europe has been a transitional zone between the Western tradition of division of power and Eastern tradition of concentration of power” (2004: 14). To put it bluntly we can indicate a common tendency in the former republic of the USSR: the farther to the south and east the greater is this tradition of concentration of power. In the post-Soviet countries the feudal relations which had been widespread during the Middle Ages in Western Europe did not exist. Consequently in post-Soviet countries there are traditional or even archaic power relations such as tsardom and clientelism. These tendencies are more prominent in the southern parts of the former Soviet Union (Berglund et al. 2004: 16), including regions under the influence of both Ottoman and Russian empires.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Eastern European countries failed to develop the channels, institutions and political practices necessary for establishing consensus between the main social, ethnic, linguistic, regional, etc. groups and political forces on “founding questions” and the influence of these groups on decision-making process. Attempts to consolidate the center and boundaries in new independent states are often accompanied by the reproduction of imperial practices of domination of one or a few political actors which represent the interests of the center. In particular this tendency reveals itself in the wide dissemination of “nationalizing” policy, where state- and nation-building projects reinforce the power of a dominant ethnic group. “Nationalizing” policy plays an important consolidating role for these groups, especially in contexts of state weakness, and where there is a lack of consensus on “founding questions” and national identity.

The degree of the domination and consensus achievement depends not only on the control over the boundaries. Another important factor is the influence of external actors and international organizations. This conclusion is confirmed by the softening of the “nationalizing” policy in Eastern European post-Soviet countries under the influence of the international community and some former imperial powers.
Variants of “nationalizing” policies in Eastern European post-Soviet countries

The character of “nationalizing” policy and the choice of the strategy of nation-building in post-Soviet space depended on different factors (Brubaker 1996; Bunce 1999, etc.):

1. the arbitrariness of political boundaries and redistribution of territory and resources over time;
2. patterns of population settlement during the Communist era and “settler colonialism” by the hegemonic population (Russian speakers, etc.);
3. historical traditions and the influence of external centers on internal political processes in new independent republics;
4. the specific policies shaping identity formation influenced by external actors;
5. problems provoked by the resettlement of displaced peoples.

All new post-Soviet Eastern European republics have been influenced by these factors. Three of these states – Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova – were to some degree constructed by the Soviet Union. Most Eastern European Soviet republics had a large number of Russian speakers among their population (see Table 8.1). The exception was Lithuania where the number of Russians was only slightly larger than the Polish minority. Belarus never actually existed as a state before its creation by the USSR. Ukraine and Moldova never existed as independent states as defined by their contemporary boundaries. The political and cultural identities of these groups have been shaped by the influence of Soviet policy. This was the case in Moldova. In Ukraine the Soviets implemented a policy of Ukrainization of non-Ukrainian populations including the Russins of Transcarpathia and the Polishchaks living in the borderlands with Belarus. This policy of Ukrainization has been ongoing since 1920. The Soviet government believed this policy would lead to the unification of the Soviet Ukraine, disseminating the Ukrainian language in different areas including the big industrial centers of eastern Ukraine. Estonia and Latvia had never existed as states before they became independent after the October Revolution in Russia. The duchy Kourliandia and Zemgalia (the western part of contemporary Latvia) was created as a result of the secularization of the Livonian order. Other parts of present-day Latvia were controlled by Sweden, the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and Russia. At the beginning of the twentieth century there was no common cultural and political identity in either Estonia or Latvia. The interwar period of independence was very important for nation and state formation in Latvia and Estonia. During this period the “nationalizing” policy of their respective authoritarian regimes began, which was typical of many other independent countries of Eastern Europe. For example, while faced with the Nazi threat, the Latvian state had forced many Baltic Germans (53,000 people) to leave Latvia. This move had been described as a victory in the nation-building process (Hiden 1987). Under Nazi occupation
the “final solution” to the Jewish question was initiated with the support of local nationalists. Estonia was the only “Judenfrei” country in Europe at the time of World War II.

In some Eastern European post-Soviet countries Russian minorities and other ethnic minorities concentrated in certain areas. For example, many Russian speakers living in Estonia resided in the Ida-Virumaa region. Most Russians in Latvia lived in Latgalia and Riga. Transnistria was populated mostly by Ukrainians and Russians and Gagauz Yery by Gagauz and Bulgarians. Russians concentrated mainly in the eastern and southern part of Ukraine. Many Russians and Poles lived in the Lithuanian capital.

In applying the typology of nation-building strategies formulated by Linz and Stepan to the analysis of the post-Soviet countries it is evident that there are no examples of the fourth type. We can find the first type of nation-building strategy (expel or at least systematically encourage the “exit” option) mostly in the region of armed conflicts. In post-Soviet space there are many examples of ethnic group displacement during these conflicts but many of them occurred in other parts of the former Soviet Union. There is only one example of armed conflict in post-Soviet Eastern Europe – the conflict in Transnistria. It was the least protracted armed conflict of those in the post-Soviet republics (Mukomel). There were ethnic migrants (for example, Moldovans leaving Transnistria) but there are few data detailing exactly how many.

The elements of this strategy have been used not only in the conflict zones but in some peaceful republics. For example, many Latvian politicians in the first half of the 1990s believed that the “Russian problem” could be resolved not only by naturalization but by repatriation and emigration (Budryte 2005). The requirement that residents know titular languages and the real inequality experienced by different ethnic groups forced many Russians to leave post-Soviet republics.

The second type of nation-building strategy involves the isolation of ethnic minorities from the political process by granting civil liberties without political rights and thus discouraging the “voice” option. This type of “nationalizing” policy was evident in Latvia and Estonia. According to the citizenship laws of these countries (1992 and 1994, respectively) automatic citizenship was granted only to those non-Latvian and non-Estonian people who had had it before 1940 or to their descendants. All other residents were required to become naturalized in order to become citizens. Only some years later under the influence of international organizations were elements of *jus soli* introduced and the procedure of naturalization was softened. The process of naturalization of non-citizens was slow. By 1 January 2007 there were 392,816apatrids (17.2 percent) in Latvia (Brands 2007: 11). In February 2007 of 1,360,670 residents living in Estonia 118,840 persons were without citizenship, 136,860 naturalized citizens (plus 31,460 persons living abroad) and 91,520 citizens of the Russian Federation. On the whole the quantity of persons having no citizenship decreased to 9 percent of the population (Shiriaev 2007). Citizens and non-citizens of Estonia and Latvia have different political rights. Non-citizens have no right to participate in
national elections. Estonian non-citizens have the right to vote in local elections. Russian non-citizens, who are more diffusely populated in Latvia than Russians in Estonia, have no rights to participate in local elections even as voters. Non-citizens in Latvia and Estonia enjoy many social and economic rights. There are problems with the cultural and political rights held by ethnic minorities. According to official legislation national minorities consist only of citizens. There are no special political institutions (excluding political parties) providing ethnic minorities with political representation in parliaments or territorial autonomies. There are advisory councils for minorities but they cannot seriously influence the decision-making process.

Some scholars have tried to apply the concept of ethnic democracy formulated by Ian Lustick to these cases. He distinguished three stages of relations between the ethnic minority and the dominant national group: segmentation, dependence and cooptation (Pettai and Hallik 2002). First, the ethnic minority is isolated from the majority and divided into several groups. Second, the minority becomes dependent on the majority in terms of access to resources, working places and permits. Cooptation implies the selection and bribery of minority leadership in return for loyalty. In fact there are different groups of Russians in Estonia and Latvia having different status and levels of integration into these political communities. These groups have different political, social and economic rights (see for example, Roberova 2004; Galbreath 2005; Pettai and Hallik 2002; Budryte 2005).

This kind of the nation-building policy promotes the gradual consolidation of the polity with respect to “founding questions”. However, in these countries democracy is competitive and fair only for a limited number of citizens. Such a political regime could hardly be considered a modern democracy because this regime assumes a “categorical inequality”. As Charles Tilly notes:

The term means organization of social life around boundaries separating whole sets of people who differ collectively in their life chances, as is commonly the case with categories of gender, race, caste, ethnicity, nationality and religion, and is sometimes the case with categories of social class. To the extent that such inequalities translate directly into categorical differences in political rights and obligations, democratization remains impossible. Any democratization process depends not necessarily on diminution of categorical inequality but on insulation of public politics from categorical inequality. Two main processes contribute to that insulation: equalization of the categories themselves in some regards, and buffering of politics from the operation of those categories.

(2007: 56)

Furthermore, the disagreement on “founding questions” by a large portion of the population in these countries can create threats of potential instability. Exclusionary policies encourage the representatives of ethnic minorities to choose the exit opinion: for example, to become citizens of the motherland or get no
citizenship at all. Many non-Latvian and non-Estonian residents of these countries regard Estonian and Latvian citizenship only as an instrument for the achievement of their personal goals. Given this perspective, the number of applications for naturalization decreased once freedom to travel within the EU without a visa was granted to the residents of Latvia and Estonia (Brands 2007: 11).

The third type of nation-building strategy implies a “major effort to assimilate minorities into national culture and give no special recognition to minority political and cultural rights”. No states in post-Soviet Eastern Europe have pursued this strategy. In Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania the cultural rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities are recognized but no particular political rights or instruments provide those minorities with special political representation or participation in the decision-making process.

Unlike Latvia and Estonia, other countries such as Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania adopted inclusionary citizenship laws granting citizenship to all permanent residents. For example in Ukraine the law assumed a territorial definition of citizenship and membership in the new state was granted automatically to almost everyone who was living in Ukraine at the time the law was passed (the so called ‘Zero Option’). As no category of the population was formally excluded from the political community, citizenship based on *ius soli* became one of the fundamental attributes of the new political community.

(Wolczuk 2001: 89)

The language of ethnic minorities has not become the second state language in any of the post-Soviet countries except Belarus despite the efforts of some political forces. However in Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus some norms exist ensuring the cultural rights of minorities. For example Article 10 of the Ukrainian Constitution ensures “the free development, use and protection of Russian, and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine” (Constitution of Ukraine 1996). Article 53 guarantee the rights of minorities to learn their native languages: “Citizens who belong to native minorities are guaranteed in accordance with the law the right to receive instruction in their native language, or to study their native language in state and communal educational establishments and through national cultural societies.” It is reasonable to agree with Dominique Arel, who affirms that, unlike many of the successor states of the former Soviet bloc, the Ukrainian state was being built on territorial and civic principles, eschewing any privilege for the titular Ukrainian group…. In terms of civic rights, one can hardly disagree with the assertion that Ukrainian state policy has been all-inclusive…. It is difficult to disagree with the contention that the Ukrainian state-building project is resting on territorial, as opposed to ethnic, foundations.

(Arel, 1995: 167–168)
According to Alfred Stepan, Ukraine was an example where the soft policy of nation-state formation could provide many complementary identities important to state-nations and democracy in plural societies (2005, 2008).

This soft policy had been accomplished by the dissolution of Verkhovnaia Rada in 2007. During this political crisis the “nationalizing” policy was intensified. Some examples include the adoption of Ukrainian for higher education and a law requiring Russian films be translated into Ukrainian.

In Ukraine no special institutions ensure the representation of minorities. For example, regions in Ukraine lack institutions facilitating minority-interest representation like federal structures or special quotas in parliaments and other governmental bodies. Since 2006, Moldova, Russia and Kazakhstan have instituted an unusual proportional representation electoral system with a single nationwide district.

Efforts to assimilate national (or linguistic in the Ukrainian case) minorities do not correspond to the soft-line strategy of nation-state-building and can create threats to the stability and unity of Ukraine. It is important to consider that different groups of people have competing views of what the Ukrainian nation is and should be. According to the poll conducted by the Ukrainian center of Rasumkov, in the Ukraine, the majority of all linguistic groups believe that the best definition of the Ukrainian nation would be as a civic nation (43 percent, 42 percent and 35 percent of Russians, Russian speakers among Ukrainians and other groups respectively). Responses focusing on the ethnic character of the nation among all groups living in the Ukraine are higher than the percentage of the respondents preferring the civic principle (Litvinenko and Yakimenko 2008).

An ambiguous “nationalizing” policy is carried out in Moldova. On the one hand there are some forms of minority-rights protection. In 1994 Gagauz was granted territorial autonomy (Gagauz Yeri). In 2001, a law on the rights and juridical status of persons belonging to national minorities was passed. Article 7 of the law gave minorities rights to education in Moldovan and Russian. This law guarantees the rights of national minorities to approximately proportional representation in executive and judicial bodies, in the army and law-enforcement organizations.

On the other hand, in Moldova there are no special institutions ensuring the political representation of ethnic minorities and their influence on the process of decision-making. Neither the constitution nor the law carry any stipulations concerning the rights for quotas of ethnic minorities in representative bodies or for the creation of ethnic parties. Judicial norms concerning parties and elections also do not favor representation of national minorities. Amendments to the law on political parties in 1998 introduced a high threshold of unification. It demands that any political party must have 5,000 members in half of the administrative units at the second level.

Moldova has a proportional electoral system with a single nationwide district. The 2000 amendments to the electoral law introduced a 6 percent threshold of representation for a party (it was lowered to 4 percent after the last presidential elections), 9 percent for a block of two parties and 12 percent for a block of three or more parties.
One of the methods of “nationalizing” politics used in Moldova is the creation of an enclave of national minorities in Transnistria. All parties to this conflict are interested in maintaining the status quo (see Val’ and Emerson 2005; Meleshkina 2008). Unlike in Latvia and Estonia, this is another example of exclusion and limitation of the influence of ethnic and regional minorities upon the political process in Transnistria. This frozen conflict allows for a narrower and ethnically homogenous electorate (see Table 8.1) and creates an external “enemy” as a tool for internal national integration.

As the experience of Moldova and Ukraine shows, “nationalizing” policy could play an important role of consolidation when the state is weak and a social consensus about “founding questions” and identity is lacking. But these policies do not necessarily lead to democratization.

The case of Lithuania is an example of a softer “nationalizing” policy than Ukraine and Moldova. There is one state language but there are also norms securing the cultural rights of representatives of Russian and Polish minorities. However, Lithuania is the only country which devised mechanisms facilitating the political representation of an ethnic minority. For example, according to the 1992 electoral law, parties of national minorities must overcome a 2 percent threshold to get parliamentary representation (unlike the 5 percent required for other parties). A mixed electoral system encourages the representation of territorially defined ethnic groups. Many researchers recognize that the processes of nation and state formation in Lithuania as well as democratization are more successful than in other post-Soviet states. The strategy of nation-building in Lithuania does not create instability and ethnic conflicts. There is no volatile ethnic cleavage in the country. However, there are some problems with participation and the political inclusion of minority groups. Furthermore, minority groups remain some of the poorest people in these countries (most Poles and Russians live in the poor eastern part of Lithuania) (see Budryte 2005 for more detail). Belarus is the exception. In this country the Russian language has been recognized as a second state language.

Conclusion

The common features of nation-building and political structuring in Eastern European post-Soviet countries help us to arrive at some general perspectives on this process. A combination of existing problems caused by the imperial legacy has inhibited nation-building and democratization. “Generic” features of the Soviet post-imperial spaces provide two comparatively successful variants of nation consolidation. However, these variants seem to be problematic with respect to both democratization and transaction costs.

The first variant promotes the exclusion of ethnic minorities from nation-building processes as a result of the ethnocultural criteria for membership. The most evident examples are Latvia and Estonia. Concealed mechanisms of this kind of policy could be found in other post-Soviet republics. As we mentioned above, such a policy endangers democracy and is fraught with instability and conflict.
Democratization in the post-Soviet countries

The second variant is based on the formation of a civic identity with the use of legal and political standardization and the inclusion of “other” groups of people (for example, ethnic minorities) in the polity by granting various rights to them. As the international experience shows, the process of civic nation-building involves sociocultural standardization and homogenization on the grounds of ethnocultural or ethnolinguistic criteria. However, in the case of an inclusive policy, ethnic or linguistic criteria for national membership could hardly be deemed dominant.

In any country soft and inconsistent policy resulting in the exclusion of minority groups and restrictions on organizational expression of their interests may jeopardize the consensus and/or balance of the interests necessary for democratic development. Since these groups cannot participate in consensus-building, they are motivated to undertake other forms of political action, including the illegal and the radical. This situation creates an environment in which extremism, instability and insecurity thrive, provoking conflicts similar to those in Transnistria, Gagauz and other places in the 1990s.

On the other hand, the granting of extensive rights and the recognition of organized minority interests in conflict with the “founding questions” of the majority of the population and/or with the group of nation-builders can also endanger democracy and create insecurity and instability. As Bartolini notes,

today it is felt – although not yet demonstrated – that “democracy” can be more easily than before exported or taught and that top-down democratization can lead later on to the political structuring of the polity. The extent to which this gives rise to only “façade” democracy is still the object of heated debates, however.

(Bartolini 2005: 408)

Consequently the achievement of the basic consensus on the nature of the state, the boundaries of political community and fundamental rules of the game could be regarded as the main condition of success of nation-building and democratization in post-Soviet countries.

Notes
1 This article was written with the support of the Russian Humanity Foundation.
2 This kind of politics has been characterized as following:

In the arena of civil society, schooling and mass media could be restricted to the official language. In the arena of political society, nationalizing citizenship laws could lead to a significant over-representation of the dominant nationality in elected political offices. In the arena of the state bureaucracy, a rapid changeover to one official language could de facto decrease other nationalities’ participation in and access to the services of the state. In the arena of the rule of law, the legal system could subtly privilege a whole range of customs, practices, and institutions of the would-be nation-state. Finally, in the arena of economic society, the state-bearing nationality, as the presumed “owner” of the nation-state, could be given special (or even exclusive) rights to land redistribution or voucher distribution, if there was privatization.

(Linz and Stepan 1996)
To distinguish two strategies (domination or consensus) of nation and state building Linz J. and A. Stepan use the different terms: “nation-state” and “state-nation” (Linz and Stepan 1996: 34); see also: Stepan 2005, 2008).

3 Rogers Brubaker distinguishes “nationalizing” states from civic states. In the later cases ethnicity should not be used as a measure of state politics. The state and citizenship are defined in terms of liberal democracy and civil rights. Unlike the civic states, “nationalizing” states are “ethnically heterogeneous yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elites promote … the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing and political hegemony of nominally state-bearing nation[s]” (Brubaker 1995: 109). There is a national minority resisting assimilation and its external “homeland”.

4 The concepts of “ethnic” or “ethnocratic” democracy as well the concept of “diminished democracy” have been developed since the 1973 Arab–Israeli war (Ghanem 1998; Peled 1992, etc.). These concepts describe a specific regime in an ethnically divided society where rights have been granted to all residents but the domination of one ethnic group has been secured in institutions. The goal of this regime of majoritarian government is to assign values, power and public resources to one titular ethnic group comprising the social constituency of the state. This regime accords several compensations to the ethnic minority. Lustick notes that the ethnic majority use segmentation, dependence and cooptation to establish and sustain their dominant position (1980). This concept of Lustick’s has been used to analyze situations in countries (for example, Estonia) where a proportion of the residents has not had formal political rights (Pettai and Hallik 2002).

5 One of the basic institutions of contemporary democracy is inclusive suffrage, when practically all adult residents have the right to vote during elections and almost all adults have the right to run as candidates (Dahl 1971, 1989).

6 A term proposed by Roeder (2007).

7 The formation of this type of “civic” nation has provided the mechanisms of compulsory inclusion and mobilization (institutes of the “Soviet democracy”), many of which have significantly differed from the means of nation-building and political structuring in Western European democracies.


9 With other parts of Eastern Europe, these countries formed the so-called Balto-Euxenic system (for example Ilyin, 2008).

10 About regional difference and regional politics in Ukraine see for example Kubicek 2002; Sasse 2002; Katchanovski 2006.

11 A proportional system and the magnitude of districts complicate the representation of territorially concentrated minorities.

12 Tilly has noted that practically all European governments eventually tried to homogenize their population (1975).

References


Democratization in the post-Soviet countries


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9 Political and national identity in Russian political discourse

Olga Malinova and Philipp Casula

Nationalism, identity and identity politics have traditionally not been the major focus of transformation theory. Instead, on the strictly theoretical level, the focus was more on hard, positivist factors, such as institutional setup, prior regime type, mode of transition, economic development (Müller and Pickel 2007: 76). There also was a special emphasis on the role of political elites, and on the (expected) development of civil society. In the strand of transformation literature which finally picked up the issue of national identity, it became a commonplace that after 1990, Russia underwent a severe identity crisis. However, because of the aforementioned gaps in theory, many accounts in (Western) social science either fail to provide detailed evidence for this claim and/or fall short of embedding their assertion into a theoretical framework.

On the other hand, international relations (IR) theory has been much more inclined than transformation theory to translate the cultural turn into their theories, adopting constructivist and sometimes poststructuralist perspectives (Connolly 1991; Edkins 1999; Hansen 2006; Chernoff 2007: 153ff.). The poststructuralists’ basic claim is that it is not possible to step outside the world and impartially observe reality as it takes place “out there”. Actually, there is no “reality” out there – what can rather be observed are networks of (verbal and non-verbal) interactions (i.e. discourses) that construct different realities. Similarly, identities are seen as constructs and IR theory has also been accordingly quick to recognize their importance for international relation formation (Kassianova 2001; Hopf 2002; Tsygankov 2006; Morozov 2009).

A particularly promising theory to shed a new, theoretical sound light on Russia’s identity crisis is Laclau and Mouffe’s (2001) theory of discourse and hegemony, which highlights the relational and antagonistic character of identities. It elaborates how events like the end of the Cold War represent major discursive ruptures which trigger a reshuffling of identities. It also offers points of departure for understanding Russia’s development and new stability without being bound to the usual approach of assessing the degree of democracy.1 Introducing poststructuralist elements into transformation theory also means releasing it from the grip of a normative, Eurocentric transitology, since, as Richard Ashley summarizes:
The task of poststructuralist social theory is not to impose a general interpretation, a paradigm of the sovereignty of man, as a guide to the transformation of life on a global scale. In contrast to modern social theory [of which Transitology is a derivate, OM&PC], poststructuralism eschews grand designs, transcendental grounds or universal projects of humankind.

(quoted in Connolly 1991: 56)

Approaches focusing on discourses allow us to take into account material and ideational elements to the analysis, shedding light on how identities, emerge, change and achieve stability.

Bearing these theoretical issues in mind, the present chapter will tackle the issue of discursive identity construction in Russia, focusing particularly on the development of national and political identity, highlighting how both are interconnected and how hegemonic struggles for redefining key concepts take place. Rather than a detailed analysis of public discourse, which goes beyond the scope of this chapter, it will concentrate on how the official, hegemonic discourse articulated political and national identities. Analysis will focus especially on the discourse of “Democrats” in power and on the Statist discourse. In the early 1990s a specific strand of politicians, conventionally labeled as “Democrats”, came to power, representing a kind of discourse that achieved a precarious hegemony. This discourse developed and articulated, with certain variations, demands from the late perestroika period. The hegemony was crippled, however, also due to institutional impediments and practices (which are not the object of analysis here), and was replaced by the prevalence of the Statist discourse, which slowly achieved a new hegemony. Hence, the chapter covers the periods of the early 1990s when dealing with the “Democratic” discourse and of the late 1990s when dealing with the Statist one.

Debates about “the nation”: the tension between civic and ethnic concepts

On “nationalism” in Russia

In Russian, the word “nationalism” has a pejorative meaning: it is often used to point to negative phenomena such as “national egoism”, “exaggerated attention to national differences”, “exaltation of one’s nation to the detriment of the others”, etc. Both in academic literature (for example Yanov 1978; Laqueur 1993; Devlin 1999) and in public discourse, the tradition of Russian nationalism is primarily linked to conservative and traditionalist doctrines about “our common past” and “our common future”. According to this dominant interpretation, there can be no positive connection between ideology and the political practice of nationalism, and the development of democracy.

More importantly, it remains disputable if the community that “stands behind” the Russian state can be interpreted as “the nation”. This ambiguity is reproduced in the text of the 1993 constitution that defines as the only source of state power
the multiethnic people of the Russian Federation, or, more precisely, its “multi-
national” people (mnogonatsional’nyi narod). The constitution establishes equal
rights and freedoms for all citizens irrespective of their nationality. The term
“nationality” was reserved for ethnic groups, though sovereignty was ascribed not
to the aggregate of such groups but to the “people” as a whole. Hence, to rein-
force the integrity of the state in the face of expanding ethnic conflicts, political
discourse followed the way of the USSR in defending the collective identity of its
citizens as supranational: what remained, and which marks a kind of continuity,
is a principle of viewing “nationality” as a characteristic of “peoples of Russia”.

At the same time this constitutional formula opened the way for interpreting
the “people of the Russian Federation” as a civic nation. Boris Yeltsin proposed
such an interpretation in his first presidential address to the Federal Assembly in
1994 (Yeltsin 1994). It provoked critical reactions from those who supposed that
the idea of a civic, rossiyskiy, nation challenged the “rights” of the “nationali-
ties” of Russia (see Tishkov 2007: 21, 39).

Many liberal adherents of a civic nation question whether the preconditions
for its existence are in place. Emil Pain, experts at Liberal’naya missiya Foundation,
writes:

[T]he civic nation has not formed in Russia yet…. There are no signs of the
basic factors of development in this direction – no stable predominance of a
Russian civic identity over ethnic, regional, confessional ones.

(Pain 2004: 18)

This assessment is based on a specific interpretation of the “nation” as the oppos-
ite of “empire”. Pain underscores:

Russia today is . . . an empire with a liberal façade, decorated to look like a
federative republic. It . . . retains the essence of imperial political regime – a
power that does not rest upon the consent of the peoples, upon their will.

(Pain 2007a)

Valery Tishkov voices another opinion concerning the perspectives of a civic
nation. In his view, the Russian Federation is the embodiment of the rossiyskiy
nation, based on historical, cultural, social and political bonds. Tishkov supposes
that nation-building relies on policies oriented towards creating “a notion that
reflects and accentuates common features and values, including civic national-
ism and rossiyskiy patriotism” (Tishkov 2005).

However,

[t]he special feature of discussions about the nation in contemporary Russia
consists in the fact that it is addressed to too many basic issues simultan-
ously. There hardly is any other country where so many basic issues were
contestable at the same time.

(Miller 2007: 10)
Such conditions are the result of both cognitive/cultural and institutional factors. Though notions embedded in official Soviet ideology had lost the status of “the only true” ideas, they remained part of a repertoire of meanings within the discourse about the nation (essentialist interpretations of “the nation” are part of this legacy). There is a ceaseless symbolical struggle around old and new problems connected with the definition of national identity and national interests. And most discourses in this struggle are not aimed at dialogue and the search for compromise, but instead compete for hegemony.

“Democrats” on national identity

The fate of the foreign policy of the “Democrats” illustrates this struggle over the meanings of national identity. “Democrats” like Yegor Gaydar and Gennady Burbulis were, however, first of all concerned with the economy and did not see national identity as priority issue.

Nevertheless, the “Democrats” had some clear ideas on Russia’s role in the world and thus also on Russia’s identity. Andrey Kozyrev and other “Democrats” around Yeltsin took over elements of Gorbachev’s foreign policy doctrine and refined them. More than Gorbachev, who stressed the integration into the “common European House”, they demanded integration into the whole international community. Kozyrev is emblematic for the “Democrats”’ positions and for the school of thought labeled as *International Institutionalists* (Tsygankov 1997).

These “Democrats” believed that a maximal opening of Russia to the West would grant the country “efficiency, wealth, and power associated with the liberal states of the North and West” (Richter 1996: 77; cf. Malinova 2009: 144–153). The national security concept of 1993 sees the real threats not in the Western states but rather within Russia, in the former Soviet Union, and in general in all non-democratic states. These threats are best countered through negotiations and nonviolent means. NATO is mentioned only in the context of possibilities of cooperation (Kassianova 2001: 830f.; Tsygankov 2006: 61). These guidelines led to a kind of isolationism within the former USSR and vis-à-vis Asian countries that went so far that even the interests of ethnic Russians living in the Near Abroad (the former Soviet republics) were disregarded.

Insofar as they were concerned with national identity, “Democrats” in the early 1990s were inclined toward a civic nationalism (Gaydar, Kozyrev). This also applies for the members of the liberal parties, such as *Výbor Rossii* and *Yabloko* (Malinova 1998). However, the “Democrats” lost momentum. From 1993 on, they realized that the drift towards the West was not fully appreciated there as they had expected. The establishment of a partnership on equal footing proved to be difficult. Kozyrev and others who had underlined common (democratic) values in the beginning, deeming them to be sufficient for the establishment of such a partnership, consequently started to point at common *interest*, too. Thus, when describing the “Lagging Partnership”, Kozyrev (1994) stressed not only the “natural friendship” between Russia and the West but also hinted at common...
interests, pointing out possibilities for a “variable geometry” for and a “pragmatic approach” to the relationship (Kozyrev 1994: 59ff.). An element is additionally introduced into this discourse which actually comes from another political, more “conservative”, camp: “Russia is predestined to be a great power” (Kozyrev 1994: 62), and as such it deserves respect, states Kozyrev. Accordingly, it is up to the West to decide whether this great power falls into the hands of the ultranationalists or whether it stays on the path to democracy.

This slight movement in the position of the most ardent proponents of a Western integration hints at the pressure which this discourse suffered, especially from the conservative camp, which grew stronger as the partnership with the West failed to materialize and the West failed to conform to the do-ut-des principle. Kozyrev (1994) offered a catalogue of principles that were supposed to guide the relations between Russia and the West: it included recognition of Russia as an equal partner and the closure of institutional gaps, and it provided for Russian participation in European decision-making processes. However, in the following years, the West tacitly rebuffed this catalogue. The expansion of NATO beginning in 1995 was a setback to the foreign policy of the “Democrats”. The final blow came in 1999, when NATO forces intervened in Kosovo and bombed Serbia without a UN resolution and against Russia’s will.

The Statist discourse emerging

Due to these setbacks, the “Democratic” discourse on national identity continuously lost ground to discourses that put more emphasis on Russia’s national interests, and its uniqueness. The Statist discourse emerged from this struggle as the dominant interpretation of Russian national interest and identity, managing to marginalize more radical positions. In the mid-1990s the trend towards Statist positions became more and more apparent. Former “Democrats”, like Andrey Kozyrev, adhered to (elements of) Statism (Kozyrev 1995). It was the disagreement with the economic reforms as pushed under Gaydar and the course in foreign relations as proposed by Kozyrev which contributed to the strengthening of the Statist discourse.

While the Statists have more pronounced opinions about the national identity than about domestic policies, they also remain vague when it comes to presenting a coherent view on this topic. It is this vagueness that makes Statist discourse so inclusive and compatible with other positions, enabling it to conquer a hegemonic position. “Vagueness” can also be interpreted as inclusiveness, as the ability to include different discursive elements and to articulate them as moments of a single discourse. It is these characteristics of the Statist discourse that make it such a good populist discourse, in terms of Laclau (2005).

However, Statists claim for Russia the status of a great power (velikaja derzhava). This self-perception is reflected in the National Security Concept of 1997. The country in question seems to be completely different from the one in 1993, states Kassianova (2001: 831). At various points, parity with other great powers is stressed. NATO is portrayed as a possible antagonist, its expansion
considered extremely dangerous. Quite in contrast to the policies of Kozyrev, the Statists focused on the former Soviet republics. It was there that, in the Statists’ view, Russia should defend and expand its primacy (cf. Richter 1996: 80f; Tsygankov 1997: 252).

Thus, the Statist discourse includes elements of the “patriotic discourse’s” perception of Russia as a great power, as it is advanced by parties such as the LDPR of Vladimir Zhirinovsky. This leads to an antagonistic position vis-à-vis the West, conducive to the identity-building process. It is thus not surprising that Statist discourse has become hegemonic under Putin.

The Statist discourse since 2000

After 2000, the Statist discourse strengthened its position as the official discourse, seeking to establish a “consent” about national identity. As this discourse tries to be “comprehensive”, it tends to reduce the tensions between competing models of collective identity by mixing their elements into an eclectic construction. At the same time it rejects (and thus marginalizes) the extreme versions of competing models. But not all symbolic conflicts can be solved this way. Ultimately, Statist discourse faces the same ambiguities and struggles over the meaning of terms.

The *russkiy*–*rossiyskiy* debate is a case in point. The project of a civic *rossiyskaya* nation that was proposed (but not fully accepted) in the 1990s introduced the term *rossiyskiy* into official discourse. Still, there is a certain resistance to this term in everyday speech practices – not only for ideological reasons (though because of them as well). The term *rossiyskiy* seems to be inclusive – in contrast to the concept of a Russian nation based on ethnicity. But the inertia of meanings makes a politically correct substitution ambiguous. You might say *rossiyskiy* about the state or history, but language, literature, and culture remain *russkiy*, which signals that not all meanings connected to national attributes can be translated as *rossiyskiy*. As a result, an inclusive notion can turn into the opposite and become a marker of not belonging to the category of *russkiy*. So, many historical and cultural meanings involved in a description of national identity are still connected with the adjective *russkiy*.

At the same time it is hardly possible to replace *rossiyskiy* with *russkiy* as it was recently proposed by some politicians from the party of power *Edinaya Rossiya* (ER). In June 2006, they organized “The Days of the Russian Political Culture” (*Russkaya politicheskaya kul’tura*). The choice of the adjective “Russian” (*russkaya*) was meant to stress the contiguity with Russia’s cultural traditions in their ethnic and not civic/state dimension. At the same time, it was supposed to challenge “the national nihilism” of the liberals and “Westernizers” who defined (nationality) politics in Yeltsin’s times. Rehabilitated “Russianness” (*russkost’) is interpreted in terms of culture, not descent. According to one of the ideologists of ER, there are three criteria of Russian (*russkiy*) identity: Russian language, Russian culture and the Russian state as an “unquestionable value” (Isaev 2006: 7–9).
The politicians of ER most certainly do not mean to liquidate the project of a civic nation, but the choice of the adjective makes a big difference. The proposed change is not only rather disputable from the political point of view, it also encounters the resistance of established meanings to which people appeal to describe things.

**Democracy and collective identity: reassessment of history and search for solidarity**

The notion of “democracy” existed already in Soviet discourse. The USSR claimed to be “democratic”, but not in the bourgeois sense. Thus, “democracy” was nothing illegal or subversive in the Soviet Union. However, “democracy” was certainly not a constitutive element of the Soviet discourse.

Thus, when being “democratic” was separated from the Soviet discourse and transformed into an independent demand (for democracy “like in the West”), being “democratic” became subversive to the system.

**“Democrats” on democracy in the 1990s**

Boris Yeltsin, the most prominent “Democrat”, persistently demonstrated his commitment to “democracy”. In his speeches, he represented democracy as part of a newly emerging collective identity, the result of a voluntary choice by the citizens of Russia. “Democracy” was a great and positive change that Russia was experiencing. On one hand, this change was a matter of pride: It meant a break with totalitarianism and its practices of violating human rights, as well as its ideological dictate, the absence of freedoms, the ineffective economy, etc. On the other hand, the break with the past was indeed very sharp. The reassessment of the national past by the “democratic” political camp during perestroika drew a clear line between the Soviet experience (portrayed in negative terms derived from the Cold War system of binary categories), and a future Russia that will “return to the road of civilization”. From this perspective, prerevolutionary history could not be seen very positively because its specific course led to the October Revolution. As Yeltsin put it in 1995: “Russia is moving from one historical epoch to the other with the speed commensurable to the life of one generation” (Yeltsin 1995).

The novelty of “democracy” for Russian identity had consequences that were twofold: On one hand, it symbolized a desire for change, but on the other, the future breakthrough to “civilization” could only be achieved by way of demolishing national traditions. The discourse about national identity constructed by “Democrats” was antagonistic to Communists and “Patriotic” discourses. For that reason, it could not be a good basis for “national consent”, for which reformers so strove.

But the most important difficulty related to the adoption of “Democracy” as a part of Russian identity consisted in its dependence on economic and social success. As the population got more and more disappointed with democratic
reforms, the idea of democracy lost its appeal. This clearly shows that “Democracy” was mainly seen as a way of achieving the prosperity\textsuperscript{11} of wealthy Western nations.

When this prosperity failed to materialize, authorities were forced to find excuses for these failures. In his addresses, Yeltsin persistently blamed the lack of consent on basic issues for the delayed results of his reforms. He also blamed “the profound struggle between adherents and opponents of the democratic system” inside the state structures (Yeltsin 1994) and argued that the “development of the new statehood took place in the context of strict political confrontation” which hampered the adoption of optimal decisions (Yeltsin 1997). Political discourse of the 1990s reveals permanent tension between pluralism and the lack of solidarity.

**Statists on democracy in the late 1990s**

This tension contributed to a fading of the “Democratic” discourse and the rise of the fortunes of the Statist discourse. All in all, the Statists displayed a pragmatic approach to both foreign and domestic politics, apparently lacking any ideological foundation. However, it is precisely this lack of an explicit Weltanschauung that hints at their ideological foundation. This is apparent when it comes to describing the development of Russia in the 1990s. Primakov expresses his “indignation” about the Russian loss of influence and especially about the decline of the state’s strength:

> What caused me the most concern and even indignation at that time was the lack of progress in strengthening the power of the law. With public discontent rising over the inertia of the state bodies and the lack of order and discipline, voices were increasingly clamouring for an end of the “democratic game” and a return to a “strong hand” at the helm.  
> (Primakov 2004: 72)

Rule of law, efficiency, order and discipline seem to be the major concerns of Primakov. The cure which the “Pseudoliberals” (Primakov) applied led to corruption and crime and made the behavior of state bodies unpredictable. At different points in his book, Primakov denounces the effects of privatization as it was carried out.\textsuperscript{12}

“Democracy” actually does not play a central role in the Statists’ worldview. A strong state, stability, efficiency and order are their main goals. How to achieve them, by which means, Primakov fails to explain – in fact the “how” was not important to him. In many regards, thus, Primakov’s conduct as a prime minister after the financial crash in 1998 foreshadowed and set the tone for Putin’s presidency. Putin, however, in contrast to Primakov, had the power and the (financial) means to pursue this approach.
Sovereign democracy – Statism after 2000

The transformation of political institutions and the system of political communications that started when Vladimir Putin came to office opened the way for other strategies for the mobilization of solidarity. Putin gave more room to some ideas from the store of Communists and “Patriots” that were taboo for the “Democrats”. Thus, the Statist discourse could mobilize “consent” by appealing to values and symbols from the Soviet past. The first remarkable step in this direction was a law about state symbols adopted in 2000. It established a “new” three-color state flag and national anthem based on the “old” melody of the Soviet anthem.

Nevertheless, “Democratic” demands were also articulated. Under Putin, an idea of democracy took shape that was supposed to become part of the national identity. This aspiration has been realized in the concept of sovereign democracy, an outline of which can be found in Putin’s presidential address of 2005. Later, the concept was developed by other politicians and public intellectuals. The leading role in its promotion belonged to the deputy chief of Putin’s administration, Vladislav Surkov.

The concept of sovereign democracy states that Russia must follow its independent path towards democracy. This thesis had several implications. First of all, it legitimizes “peculiar features” of the Russian transformation, especially the political reforms after 2000 that made Russian politics less competitive. Also, the thesis implies that democracy is a value that was not imposed from outside but a genuinely Russian thought, a truly Russian initiative. So, the idea of sovereign democracy was directed both against interpreting the outcome of the Cold War as a victory by the West (Surkov 2007: 396), and against those who see authoritarian regimes as an inseparable element of Russian culture. In a certain sense, the concept was an attempt to further “appropriate” democracy, to bind it to Russian identity.

This argument rested upon a rather ambiguous interpretation of recent Russian history. From the very beginning, Putin’s domestic policy aimed at “strengthening” the state. It was represented as opposition to Yeltsin’s period. In Putin’s texts, the political practices of the 1990s were interpreted rather critically. At the same time, the second president of Russia often stressed the continuity of his policies: He highlighted his commitment to the “democratic choice” made in the 1990s. And here, Putin directly opposes those who argued that “our young democracy is not a succession of Russian statehood, but its final collapse” (Putin 2005). So, in their interpretations of recent Russian history, Putin and the ideologists of his administration preferred to hold “the middle line” that in a certain sense satisfies the expectations of adherents of different political positions without coinciding fully with either of them. Thus sovereign democracy strives for legitimization of the regime, internally (binding demands from different political currents) and externally (claiming democracy and hence parity with Western powers). Such a strategy partly achieved its aims: it did not produce consent, in the sense of a shared conviction, achieved through deliberation,
but fostered an “overlapping” solidarity around rather vague ideas that might be “read” in different ways. This discourse, hence, managed to articulate different demands.

**Conclusion: “consent from above” – a case for hegemony?**

This chapter has shown that the late Soviet period and the early years of Russia’s independence were marked by contestations of the political system in general, and of democracy and national identity in particular. Different discursive strands that competed for hegemony developed, with distinctive views on both issues. For different reasons, none of them became dominant in the 1990s – at least not in public discourse. With the branch of “Democrats” around Yeltsin coming to power, in official discourse, i.e. particularly in the position of the presidential administration, “Democratic” positions prevailed for a short time or were at least influential (at least between 1990/91 and 1993). After 2000, signs of a consolidation of the Statist discourse towards an almost hegemonic position in the sense of Laclau and Mouffe (2001), begin to appear. In many ways, it was already the Primakov government which reflected the growing consent on Statist positions and its ability to integrate demands from the main competing discourses. Thus, parts of the other discourses’ demands have been absorbed into the Statist discourses; the remaining demands or discursive elements survived as counterhegemonic discourses.

Do these developments signify the emergence of a consensual, hegemonic definition of national and political identity around Statism? There is no clear answer to this question.

On the one hand, the efforts by the ruling part of the political elite to impose a “consent from above” through the implementation of a more “comprehensive” discourse and the partial restriction of pluralism in the “main” public sphere has brought some results. This strategy proved effective for the mobilization of mass support for “Putin’s course”. But on the other hand, it did not foster consent on disputed questions. “Stabilization” was achieved at the expense of marginalizing extremely oppositional opinions, which could only be articulated in alternative public spheres. Besides, the structure of public sphere that resulted from Putin’s reforms is not conducive to a public dialogue, in which different discourses of collective identity could compete on equal grounds. As a result, the number of contested issues in debates about national and political identity has not diminished.

On the other hand, the readiness of the Russian public to support “Putin’s course” and to endorse elements of a “comprehensive” discourse on Statism, might point to the emergence of at least partial consent. Such consent – while not attained through a process of free deliberation – might still be functional and conducive to political and social stability. The key point is, then, that the Statist discourse has indeed managed in the past eight years to integrate different demands from different camps. It thus established itself as the leading political horizon, establishing chains of equivalence and difference where other
discourses failed. The Statist discourse expanded by taking over demands from other discourses. Of course, as Laclau and Mouffe contend, every hegemonic discourse is bearing in itself its contradiction. Given the relational character of identities, the contradiction is needed for the construction of every identity and discourse. As soon as moments of the discourse can no longer be integrated or as soon as dislocations like economic crises appear, a hegemony can break down. At least during most of Putin’s presidency, however, the record was one of stability.

Notes

1 The need to overcome the democracy/non-democracy bifurcation is also expressed by Bacon et al. (2006).

2 There are two terms for referring to “Russian” – *russkiy* encompasses the ethnic and/or cultural dimension only, while *rossiyskiy* refers to the merely civic dimension of Russian identity. Hence it would be correct to speak of a *rossiyskiy* citizenship or of the *russkiy* cultural heritage. In German academic literature on Russia, *rossiyskiy* is translated by *russländisch* as opposed to *russisch* (*russkiy*). In this chapter, however, we will simply stick to the Russian terms to underscore this important difference.

3 Equally critical were Russian “imperial” nationalists who argued that Russia should remain an empire and who preferred to combine statements about the special role of ethnic Russians with the “internationalist” rhetoric of “multinationality” dating back to Soviet times (Malinova 2008: 35–43).

4 The term “nation” is used synonymously with “nation-state” and reflects elements of modernization theory (Yakovenko 1996: 118; Pain 2007b: 104; Kara-Murza 1995: 96).

5 However, positions changed over time so that being a “Democrat” did not automatically make one a proponent of civic nationalism; think, for example, of Sergey Shakhray, who was leader of the “Democratic” Party of Russian Unity and Concord (PRES).

6 The OSCE did not become the primary security instrument in Europe. Instead, NATO kept this role and even expanded to Central and Eastern Europe, leaving Russia out while trying to appease it with the NATO-Russia-Council.

7 Ted Hopf points to three other events that dominated Russian political discourse in 1999: recovery from the 1998 financial crisis, the war in Chechnya, and the shuffling of the political elite (Hopf 2002: 154). Also on NATO’s intervention in Serbia “there was a discursive consensus: NATO’s war against Yugoslavia was [seen as, OM&PC] a greater threat to Russian security than either the U.S. deployment of Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) or the consequences of NATO expansion” (Hopf 2002: 213).

8 The first prominent representatives of the Statist discourse with actual power at the end of the 1990s were, for instance, Yevgeny Primakov, who first acted as minister for foreign affairs, then as prime minister. Later, almost all leading politicians represented Statism, though to different degrees.

9 In official announcements, Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev, for example, always refer to the Russian national identity as *rossiyskiy*. However, Vladislav Surkov, referred to by some as the ideologue in the Kremlin, referred to the “*rossiyskaya* nation” (Surkov 2007: 394) but to the “*russkoe* multinational state” ((Surkov 2007: 407), which appears to contradict common usage.

10 An idea of democracy was included in official Soviet ideology under the rubric of the opposition between “bourgeois” (formal and false) and “socialist” (true) democracy.

11 Lukin (2000) identifies other dimensions of democracy as well, among them a reading of “democracy” as *social justice* and as a *road to perfection* – morally and spiritually.
These positions on democracy were highly interwoven and linked to each other. However, the most successful “Democrats” were the market-liberalizers, who put less emphasis on social justice and more on prosperity.

I want to make it clear that I was never against honest entrepreneurs and business people, and gave them all sorts of support. But along with honest entrepreneurs and business people there are enterprising thieves and economic criminals, whom I always thought had to be fought, and fought as hard as possible.

(Primakov 2004: 228)

Even more critical assessments might be found in the writings of those who carried on with the concept of sovereign democracy. Yeltsin’s regime is criticized as “oligarchic” and insufficiently “sovereign”. For example, according to Isaev, the reforms of the 1990s were illegitimate as far as “they were perceived as a dissovereignization of Russia, as a restriction of its independence” (Isaev 2006: 21).

On the transformation of the public sphere after 2000 see Malinova (2007).

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10 Escalating minority claims
The Arab “vision documents” of 2006–2007 in Israel

Ilana Kaufman

The complex relationship between majority and minority in a democracy is well known. In the democratic age with its emphasis on popular rule, more often than not, majorities are not particularly inclined to accommodate demands from minorities. Indeed, as mass democracy was being constituted in the late nineteenth century in Europe, J. S. Mill observed that the majority “may desire to oppress a part of their number” and hence “precautions are as much needed against this as against any other abuse of power” (Mill 1947 [1859]: 4) Undeniably, where such precautions were not installed or were removed, at times under the auspices of nationalism and democratization, mass violence took place, as analyzed in Michael Mann’s work, The Dark Side of Democracy. But even in lesser situations of ethnic conflict and national tensions, equitable and acceptable solutions to claims by subnational groups are not easily attained. The well-known list of constitutional and institutional mechanisms for managing those tensions attest to that difficulty (Schneckner 2002; Berg and Ben Porat 2008). The logic of the territorial nation-state as a social organization almost dictates opposition to any challenge to the state’s sovereignty and control over its borders and within them. Although this logic forms the necessary basis of state capacity to enforce its rules, and is therefore an essential condition for a functioning democracy (Tilly 2007: 15–24) its origins are undemocratic and it is at loggerheads with subnational claims for self-determination (Anderson 2008).

Yet despite this logic of state, in a number of democratic states (Canada, Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland), minority claims for a measure of self-rule were negotiated and partially satisfied in a peaceful way, or following only a mild level of violence. These states could undergo a process of decentralization and to some extent become “denationalized”, precisely because their public political culture either subscribed to a pluralistic or multidimensional version of the “national idea” in the first place (e.g. Canada, UK, Switzerland) or, because they had have undergone a radical process of democratization (e.g. Spain), (Miller 1997: 94–95; Peleg 2007: 105–137).

But other states that have also undergone a process of democratization, (particularly following the breakup of the communist systems in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe) follow more closely the logic of the modern state. They put a premium on the idea of culturally defined nationality and enlist the state’s
apparatus in the service of the nationality project. Brubaker conceptualized these
as “nationalizing” states, noting that the elites of such states have in common a
certain strategy of state-building: making them “a state of and for a particular
ethnocultural ‘core nation’, whose language, culture, demographic position, eco-

tonic welfare, and political hegemony must be protected and promoted by the
state” (Brubaker 1996: 103). This strategy is based on two ideological bases:

1 the sense of “ownership” of the state by a particular ethnonational group
that is conceived as distinct from the citizenry as a whole;
2 the attitude toward state-building as a “remedial compensatory” project for
past injustices.

The subjective reading of the historical background (or the dominant narrative)
of this strategy is crucial to understanding its inner logic and ideological
justification:

the core nation is represented by its elites as weakened and underdeveloped
as a result of previous discrimination and repression. Even the dominant
nations in the preceding multinational states … have been represented in
this light. To compensate for this, the new state is seen as having the right,
indeed the responsibility to protect and promote the cultural economic
demographic and political interests of the core nation.

(Brubaker 1996: 104)

In other words, the premise of the nationalizing states is that “majorities” could
be “at risk”, and may need protection. But protection from whom? And at what
cost to the regime?

Many of those states contain national “non-core” nationalities, who actually
belong to a national majority across state borders. The minorities, a priori there-
fore pose a potential threat to the national security of the state and its borders,
and present the state with a national-security dilemma: taking “protective” meas-
ures which limit the power of minorities to influence policies may actually pro-
duce frustration and lead to a hostile mobilization on the part of the minority. It
could even provoke the homeland state of the minority to take action, and even-
tually increase the state’s insecurity. Thus the nationalizing project as a state-
building strategy has a problematic impact on both security and the nature of the
democratization process.¹

In what sense? In his latest contribution to democratic theory Charles Tilly
argues that one of the fundamental processes promoting democratization consists
of “increasing insulation of public politics from categorical inequality” (Tilly
2007: 23). In Tilly’s high end of the equality dimension of democratization “eth-
nicity has no significant connection with political rights or obligations” (Tilly
2007: 14). However, as delineated above, this formulation of democratization
runs counter to prevalent state-building projects in the new nationalizing states,
where elites of national majorities (and on certain occasions, also those of
minorities), actually express their wish to incorporate categorical distinctions into public life, and to actually tie them to political rights and obligations. The problem of course is, how? When is such incorporation accepted by the citizenry as whole as fair? More specifically, what are the political dynamics that ensue, if such incorporation is not seen as fair by the minority?

This is where Brubaker’s second conceptual contribution is useful: strategies of elite majorities and counter-claims of elites’ national minorities within nationalizing states cannot be separated from their political environment or the historical narratives in which they are conceived. Hence, they should be analyzed as occurring in a “triadic nexus” of relations between three fields: the host country’s (majority) stance, a national minority stance and the external minority’s “homeland” stance. Each stance should not be conceived as the product of a single unified actor, but as of a composite of elites, parties, etc. Furthermore, those stances should not be considered as either fixed or independent, but as political strategies which are constantly being formulated in relation to one another and contested by different players (Brubaker 1996: 68).

Within this basic framework, Jeene has made a significant conceptual contribution by outlining a model for predicting the kind of claims put forward by representatives of national minorities (Jeene 2004). The model focuses less on the process of claim-making than on the results, and is premised on the logic of political opportunity. The model assumes that all minorities fearing disadvantage from political change make claims for protection. But, in this model, claims are conceived primarily as bargaining positions vis-à-vis the host state, signifying both the power differential between minority and majority at any given time and as indicators of the minority’s legitimate position along the spectrum of state control. Just as the state’s nationalizing policies range from suppression (by a non-liberal majority) to egalitarianism (by a liberal-leaning majority), so do the claims of the minority rank from the weakest challenge of affirmative action, to cultural autonomy, territorial autonomy, to the strongest challenge – secession.

The basic hypothesis of this model is that the minority’s decision to move up the scale in its claim-making, i.e. to intensify its challenge to the host state, is determined first and foremost by its assessment of the chances of getting support from a powerful national homeland (or another outside actor) and only second, by its assessment of the possible reaction of the “host state” to its mobilization. This is so, because support (or lack of support) for the minority from an outside lobby actor is factored into the host state’s internal and external security considerations.

According to Jeene, minorities will escalate their claims (compared to the status quo) if they have outside backing, particularly if the majority appears to be tilting toward liberalization, because in such a case they stand to gain much (and lose nothing) by such a move. In contrast, minorities who do not enjoy homeland support even accommodate repressive policies of a host state, rather than risk a wrathful reaction from a repressive majority. But even if the majority of the host state is tilting toward liberalization, the minority would still refrain from escalating its demands without its homeland’s support, for fear of a backlash unchecked by an outside homeland actor.
But what if the national minority’s homeland actor is a sub-state weak actor, itself engaged in the national conflict with the (nationalizing) host state? How does this situation affect the claim-making of the minority and the democratization process in the host state?

The logic of the model would lead us to expect that in such a case the minority would still act as having no support from its homeland. In other words, the prediction of the model would be that it would not escalate its demands and would accommodate to repression. In that case, there would be no democratization or de-democratization within the nationalizing state.

I would like to show through a case study of the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel that this is not necessarily so. In the following, I will argue that this national minority in fact escalated its claim-making because of the weakness of its homeland, and despite the majority’s backlash, after a short period of a tilt toward liberalization.

In the following, I wish to argue that the introduction of three interrelated variables change the prediction of the model of escalating claim-making by a national minority:

1. A protracted national conflict between the homeland actor and the host state;
2. A significant power gap in favor of the host state;
3. The host state is a “nationalizing” state.

The logic of this argument is this: conditions (a) + (b), (create an area of conflicting interests on the homeland–minority nexus. The result is that the minority cannot count on its homeland for support for escalating claims vis-à-vis the host state.

Conditions (a) + (c) (a protracted conflict between a nationalizing host state and a homeland actor) increase the probability of a backlash against the minority.

I argue that under those conditions a minority, if empowered from within, would attempt to make itself as an autonomous actor in this triadic nexus, i.e. independent as far as possible from both its homeland and its host state.

Israel as a nationalizing state in the nationalizing Middle East

Despite differences, the ethnoterritorial dynamics of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians/Arab region, has several factors in common with the post-Habsburg interwar period and the post-Soviet dynamics in Europe. True, unlike Central Europe, the Middle East region did not experience a popular nationalist tumultus prior to the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire, and the borders of the successor states were carved up by the French and British colonial powers. But, as a consequence and as a reaction to the colonial experience in the Middle East, pan-Arabism became a powerful political idea in the 1940s. It turned into a political force which threatened the Arab state system from above (elite level)
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and from below (popular level) during the hegemony of Nasserism in the late 1950s to 1970 (Haim 1976; Kerr 1971).

A focal point in this process became the contest over the control of the territory of Palestine (Stein 1984; Shafir 1989). The war in 1947–1948 fought between the Jews who settled in Palestine on one side, and the Arab states and the Palestinians on the other, thwarted the 1947 UN plan to divide the area between a predominantly Jewish and a predominantly Arab state. The Palestinian national project totally collapsed, while Israel was successfully established as a nationalizing state on an area larger than allotted to it in the UN plan, and with a small Arab minority.3

The majority among the Jews of Israel have a self-awareness of themselves as a “core” nation of the state, whose language, culture, demographic position, economic welfare, and political hegemony must be promoted and protected by the state from the danger of being overcome and overwhelmed by the surrounding “other” – the Arabs. This perception expresses the overwhelming consensus among the Jewish majority in Israel with the basic premises of the founding ideology of the state.4 According to the basic tenets of Zionist ideology the Jewish nation enjoys ancient sovereignty rights over the land, despite the centuries’ old existence of the Jews in the diaspora. Thus, the opening paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence state that:

Land of Israel, [Palestine] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. . . .

Furthermore, as is commonly found among the post-Soviet states, the discourse regarding state-building in Israel contains a strong emphasis on remedial compensation for past injustices, and regards it as an ongoing national project. In addition to the narrative of the 2,000 years of “forced exile”, the twentieth-century attempted genocide perpetrated against the Jews in Europe by the Nazi regime, is perceived as a posteriori historical justification of the Zionist project.5

In the wording of the Declaration of Independence:

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people – the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe – was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations.
The hallmark of the continuity of the project of “the ingathering of the exiles” is the Law of Return of 1950, which grants automatic citizenship to any Jew who emigrates to Israel. Since its foundation in 1948, this principle was translated into a state-sponsored project of the absorption of some 3 million immigrants, while successfully blocking the return of the 750,000 of a million Palestinian refugees who were either ousted or fled in the 1948 war. Since 1949, the state’s machinery and its policies have been openly mobilized first and foremost to the building of the Jewish nation. Thus the state is officially and constitutionally a uni-national state: A Jewish state of and for the Jewish people.

Such a definition has had a pronounced impact on the remnants of the pre-1948 Palestinian community who were included in Israel in 1948 and became its citizens. By 2008, they number some 1.1 million, or 18 percent of the total citizens. Their status and relations with the state were problematic from the start. The state was determined to preserve the results of the 1948 war and to prevent a reversal to the *ante bellum* political solutions. As part of the vanquished enemy, they were stripped of some resources (particularly land), excluded from full participation and equal access to other resources, and generally relegated to a weak social and political position. Furthermore, as the regional conflict persisted, the Arab-Palestinian citizens, were considered a potential national threat to the Jewish majority in the wide sense of the word.

After some two decades, the Arab citizens were granted individual political and social rights and several polyethnic collective rights (such as religious autonomy, state education in Arabic). But even during the years in which the Palestinian national project seemed to remained buried, the Arab citizens continued to be looked upon as “invisible outsiders” (Smooha 1990: 402). Their representatives were locked out of participation in government coalitions, and they continued to suffer discrimination in the allocation of resources.

The resurfacing of the Palestinian problem on the Israeli agenda after Israel occupied the rest of the territory of Palestine in 1967, revived it also as an internal issue. The Palestinian-Arab citizens’ use of their political rights to protest against land expropriation, to express their solidarity with their fellow non-citizen Palestinians under Israeli occupation, and to expound their opposition to Zionism, were mostly tolerated but with resignation and alienation on the part of the Jewish public and the state. But at the beginning of the second Intifada in October 2000, the unprecedentedly severe clashes of demonstrators with the police, which also spilled over in intercommunal strife, leaving 13 Arabs dead, accentuated the state’s and the majority’s conception of the minority as a dissident, alienated, menacing minority.

The intellectual rebuttal to this view came from the secular educated section of the Arab-Palestinian community some seven years later in the form of claim-making within a political agenda. Hitherto, demands for affirmative action policies and de-nationalization (de-Zionization) of the laws and practices of the state were the traditional demands made by the Communist Party, which is effectively, an “Arab” party (Kaufman 1997). Many of the claims expressed in the documents have been sporadically aired in public by academicians,
politicians and civil society since in the early 1990s. Claims for the recognition of Arabs’ collective rights were introduced to the platforms of the newer Palestinian Arab parties formed in the 1980s and 1990s, and resulted in some legal measures of affirmative action. But compiling and presenting an overall view of the community’s claims and their justifications had not been undertaken up till then.

The vision documents

In the short span between November 2006 and May 2007 three documents pertaining to the future status of the Palestinian minority within the state of Israel were published. The three documents were compiled by different groups consisting mainly of members of the intellectual elites of the Arab minority acting under the auspices of Arab civil-society organizations. The documents referred to as the “vision documents”, are:

1. **The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel** (published by The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, November 2006)
2. **The Democratic Constitution** (published by Adala, the Legal Center of Arab Minority Rights in Israel, February 2007)

The documents are of different natures – one is of a mixed visionary and programmatic nature (document no. 1); one is written as a legal document (document no. 2); the third is written as a declaratory document, reminiscent of a declaration of independence (document no. 3). Despite those and other differences in political nuance, all three share common political messages: support for the two-states solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, together with a demand for radical change in the collective status of the Arab citizens and a concomitant radical change in the existing political order. It is the latter – the status of the Palestinian-Arab citizens within the 1967 (Green Line) “border”, rather than the larger issue of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which is the focus of the documents.

The documents therefore pose an ideological and programmatic challenge to the Jewish majority. They all propose a significant departure from the state’s current institutional and constitutional structure in the direction of greater autonomy and collective rights for the Palestinian-Arab minority. They purport to speak in the name of the Palestinian community and outline this community’s claims toward the state. (Two of the documents, nos 1 and 3, also include guidelines for change within the community).

All three were compiled (separately) as a collective group effort containing individuals from almost the entire social and political spectrum of the Arab community, with the important exception of the Islamic movement. Hence, the doc-
documents can be legitimately regarded as “claim-making documents” by the minority. There is, however, a qualification – although some of the participants had clear party affiliations, the documents were received with mixed feelings by the leaders of the Arab political parties and none has adopted any of them (Kabha 2008). In addition, the documents were not submitted for approval before any of the unofficial but recognized Arab political bodies. Two of the documents (nos 1 and 2) are in fact declared to be drafts for a public debate, including drafts for a dialogue with the Jewish public.

**The challenge to the narrative of the majority and claims of restitution**

Israel does not officially recognize the Arab citizens as a national minority with collective rights and affiliation to the non-citizen Palestinian nation. The documents challenge this official position by defining their identity as an integral part of the Arab nation and the Palestinian nation, as the indigenous people of the land or as a “homeland minority”. The claim is therefore that Israel would cease to disallow by law the regular contact of the Arab citizens with the rest of the Palestinians and the Arab countries which are considered “enemy countries”.

The Palestinian Arabs in Israel are the indigenous people of the country … They are an integral vital and inseparable part of the Palestinian People.

(\textit{The Future Vision})

We reaffirm our attachment to our Palestinian homeland and people, to our Arab nation, with its language, history, and culture….

(\textit{The Haifa Declaration})

the legal starting point of this constitutional proposal is: The Arab citizens in the State of Israel are a homeland minority.

(\textit{The Democratic Constitution})

Furthermore, as the original owners of the land, the documents deny the Jewish majority’s Zionist claim to legitimate “ownership” of the territory by the Jewish nation. The documents express the view that Israel is an elitist-colonial project supported by imperialist Western powers and having the characteristic of a colonial society:

Israel is the outcome of a settlement process initiated by the Zionist–Jewish elite in Europe and the west and realized by Colonial countries…. After the creation of the State in 1948, Israel continued to use policies derived from its vision as an extension of the west in the Middle East and continued conflicting with its neighbors. Israel also continued executing internal colonial policies against its Palestinian Arab citizens.”

(\textit{The Future Vision})
The documents reject the Jewish majority’s narrative concerning the war in 1948 as a rightful defeat of the Arab and Palestinian attempt to foil by force the 1947 UN plan for partition. The documents present the war as an unjust calamity (Nakba) perpetrated by the Zionist majority, which continued to be perpetuated by the state after 1948.

In 1948, the year of the Nakba of the Palestinian people, the Zionist movement committed massacres against our people, turned most of us into refugees, totally erased hundreds of our villages, and drove out most inhabitants of our cities. Later, the State of Israel prevented the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland in defiance of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194, and the UN’s successive resolutions in this same regard. Although we were made citizens of the State of Israel . . . after its establishment . . . many of us were displaced from our towns and villages, becoming refugees in our homeland . . . and to this very day it refuses to recognize dozens of Arab villages, where it follows policies of land dispossession.

(The Haifa Declaration)

As a consequence of the above, the documents make claims of restitution for lost and confiscated land during and after 1948. Although the scope of the claim for restitution varies between the documents, all make some reference to them. The most far-reaching claim is made by the The Haifa Declaration, that the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees of 1948 be recognized, according to UN Resolution 194 (p. 15). Chapter II of The Democratic Constitution is titled “Distributive and Restorative Justice” and asserts the legal right of claims for comprehensive compensation for land and property. The weakest claims in this regard are made in The Future Vision, which calls for policies of corrective justice in all aspects of life in order to compensate for the damage inflicted on the Palestinian Arabs due to the ethnic favoritism policies of the Jews (p. 11).

The challenge to the regime and calls for a fundamental constitutional change

Israel defines itself legally and officially as “Jewish and Democratic” (or alternatively as the “state of the Jewish people”). The Basic Law of Return, grants an immigrant of Jewish descent an automatic right to citizenship. The documents decry the state’s ethnic characterization, and deny its democratic character, by pointing to the severe marginalization, discrimination and exclusion from power of Arab citizens. Instead, Israel’s definition as a Jewish state is characterized in one of the documents as an “ethnocracy” i.e. as a regime that guarantees the hegemony of the majority (The Future Vision: 9); and that the citizen status of the Palestinian Arab citizens is described as hollow for they are “citizens without the genuine constituents of citizenship, especially equality” (The Haifa Declaration: 14).
In order to remedy the vulnerable second class status, the documents demand to transform the state from a “Jewish State” to an effectively bi-national state. The two major demands are to introduce constitutional mechanisms of power-sharing and mechanisms of autonomy. One document demands power-sharing along the lines of a “consensual model” (sic), with inclusion of Arab parties in the coalition, ensured “proper” representation, but also special veto powers which put the Jewish majority and Arab minority on [an] equal power basis (The Future Vision); the other two make similar claims along the lines of a bilingual and multicultural model. All three demand recognition of the minority’s right for cultural autonomy and other particular self-governing rights.

In sum, the claims made in the documents on behalf of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel are of a very wide scope: restitution rights, policies of distributive justice, cultural autonomy. Above all, despite the fact that the minority constitutes only 20 percent of the population, the documents present a claim for an effectively “thick” binational structure of state institutions. Put together, the documents can therefore be clearly seen as “escalating” claims towards the state and the Jewish majority.

What explains the sudden rush to construct such far-reaching claims in 2006–2007? I suggest that in order to comprehend the full significance of the documents it is useful to read them in the context of the triad relations between Israel as the host state, the PLO/PA, as a homeland actor and the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel since the outbreak of the first Intifada (Palestinian uprising) in 1987. It is of course impossible to go into the full account of the tragic ups and downs of those relations. But it is still possible to examine the major milestones in their development and their impact on the claims of the Arab minority within Israel.

The homeland–minority nexus and its discontent

1 The forging of solidarity

Up to the mid-1970s the Palestinian Arab citizen minority in Israel, was one small section of the defeated and dispersed total Palestinian population of 1948. It was totally ignored and even scorned by the Palestinian national movement. This attitude changed only after the minority earned its first nationalist credentials by staging mass protests against land confiscation (in which six demonstrators were killed) on the Land Day in 1976. The top leadership of the PLO was situated in Jordan and Lebanon, and its lower-level leadership within the occupied West Bank and Gaza “discovered” “its minority and recognized it as the long-forgotten sons of the Palestinian nation. Thus, the Land Day anniversary was adopted as a day of commemoration in the national Palestinian calendar as an act of national solidarity, thereby embracing the Palestinians who hold Israeli citizenship (Al-Haj 2005: 185).
For the weak and internally divided Arab community in Israel this new attitude was a source of cultural and political strength. True, in 1977 the Communist Party in Israel was the body that, after organizing the Land Day, also set the political agenda for the community by championing the “two-states solution” and a return to the 1967 borders. But, its Jewish-Arab leadership failed to fill the leadership void in the Arab population. Yasser Arafat as the head of the PLO in exile, in 1975 won international legitimacy for the Palestinian national cause, galvanizing and rejuvenating also the collective identification of the Arab minority in Israel. In sum, the renewed direct ties with the Palestinians after 1967, the change of attitude towards the minority after 1976 ended three decades of its isolation from the Arab hinterland in general and from the Palestinians in particular.

The renewed ties were not merely on the symbolic level. True, the working-class Palestinians on both sides of the 1967 “Green Line” now competed in the Israeli job market; but for the lower middle class and educated class of the Arab Palestinian citizens, West Bank and Gaza became a cultural and political homeland (Al-Haj 2005; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1986). During the 1980s the PLO-affiliated local leadership in the occupied territories fostered political, cultural and economic ties with the nationalist-oriented political leadership of the minority, and became an address for arbitration in various matters. In particular, the Islamic religious movement on the West Bank nurtured and helped develop a similar movement and orientation within the Arab Palestinian minority. Arab academics from Israel who could not get positions in Israeli universities were absorbed in universities and colleges on the West Bank (Al-Haj 2005). Before each general election in Israel in the 1980s, (1981, 1984, 1988) the Arab politicians in Israel vied for the endorsement of the PLO in order to increase their vote (Rekhess 1989). The Arab minority’s solidarity with the occupied Palestinians and identification with their cause was unmistakable. The war in Lebanon in 1982 in which the PLO leadership was besieged, humiliated and driven out of Lebanon by Israel has even led to a temporary closing of ranks between the competing political factions of the Arab minority community. A direct result of this development was the setting up of the Supreme Follow-up Committee. To this day, it is the chief extra-parliamentary body of elected and civil-society leaders, culled from entire political spectrum.

Despite the growth of ties with the Palestinian national movement, the specific political implications of this growing solidarity remained vague. A critical moment which drew the political line between the national minority and its homeland actor, came with the outbreak of the first Intifada in December 1987. The popular uprising on the West Bank and Gaza was an attempt to overthrow Israeli control. It forced the nationalist-leaning Arab leadership of the minority in Israel to restate their stance in the national conflict between their host state, Israel and their homeland Palestinian community. Despite widespread acts of solidarity and protest (including closing off a major highway), this stance retained the consensus on a two-states solution to the conflict. The Arab Palestinian national minority preferred to remain a marginalized, but relatively secure
national minority within the nationalizing Jewish state, rather than risk destruction and bear the costs of trying to become part of the struggle for independence from the Israeli system. Those costs, should the Israeli Palestinians decide to join the struggle, were made clear by public statements by Israeli officials. They warned that if the struggle for independence is about the whole territory of Palestine like the struggle in 1948, then the Palestinian tragedy might very well repeat itself (Al-Haj 2005: 192).

2 The Oslo process – from enthusiasm to disillusionment

The choice of the clearly lesser of two evils did not put to rest the widespread bitterness of Arab Palestinian citizens concerning the state’s practices of excluding them from power. The taboo on Arab parties’ inclusion in a coalition, even as “silent partners” was demonstrated most bluntly in the 1990 governmental crisis. Yet the strategic choice made by the community seemed justified when within a few years, under the terms of the 1993 Oslo Agreement, Israel caved in, and recognized the PLO as a partner for negotiation over the occupied territories. The exiled leadership of the homeland, having survived the onslaught of the Lebanon War, settled in the territory and set up the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a first step toward Palestinian sovereignty.

The enthusiasm and support for the Oslo process among the Arab minority was immense. There was a double expectation for a new era for the minority. First, the readiness by the state to offer concessions to the homeland Palestinians was taken as a sign of the liberalization that was yet to come. The unprecedented leaning of the Rabin-led coalition in 1992–1995 on the “block” of Arab parties was viewed as a promising sign. Some discriminatory legal practices were annulled by this government (Kaufman and Israeli 2002). The expectations of Arab public opinion was that this was the beginning of the state’s acceptance of the age-old claims by the minority to end many more practices of exclusion and indirect discrimination.

The second expectation was that the strengthening position of their homeland actor – the PLO vis-à-vis their home state – Israel, would lead to the satisfaction of far more extensive claims of members of the minority: their restitution claims. Those claims concerning the consequences of the 1948 war focused on two related issues: the expropriation of land and property (personal and community) and the displacement of people (internal refugees) within the 1967 borders.

However, this expectation was quickly disappointed. Obviously, as a precondition laid down by Israel, the Oslo Accord between Israel and the PLO did not mention the Arab minority at all, and none of its issues was mentioned as being “on the table” for negotiation. The code phrase on which the Israeli side has insisted upon as the basis for Oslo was “Two States for Two Peoples” (one Arab state, one Jewish state) as opposed to merely a “Two States Solution” (Al-Haj: 2005: 195). On the verbal level, the Palestinian side stuck only to the latter, but, it would not (or could not) back this commitment with positions in the negotiations, without undermining the Accord itself. Thus, the homeland actor’s
interests contradicted the interests of the minority, and hence, these were neglected. It soon became clear that the implication of the Oslo Accord for the Palestinian Arabs in Israel was that

their problems are their own and should be solved within the Israeli context … the Oslo process reinforced the status of the Palestinians in Israel as a “double periphery” … placed at the margins of Israeli society and at the margins of the Palestinian National Movement.

(Al-Haj 2005: 196)

As one activist put it:

As negotiations on permanent settlement between the Palestinians and Israel proceeded, the Arabs in Israel felt more despair, and therefore the feeling that they have to take their fate in their own hands only intensified. When the state of Israel does not care about them on the one hand and the Palestinian Authority neglects them, on the other, only they are the people who can take care of themselves.

(quoted in Al-Haj 2005: 196)

The host state–minority nexus: contradictory trends within the nationalizing framework

1 The empowerment of the emerging Arab Palestinian middle class

The Arab minority was incorporated into the Israeli state in 1948 as the subaltern citizen “other” of the Jewish majority. Marginalization, exclusion and control made up the basic strategy applied to the minority as an answer to the state’s continuous security dilemma (Lustick 1980). But as part of the rapidly modernizing Israeli system, with a relatively strong welfare state, the specific indicators of the Arab citizens’ “otherness” changed along with the changes in Israeli society and polity. The stronger voice and modest successes in claim-making mentioned earlier were clearly the result of the growth of an assertive, educated Arab middle class, as a by-product of the high capacity of the Israeli state and economy. But due to the nationalizing practices of the state, these changes did not result in closing social and economic gaps between the Jewish majority and Arab minority, which persist in health, housing, employment, welfare and education (Sikkuy 2008a); nor were these changes accompanied by a significant step toward a more equal incorporation of the minority into the civil service or the body politics.

Yet, as will be elaborated further in the next section, Israel’s “nationalizing” model did undergo liberalization. Also part and parcel of this liberalization drive were constitutional changes, which anchored in Basic Law the principles of individual rights and private property. Although the principle of equality of rights was not written into law, it was applied more rigorously by the courts under the liberal-leaning Supreme Court in the 1990s.
Arab citizens, particularly of the emerging middle class, were somewhat better placed under this new system to realize their citizen rights as individuals, and to strengthen Arab civil society. The first signs of the emergence of this class can be seen in the late 1970s. The abolition of the Military Rule restrictions, and the postwar economic boom after 1967 channeled the bulk of the Arab labor force from peasant farming and daily menial work into unskilled or semi-skilled positions in Jewish locations, with a certain measure of job security; a growing percentage of the workforce (some 15 percent) became self-employed skilled workers, contractors and subcontractors, and in the 1990s owners of small plants, professionals and small business owners (Rosenfeld 1978: 395–398; Haidar 2005). The increased income levels, though lagging behind average Jewish income, enabled Arab families in the 1980s and 1990s to invest in education for their sons and daughters, which in turn, also increased their percentage of public-service employees to over a quarter in 2001 (Haidar 2005: 70).

Indeed, the most significant social change among the Arab Palestinian minority has been in the level of education. But the lack of complementary measures to increase social and political equality and incorporation led to the formation of a bitter and assertive intelligentsia. Many of the grandparents and mothers of this generation could not read and write. But illiteracy, which had been stood at 80 percent in 1948, came down to less than 8 percent by 2001, as a result of mandatory schooling. Median years of schooling multiplied by eight to reach ten years by 2001, and the percentage of the adult population that had post-secondary education in 1961, jumped from 1.5 to 15 percent by 2001 (Shafir and Peled 2002: 121; Haidar 2005: 124–125). By 2001 over a quarter of the employed workforce had at least 13 years of schooling, and worked mostly as teachers, but also as MDs and in other professions (Gara 2005: 225).

However, as mentioned earlier, due to underinvestment of resources and discriminatory allocations by the government, these changes did not close the educational and economic gaps between the minority and the majority (Abu Asba 2005: 208). Furthermore, the return on investment in education for Arabs proved to be significantly lower than for Jews attaining the same level of schooling. In other words, highly educated Arab individuals found it hard to find appropriate high-status (and relatively high-paying) jobs to match their qualifications. The “glass ceiling” for Arab professionals extends right across the board, but is most glaring with regard to managerial positions. This educational–occupational mismatch is the result of the underdevelopment of the labor market in the Arab localities on the one hand, and the discriminatory practices against Arabs in the Jewish labor market on the other (Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 1993: 56; Gara 2005: 228).

This excluded educated strata, found a partial outlet for investing its “human capital” during the liberalization of the 1990s in founding NGOs. Following the liberalization of the legal procedure for the setting up of associations in 1980, the number of associations and NGOs set up by Arab Palestinians shot up dramatically.16 Many of these were local Islamic associations using the new socio-political space created by the new law to preach religiosity. Their success was to
a large extent due to the fact that they stepped in to provide essential services for the population, which the state had neglected to provide. But other NGOs, aided by external financial funds (such as those from the UN and EU) were set up by secular-oriented graduates of Israeli and Western universities with the specific purpose of directly challenging the hegemony of the Jewish majority by litigation, advocacy, education or research; some (e.g. feminist NGOs) targeted the social barriers within the Arab community itself (Jamal 2008: 299–300). The most influential impact vis-à-vis the state has been the litigation activity of the Adala civil rights organization. Through its trailblazing and wide-ranging activity it has challenged various discriminatory governmental practices in the courts, and promoted a new national-oriented discourse among the educated strata.¹⁷

The plurality of purposes and orientations of the emerging civil society sparked a debate on the impact of the NGO boom on the status of the Arab community within Israel. According to one argument, it has empowered the community both vis-à-vis the state and the Jewish majority (Payes 2003: 84) and (to some extent) internally as a community (Jamal 2008: 290–299). It did so by providing alternative channels for participation, by enhancing professionalism in the means employed to oppose discriminatory policies, and by opening new spheres of deliberation for the Arab public. According to another, since the aims of all the NGOs can be narrowly defined as the ethnic mobilization of the Arab community, their ability to transform the structure of the state has been negligible (Haklai 2004). Irrespective of the differing assessments, the sense of empowerment afforded by the expansion of the NGOs, and the connection of the phenomenon to the new intelligentsia and liberalization in Israel, is not disputed (Jamal 2008: 291).

However, the liberalization of state and society in Israel has had also a contradictory, negative impact on the status of the minority. The shift away from a comprehensive welfare state adversely affects the weaker sections of society. In this case, it included a large proportion of the Arab community (Sikkuy 2008a). Furthermore, the cut in allocation of governmental resources from 2000–2003 is not accidental (Sikkuy 2002). It reflects the policy of punishment and economic boycott practiced by the government and by the Jewish majority toward the Arab minority of October 2000.¹⁸

2 Liberalization of the nationalizing model and its discontent

Between the mid 1980s and mid 1990s, a massive drive towards liberalization in the economy, society and law was introduced by the new social agents of the Jewish middle class. It entailed privatization of sections of the huge public military-industrial complex, downsizing the military budget, liberalization of the capital market and linking the economy to the global economy, and cutting back on social welfare rights¹⁹ (Shafir and Peled 2002: 213–307). Some aspects of liberalization touched upon the status of the Arab minority.

In the political sphere, a crack in the unofficial political taboo, the inclusion of Arab Palestinian parties in the government occurred after Labor regained
power in 1992. The Rabin coalition government relied on the Arab parties’ external support and rewarded this support with greater allocation of resources to the Arab population’s needs. Budgets for housing needs in Arab localities increased, some discriminatory government practices were removed;\(^{20}\) for the first time a government resolution was passed on an affirmative-action plan to admit Arab university graduates for the civil service (Sikkuy 2000).

In the legal constitutional sphere, the enhancement of individual liberal rights had a direct impact. In 1998 the High Court of Justice disqualified a Jewish right-wing group from a local election, on account of their anti-Arab racist campaign; more significantly, the court issued a landmark decision in 2000 (\textit{Qaadan vs Israel Land Authority et al.}) which declared it illegal for the state to discriminate between Jewish and Arab individual citizens in land allocation, even if the land was purchased by Jewish world funds for settling Jews (Shafir and Peled 2002: 132).

However, despite the fact that the new trends stretched the borders of the “ethnic Jewish republic”, they did not annul them, producing new tensions within them (Peleg 2007: 174–176). The legal phrase that was supposed to contain those tensions, but failed to do so, is the designation of the state of Israel as constitutionally “Jewish and Democratic”.\(^{21}\) This formula was designed as a compromise between the new conflicting claims and discourses in Israeli society.

The formula is best suited to the center-right Jewish \textit{secular} middle class, who wish to check simultaneously two different groups: the Jewish religious section which is economically weak, but has political clout; and the Palestinians, both citizens and non-citizens, who pose a “demographic danger” to the Jewish majority in the state. The democratic component of the formula would strengthen individual rights and thereby limit the role of religion in the private and public sphere. The Jewish component of the formula legitimizes the nationalizing character of the state vis-à-vis the Arab minority, but entails giving up control over the occupied Palestinians.

But other sections of society find the “Jewish and Democratic” formula either uncomfortable or objectionable. It is “too democratic” (i.e. secular and/or pro-Arab) for the Jewish nationalist right wing, and for the Jewish religious groups. Both groups abhor the idea of giving up and handing to the Palestinians the historical “land of our fathers” and similarly reject the notion of sharing power with the Arab citizens. In the eyes of the Arab Palestinian citizens the Jewish and Democratic formula is “undemocratic” (i.e. nationalizing and excluding) and an instrument for denying them equality. Hence, in the 1990s the intellectuals and representatives belonging to the Arab parties, emboldened by the liberalization trend, demanded that a different formula be adopted in its stead: a “democratic state of all its citizens” with cultural autonomy (Bishara 1997: 80). Uri Ram aptly concludes therefore that the impact of a shift to neoliberal globalism has been to “bifurcate” Israeli society and politics between the liberalization process and the backlash, of a neo-ethnicization process (Ram 2007).
3 The backlash

The first step of the Jewish ethnicized backlash was directed at changes which the 1993 Oslo Accord introduced to the state–homeland nexus and to the state–minority nexus. In the first nexus Israel promised to hand control over territory to the PA. The second nexus showed signs of incorporating the Palestinian Arab citizens into the political decision-making process, without which the Oslo Accord could not have gone through. The assassination Rabin in 1995 by a religious right-winger marked the opening shot of this backlash. It also set the stage for the second step in the backlash. The shock in face of the internal rift between the orthodox and the secular Jews pushed aside the Arab citizens. The priority of the majority was to try and heal the rift within it, without including “the other” in the process (Kaufman 2008). The third step in the backlash followed the breakdown of the Oslo process in the host state–homeland nexus. The Jewish–Arab rift that followed the outbreak of the second Intifada in the October 2000 “Events” set the conditions for the full swing of the backlash in the host state–minority nexus.

Up to 2000, in the 1980s and early 1990s, efforts to stem the accentuated Palestinian strand of political lists came from the center-right political parties in the Knesset. They based their efforts on an amendment to the Basic Law: the Knesset (1985), which regulates the elections. This Amendment blocked the running of any list whose goals explicitly or implicitly negate the existence of Israel as the state of the Jewish people even if the commitment is to achieve this agenda by legitimate political means (Kretzmer 1990: 31). Time and again they attempted, unsuccessfully, to disqualify the Arab parties from running in the elections on the basis of the Amendment (Peled 1992). A significant section of Jewish public opinion was quite sympathetic to these moves: in 1995 31 percent supported the abrogation of the right of the Arab Palestinian citizens to vote in the Knesset elections (Smooha 1998: 51–52). The coming to power of the right-wing coalition in 1996 also heralded a reversal of the liberalizing policies towards the Arabs in terms of allocation of resources (Sikkuy 2000).

The full swing of the Jewish ethnicized backlash followed the October 2000 Events, targeting the rights of the Arab minority as a whole and its leadership in particular. The Arab Palestinian citizens as a whole after 2000 were regarded semi-officially as a “strategic threat” to the national security of the Jewish state. Striving to undermine “the Jewish nature” of the state has been defined as equivalent to trying to eliminate its democratic institutions and therefore, “subversive”. In the Jewish public, academic, political and legal discourse it became legitimate to discuss the Arab minority as a “demographic bomb” and to devise “solutions” on how to decrease the number of Arab citizens in Israel (Arieli et al. 2006). In 2006 a right-wing party, Yisrel Betienu ran and won almost 10 percent of the vote on a platform which included the idea of a “territorial exchange”: a shift of the 1967 border so as to exclude Arab localities, thereby depriving unilaterally some 200,000 Arab Palestinian citizens of their citizenship; In 2003, a Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) pro-
hibited family reunion of citizen and non-citizen Palestinians in Israel. According to this Act, an Arab citizen who wishes to live with his or her non-citizen Palestinian spouse and children can only do so across the border. This drastic encroachment on a right to family life was justified on security grounds, citing a small number of cases of non-citizen Palestinians who were granted residency through marriage, and were subsequently said to be involved in hostile terror activity. But the critics of this law, among them three High Court Justices, have pointed to the demographic discourse which was more probably the hidden motive behind this legislation (Davidov et al. 2003; Peled 2007).

The clampdown on the leadership, in contrast, was part of an open and declared public policy to draw the lines of political tolerance by the state. The executive and elective organs of the state began to censure and criminalize the political expressions of Arab politicians who empathized with acts of terror in the name of the homeland actor – the PA under Arafat. To achieve that goal, in 2002 a number of steps were taken by the Knesset. Knesset members who met with Arafat while being under Israeli siege were disciplined by the Knesset; the Penal Law was amended so as to make it easier to convict for liability for violence as a result of calling or identifying with acts of violence (Alon 2002). The Basic Law: the Knesset, which regulates the elections, was amended again to enable disqualification of a candidate to the Knesset or a whole list who expressed support for an enemy state or a terrorist organization.26

A bolder move was to undercut the activity of the leaders of the two major political streams who looked for support from other homeland actors, while defying the state’s power and legitimacy. The 2002 amendments were first tested on the most challenging and confrontational of the MKs, the Pan-Arab-oriented member of parliament of the Balad party, Azmi Bishara; Bishara, a sharp critic of the PA and the Oslo process, called on the Arab Palestinians in Israel to look to the Syrian regime and to the Hizbulla as a model of resistance to Israeli power and strong commitment to national Arab identity. In response to his fiery speeches in Lebanon, unsanctioned trips by himself and others to Syria and Lebanon, Bishara was put on trial in 2002. Before the 2003 elections, the General Attorney appealed to the Central Election Committee to disqualify Bishara as a candidate. Both moves were thwarted by the Supreme Court of Justice, indicating the court’s attempt to hold on to liberal values, despite the opposing strong tide of public opinion.27 But Bishara was eventually driven into exile by the threat of the security services to put him on trial for treason and misuse of funds.28

The second leader put on trial on charges of links with the enemy was the head of the radical flank of the fundamentalist Islamic movement, Raaid Salakh. Unlike Bishara, Salakh is an extra-parliamentary leader by ideology. His movement advocates abstaining from the vote in the general elections as an act of denying the Israeli parliament legitimacy. The movement is molded according to the format of the Muslim Brotherhood across the Arab world, which forms the most formidable popular-rooted opposition to the Arab regimes. Besides mobilizing his followers within Israel around an Islamic dissident stance, Salakh has
also built a reputation in the Islamic Arab orbit as the bulwark against Israel’s alleged wish to destroy the holy Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem (Luz 2004). Salakh was blamed (along with Bishara) for inciting the crowds before the October Events by the Or State Commission which was set up to investigate the Events. Yet even before the Commission’s report was out, he was detained and charged with aiding the Islamic Palestinian Hamas movement in financing their terror campaign. After 18 months of detention his trial ended in June 2005 with a plea bargaining for a much lesser offence.

Ironically, due to the independence of the Islamic movement from the national electoral process, and due to its decentralized structure, it has not been affected significantly by this episode. The parliamentary leaders, on the other hand, have been considerably weakened as effective political actors by this marginalization drive. The result has been the stepping forward of the extra-parliamentary NGO intellectuals and local leadership, who took the lead and compiled the escalating claims contained in the vision documents.

Conclusion

The question of empowerment of subnational minorities, and the implications for democracy have gone through twists and turns in the past two decades. In the comparative global study of ethnopolitics in the early 1990s Ted Gurr argued that the surge of claim-making by subnational groups was the product of two principal conditions: the increase in the political opportunity for minorities to mobilize; and the decreasing legitimacy of discriminatory structures within states, particularly in the West. The Middle East, however, stood out in this study, as a region of the globe in which the liberalizing trend was weak and the justification of differential treatment of religious and national minorities was strong (Gurr 1993: 60).

A decade later, following September 11 2001, the liberalizing trend in the Western countries itself had suffered a setback, with civil liberties being curbed as part of the global “War on Terror” (Hubrich 2003). In another area – the post-Soviet, New Europe – in the late 1990s, a revived and reframed model of nationalism has emerged. Here democratization and state power was put under strain because of tensions between a nationalizing state, the state’s national minorities, and the nationalism of the minorities’ “homeland” across the state’s borders (Brubaker 1996: 58). It has been suggested that the challenge to the power of the state that arises from this triadic relationship may present national minorities across the globe with a political opportunity and a source of increased bargaining power vis-à-vis their states. The ability or inability of national minorities to rely on the support of a homeland (or another) powerful external actor, explains whether or not they would escalate their claims (Jeene 2004).

The examination of this argument through a Middle Eastern case study – the escalating claims of the Arab Palestinian citizens in Israel – has suggested that this argument may need to be qualified. In this case, the minority escalated its claims, because of and despite the fact that it did not enjoy the support of its “homeland actor” (PLO) which did not enjoy the status of a state. I suggest that
the failure of Jeene’s model to predict the minority’s behavior in this case is due to three conditions of the “triadic nexus”, which were not part of the model: (a) The protracted national conflict between the “homeland actor” (PLO) and the “host state” (Israel); (b) The significant power gap in favor of Israel over the PLO; (c) The persistence of “nationalizing” characteristics of the Israeli state, despite some trends to liberalization. Under those conditions, escalation of claims, can then be explained only partly by political opportunity, and more comprehensively by increased capability of the minority, chief among them, the emergence of an educated middle class.

What does this escalated claim-making imply for democratization of the state of Israel? The assessment of the future impact of this peaceful escalated claim-making by the Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel is contradictory: on the one hand this may be taken as a sign that the minority is asserting itself as an autonomous actor in this “triadic nexus”, and would be able to block the de-democratization effect of the backlash among the Jewish majority; on the other hand, some of the specific content and discourse of the claims articulated in the vision documents may pose a problem for this prospect, particularly in the short run. To a large extent, the documents mirror the majority’s nationalizing tendencies, by posing the minority’s own nationalist narrative. This may have the effect of feeding into the majority’s backlash, ethnicization thus strengthening the tendencies of de-democratization of the state and society.

Notes

1 The objection to Brubaker’s concept of “nationalizing” states, e.g. by Kuzio (2001) is that it hides a value judgement in favor of Western states by ignoring the Western states’ history of “nationalizing” in the past, and their denial of polyethnic minority rights in the present. But this critique does not tackle the question of the sources of majority–minority tensions and political dynamics. Furthermore, Brubaker himself later disassociated himself from the well-known dichotomy of civic (Western) and ethnic (Eastern) nationalism (Brubaker 2004).

2 Since these assessments may be inaccurate or may be subject to change, the claims also could escalate or de-escalate according to changes in the assessment.

3 The term “nationalizing state” corresponds to a very large extent to Peleg’s concept of “hegemonic” state with an Ethnic Constitutional Order’ which is made up of a mix of illiberal and liberal characteristics (Peleg 2007: 5). I prefer the “nationalizing state” conception here for two reasons: (a) Peleg’s conceptualization is tuned to assess primarily the condition for the transformation of the majority’s hegemonic conception of the state, while my focus here is on the minority’s political behavior and its interaction with the majority state; (b) The emphasis on transformation plays down the significance of the historical national conflict which is at the background of majority–minority relations, though it does refer to it (203–204). With regard to this point my approach is closer, though not fully in agreement with the postcolonial analytical framework of Shafir (1989).

4 Smooha has insisted that Israel has formed a special model of a nationalizing state with robust elements of democracy, which he termed an ethnic democracy. See Smooha 2002.

See the Jewish Agency’s (a semi-official body) statistics, at www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/Home/About/Press+Room/Aliyah+Statistics/jun17.htm, last accessed November 2008.

The Progressive List for Peace 1984; the Arab Democratic Party 1988; the National Democratic Alliance 1996; the Arab Movement for Change 1999. The term “ethnocracy” was introduced into the Israeli discourse by a (Jewish) academic, Yiftachel in the 1980s. It was picked up by Arab politicians, e.g. by the head of the Arab Movement for Change, Knesset member Dr Ahamd Tibi in an interview in September 2004. See www.aloufok.net/article.php3?id_article=1648, last accessed August 2008.

One Islamist leader did attend some of the meetings of the group which compiled The Future Vision, but the leaders of his movement disassociated the movement from the document (Kabha 2008: 116).

Israel does not have a written constitution, but several basic laws that enjoy the legal status of constitutional provisions. The phrase “Jewish and Democratic” replaced an earlier phrase, “the state of the Jewish people”, which was introduced in the 1985 amendment (7a) to the Knesset basic law. It was subsequently used in other basic laws in 1992, affirmed by the liberal Supreme Court of the 1990s. The phrase “the state of the Jewish people” was reintroduced in July 2002 to an amendment to a regular law concerning the protection of the privileges of the members of the Knesset.

Although none of the documents demands an official change of the name of the state, the Democratic Constitution does stipulate making the state fully bilingual, and hence binational in the cultural sense of the word (section 17).

Only a small and marginal group within the Arab community (calling themselves “Sons of the Home country”), advocated changing the national political agenda to a secular-democratic (Palestinian) state encompassing the whole of Palestine as a resolution to the conflict.

See for example the Joint Israeli–Palestinian Annapolis Statement read by President Bush, 27 November 2007.

According to World Bank national indicators, in the years 1965 and 1989, Israel’s provision of health care and higher education ranked 23rd and 22nd in the world, placing it between the upper layer of the developing countries and lower layer of the developed countries. Quoted in Shafir and Peled (1989: 214).

For example, life expectancy in the period 1970–2006 increased in Israel significantly for all, but among Jews it increased by almost nine years, while for Arabs only by just over six years (Sikkuy 2008a: 24).

Arabs constitute 14 percent of the total labor force. The percentage of Arabs in the civil service prior to the adoption of an affirmative-action policy in 1992 was 2 percent. The percentage in the civil service increased modestly but at a steady pace to 4 percent by 2000, and then froze up to 2003. Between 2003–2006 it went up to 5 percent (Sikkuy 2008b: 5).

From 30 associations active before 1980, within two decades the number reached over 1,500. See Jamal (2008: 290).


See “The Rift 2000”: new directions for government policy towards the Arab population in Israel: an emergency report by an interuniversity research team: submitted to Ehud Barak, prime minister of Israel (editors: Dan Rabinowitz, As’ad Ghanem, Oren Yiftachel).

A more debatable element in this otherwise convincing argument by Shafir and Peled is the linkage between the neoliberal shift and the turn to “peace” and the Oslo process. The subsequent neoliberal governments in Israel and the return to armed conflict with the Palestinians, and the War on Terror by the neo-cons in the US indicate that there is no necessary link between the two.
20 These the included practice of granting Jewish parents higher child allowances supposedly on account of service in the army. In addition, Arab Palestinians were admitted to the cadet course of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

21 The Basic Laws, Freedom of Occupation (1992) and Human Dignity and Freedom (1992) contain clauses that ground in the Basic Law “the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and Democratic state”. This phrase, which has been left to the interpretation of the courts, was subsequently included in other laws as well.

22 As a balance to this restriction, the ultra-right anti-Arab Jewish orthodox list was blocked from running by outlaw in the same amendment lists which negate the democratic nature of the state and which incite racism.

23 A briefing of the head of the General Security Service to the Prime Minister, leaked to nrg 13.3.07. See www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART1/555/618.html, last accessed November 2008.

24 This official position was enunciated by the head of the General Security Services and backed by the state attorney. It was made public in March–May 2007. See Maariv, 13 March 2007; Adalah Newsletter, 36, May 2007.

25 Literally in Hebrew = “Israel Is Our Home”. The party appeals mainly to and is supported by Russian immigrants.

26 Amendment 46 to the Law of Election to the Knesset and to the Prime Minister, 2002; Amendment 29 to the Law of Immunity of Members of Knesset, 2002.

27 The Election Committee disqualified Bishara and another MK, Tibi, but the decision was overruled by the Supreme Court. The criminal charge was challenged in the court, and after five years the Supreme Court ruled that Bishara’s speeches were covered by the immunity of a member of Knesset. Haaretz, 1 February 2006.

28 Bishara tendered his resignation to the Knesset in April 2007 from his exile in Jordan. See Peled 2005.

29 See the two requests of the prosecution to the High Court to extend the detention of Salakh and others (Requests 5601/04; 2637/04).

References


Escalating minority claims


11 ‘One Zambia, one nation’, many groups
State nationalism as a constraint on ethnopolitics and a facilitator of democratization

James R. Scarritt

This chapter employs a theoretical framework that focuses on the interaction among strategic choices, institutions, and social structural (system) properties and relationships to explain:

1. why state nationalism has been a strongly held value among Zambian political leaders since the rise of the anti-colonial movement;
2. how it has constrained, coexisted with, and been constrained by the constant and sometimes intense strategic competition for power among ethnopolitical groups; and
3. how this combination of mutual constraint and coexistence is facilitating a relatively successful democratization process.

This framework has been presented in detail elsewhere (Scarritt 2008a, 2008b), so only the most relevant parts will be discussed here to show readers how it conceptualizes the state nationalism–ethnopolitics relationship in a uniquely useful way.

The framework used here builds on theories of information-energy exchange combined with enablement/constraint-agency exchange to explain relationships between:

1. individual and group actors’ preferences, beliefs, and behavior (micro level);
2. roles, organizations, and institutional rules (meso level);
3. components of social structure and culture variously conceived (macro level); and
4. individual/group, organizational/institutional, and structural/systems levels of analysis (micro-meso-macro).

Information-energy exchanges refer to interaction between what are often called ideas and material factors. Agency and constraint/enablement involve both information and energy, so information/energy exchanges occur in both strategic interaction among agents and the constraint/enablement of these interactions by
institutions and system relationships, as will be elaborated below. These exchanges are general causal mechanisms, and more specific causal mechanisms such as bricolage, diffusion/translation, leadership, learning, mobilization, path dependence, and power (Campbell 2004: 62–89; Scarritt 1972) combine the two types of exchanges. Shared ideas or cultural information need to be translated into institutional rules and individual beliefs, and additionally tied to economic and other resources (energy) and the agency of many individuals, groups, and organizations to be effective, while the energy of agency, resources, and power needs to be guided by beliefs, shared ideas, and institutional rules to be effective (see also Campbell 2004: 110–119).

The crucial assumption in this framework about strategic choice is that individual and group actors exercising agency are simultaneously engaged in making strategic choices to maximize their perceived interests (preferences) and following normative rules to which they are committed as part of their self-understanding; they are preference-maximizers and rule-followers simultaneously. ‘In social action, human agents make strategic or allocative choices while simultaneously enacting (ontologically) prior understandings about the nature of the strategic situation in which they find themselves, the characteristics or identities of the players (including themselves), and the common understandings or expectations as to how the game will be played’ (Ferejohn 1991: 285). A number of authors including Johnson (2003: 92–103) have challenged the causal efficacy of values and norms, often citing Swidler (1986) who sees them as part of a cultural ‘tool-kit’, and their ‘causal significance not in defining ends of action, but in providing cultural components that are used to construct strategies of action’ (273), but she acknowledges that ‘strategies of action are cultural products’, her position is actually similar to the one advocated here. Johnson’s position is also similar, since he says (2002: 243) that ‘world view and rationality are reciprocally constraining’. Values and norms constrain and enable strategic interaction, and norms are what make organizations also institutions. But values and norms are created, given varying degrees of specificity, and changed, usually over a longer period of time, through the agency of strategic actors.

The construction and persistence of state nationalism in Zambia

In primordialist terms, Zambia is not a nation; yet state nationalism is a strongly held value among political leaders and other Zambians, especially educated ones. Zambia’s borders were determined by the race among the British, Portuguese, and Belgians to occupy as much territory as possible in the aftermath of the 1885 Berlin Conference dividing Africa among the European powers, and without regard to the composition of the indigenous population made up of more than 70 tribal societies. Treaties with selected chiefs were part of this occupation, but it was to the advantage of both parties to these treaties to exaggerate the territory controlled by such chiefs rather than to demarcate ethnic groups exactly (Hall 1965: 51–53).
Although British colonial rule established the Northern Rhodesian state with national executive, legislative and judicial institutions and, as discussed below, played a key role in creating some of the economic, urban, religious and educational structures and political institutions that eventually energized state nationalism, British administrative policies discouraged much more than encouraged the emergence of this value among the vast majority (never less than 96 per cent) of Zambians who were of purely African descent, in contrast to whites (called Europeans), Indians (both Hindus and Moslems), and people of mixed race, who were encouraged to think of themselves as citizens of Northern Rhodesia and participate in national political institutions (Hall 1965: 103–111; Rotberg 1965: 47–54). The administrative strategy of indirect rule assumed that Africans should be governed according to ‘traditional’, tribal institutions rather than territory-wide ones that were not meaningful to them because they did not constitute a nation. Rural areas were divided into Superior and Subordinate Native Authorities (NAs), which consisted initially of a chief or a council of chiefs, and later of a chief in council, with educated Africans serving, often uncomfortably, as staff and councilors. Chiefs also acted as Native Courts, deciding cases under customary law as reinterpreted to conform to British precepts of ‘civilized standards’. Attempts were made in the late 1940s and 1950s to extend the NA system into urban local government (still dominated by local Europeans) through Tribal Elders and Urban Native Courts, and into national government through Provincial Councils and in 1946 a territory-wide African Representative Council that included a minority of educated Africans. These changes compromised the traditional character of indirect rule even more, although the subordination of the NAs to the colonial administration had already compromised it severely. State nationalism among Zambian Africans arose and became strong as a reaction against the divisiveness of indirect rule along both ‘tribal’ and racial lines and the limitations it imposed on African participation in national institutions.

Social changes instituted under colonial rule undermined the viability of indirect rule and provided the informational and material bases for state nationalism. In the next section it will be shown that some of these changes also provided the informational and material bases for ethnopolitical cleavages and strategic interaction based on them. Turning first to material changes or energy, the formal sector of the economy of Northern Rhodesia was concentrated along the line of rail running through the middle of the country from Livingstone in the south to the Copperbelt in the north. White-owned commercial farms dominated the southern part of this line of rail, the capital city and light industrial center of Lusaka was in the middle, and the mining (copper and other metals) towns of Kabwe and the Copperbelt were in the north. Africans from all parts of the country migrated to urban centers and intermixed in them, making the Zambian population more than 40 per cent urban. Thus the most important economic resources were not in specific tribal areas. Land along the line of rail was mostly crown land, owned by individuals (mostly Europeans), companies, or the government, and thus was not under the control of NAs. Most of this land could not be bought by Africans, who were viewed as residents of the rural areas (and thus subjects
of the NAs) who were temporarily living in the towns or on white farms for employment. Economic policies of the governments of Northern Rhodesia and the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland into which it was incorporated from 1953 to 1963 in spite of strong African opposition favored Europeans over Africans, especially in the areas of wages, agricultural marketing, government services, and location of development projects. State nationalism was greatly stimulated by the desire of the African majority to control the wealth of the line of rail and enact policies that would reduce racial inequalities (Roberts 1976: 185–194; Rotberg 1965: 156–178).

In terms of ideas or information, educational and religious changes were supportive of the rise of state nationalism. At the time of independence Zambia was ‘one of the least educated countries in a most under-educated continent’ (UN/ECA/FAO 1964: 91), having about 100 university graduates and 1,200 secondary school graduates. But even for those who only attended primary school, colonial education stimulated state nationalism. Instruction was in English after the first few years. Since there were only two senior secondary schools – Munali for boys and Chipembe for girls – students from all parts of the country met one another in these schools. The new government rapidly expanded educational opportunities at all levels (Mwanakatwe 1968) until the late 1970s, when an economic downturn made further expansion impossible. Attempts at curriculum reform were mostly unsuccessful, but the curriculum has remained nationally homogeneous from the late colonial period until today, and has been pro-state nationalism since the early years of independence. Education has long been an important basis for status, the significance of which is discussed below. Christian missionaries played a crucial although gradually declining role in education in the colonial period, establishing a close association between religion and education. A few missionaries openly supported African nationalism, but most were moderate critics or supporters of colonial rule. Since independence, the Christian churches have been substantially Africanized. While some church leaders have become prominent critics of government policies, Christianity has become an effective ideational component of Zambian state nationalism (Gewald et al. 2008: 1219–1263).

In contrast to many other African countries, tribally based associations in Northern Rhodesia were relatively few, sporadic, and of little political significance. Instead, more educated Africans first mobilized through regional but non-tribal welfare societies that competed with the Native Authorities for the people’s loyalty, and eventually the Federation of African Welfare Societies, which became the first nationalist movement – the African National Congress (ANC) (Rotberg 1965: 124–134, 199–213). Thus from the beginning of nationalist politics in 1948, mobilization in Zambia has been predominantly nationalist and multiethnic, and the main conflict among those mobilizing has concerned the top leadership position in the ruling party (the national presidency since independence). Competitive ethnopolitical group mobilization has been the most important tool in rather than the cause of this competition; in other words, it is strategic interaction. The ANC was led by a multiethnic group of leaders from its
founding in 1948 until 1958, when most top leaders and many members left the ANC over a strategic disagreement with president Harry Nkumbula about how to best attain participation in national institutions and then independence. By 1960 they had coalesced into the United National Independence Party (UNIP) under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda, which immediately obtained the majority of support in the country. In 1964, when universal franchise took effect, UNIP won a large majority and Kaunda became president at independence later that year.

Scarritt conducted interviews with about 120 Zambian political leaders in 1965–1966 and has been conducting similar interviews with a smaller number since 2000. His findings regarding their values help to explain the relationship among state nationalism, ethnopolitical strategic action and democratization, as well as the type of interparty competition that emerges from this relationship (Scarritt 1971: 31–54, 1979: 13–38). In both time periods, Scarritt found strong support for nationalism – the unity of Zambia against external and internal forces. In 1965–1966 leaders acknowledged that feelings of ‘tribalism’ existed and could be exploited by those seeking to enhance their own political power. Most of those interviewed shared a determination that this would not be done, although there were different interpretations of what injecting ‘tribalism’ into politics meant. Those interviewed since 2000 recognized that ethnopolitical mobilization had been extensive, but believed that exclusionist mobilization that threatened national unity had been much less extensive. They believed that former president Frederick Chiluba had increased the latter, and that it should be and has been stopped, which was possible because it is not inherent in relations among Zambians. As one respondent indicated, ‘The problems are the product of politicians at Mulungushi’ (where an exclusionist minimum winning coalition was constructed in party elections in 1967 as discussed below); ‘things got bad late in Kaunda’s rule, and Chiluba made it worse’. Nationalism has been strengthened since the early 1990s by the fact that privatization of the Zambian economy has favoured foreign investors, allegedly at the expense of citizens of all ethnopolitical groups. By 2007, there was nostalgia among some leaders for the immediate post-independence years in which Kaunda and other top leaders were true nationalists rather than merely builders of broad ethnopolitical coalitions like Mwanawasa, who had stirred up tribal feelings in ordinary Zambians in the process.1 Bratton et al. (2005: 191) find many ordinary Zambians agree, while Posner presents data to show that Zambian citizens share this nationalism but combine it with the belief that people with access to resources will channel them to members of their own ethnic group (Posner 2005: 92–104).

In 1965–1966 leaders believed that political power exercised by the right people was necessary and useful in attaining desired goals such as independence, but that it was dangerous when misused by others. Those interviewed since 2000 had an ambivalent but more negative attitude to power. They were very critical of abuses of power by those who had exercised it in the intervening years, especially Zambian presidents, and although a majority still believed that Zambia needs a strong leader, many were anxious to change the constitution to limit his
power. In 1965–1966, leaders in UNIP emphasized the electoral aspect of democracy and believed that Zambia was already democratic with power being used wisely. Leaders outside the ruling party emphasized the importance of following legal procedures for democracy, and criticized UNIP for ignoring such procedures in their exercise of power.

Almost all leaders interviewed by Scarritt, both in 1965–1966 and since 2000, were deeply concerned with status. One of them has written ‘the majority of men and women go into politics in order to acquire power or status or both, usually with a purpose in mind of exercising power to introduce their policies’ (Mwanakatwe 2003: 155). In 1965–1966 leaders rejected absolute economic equality, while favouring equality of opportunity in both the economic and political spheres. They felt they had sacrificed a lot during the independence struggle in order to obtain their present positions, and believed that they and others should and would be able to reap the political and economic rewards that they deserved because colonial rule would no longer prevent this outcome. By 2000 leaders felt that this legitimate expectation held by them and their predecessors had been frustrated, in part by circumstances, but primarily by the policies of the first two presidents. The frustration of their political expectations is most relevant for state nationalism and democracy. Long-time first president Kenneth Kaunda had frustrated these expectations through centralizing power in his own hands and rotating subordinates among positions so often that they had no opportunity to accomplish anything. Second president Chiluba had promised to open up political opportunities, but had instead followed Kaunda’s practices, in perhaps an even more humiliating way. Being a party leader, even if the party is small, is valued for conferring status.

The combination of nationalism, acceptance of the utility of leadership by the right people, support for some aspects of democracy, need for status, and the feeling of status deprivation reinforced leaders’ focus on the competition for the presidency and on leadership of opposition parties seeking broad support as the best alternative for the losers in this competition. These values led them to engage in non-exclusive ethnopolitical mobilization as a tool in this competition, but at the same time focused them on gaining multiethnic support and an oversized majority for their parties.

In the first years after independence, the UNIP government, buoyed by its huge 1964 electoral victory and its successes in subsequent by-elections, pursued state nationalist goals vigorously and confidently against external and internal opponents. They initially believed that time was on their side against both types of opponents. Internally, the ANC had limited support and very little organization, and Nkumbula suffered from alcoholism. Thus it was assumed that, if the government committed sufficient resources to those areas where the ANC had won in 1964 and offered sufficient high positions to people from those areas, UNIP would probably eliminate ANC by winning all seats in the next parliamentary election. This was a clear indication that UNIP wanted to implement Kaunda’s slogan ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ through one totally dominant party (Mancola 2008). Local whites were guaranteed ten seats in the legislature elected
in 1964, and at first their representatives criticized government policies sharply, but they voluntarily disbanded their party before the reserved seats disappeared at the next election. Externally, although neighbouring (Southern) Rhodesia had moved to the right on the breakup of the Federation, the UNIP government hoped that the British government would support the majority-rule goal of African nationalism there as it had in Northern Rhodesia, and that the nationalist wave would eventually wash away the stronger, white-dominated regimes of Portugal and South Africa.

It soon became apparent, however, that these anticipated victories for Zambian state nationalism would not occur easily or quickly. Internally, the ANC gained rather than lost support and new parties formed and made ethnopolitical appeals, both due in large part to the divisive ethnopolitical strategic interaction within UNIP (discussed in the next section), with some local whites loyal to Rhodesia carrying out destabilizing acts on its behalf in Zambia, and to groups previously thought loyal to UNIP – including trade unions, secondary and university students, African businessmen, civil servants, and local party officials – beginning to criticize it for not meeting their demands quickly (Scarritt 1979). Externally, Rhodesia declared independence under white rule unilaterally, with the support of South Africa and Portugal, and Britain was unwilling to oppose this move effectively. Britain led an ineffective oil blockade of Rhodesia, which caused the latter to implement an effective blockade of Zambia. The internal and external threats to UNIP’s version of state nationalism were interrelated because Rhodesia and South Africa supported those Zambian leaders who said, in the course of their strategic appeals for electoral support, that Kaunda’s hard line toward these countries caused Zambians unnecessary suffering.

Given the short experience Zambians had at this time with governing themselves, it is not surprising that disagreements arose among leaders about the relationship between state nationalism and individual and group interests and rights. In 1965–1966 leaders outside UNIP supported state nationalism, but stressed that it should be combined with regional and/or institutional pluralism, a concern that they said the ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ slogan ignored. Leaders in the ruling party saw nationalism in more unitary terms and maintained that the continuation of democratic elections would take care of the concerns of advocates of pluralism. There were thus substantial normative differences in the interpretation of the shared value of nationalism (Scarritt 1971: 37–39). The one-party state was imposed at the beginning of 1973 against the wishes of all leaders outside UNIP and a few inside it, to defend state nationalism against internal and external threats. In 2003 Kenneth Kaunda told the author that he still believes that it had been necessary at that time because of the high level of those threats, although he had decided in 1991 that it was no longer necessary because the one-party state had diminished Zambian ‘tribalism’; Rhodesia had become Zimbabwe; Portugal had long been out of Africa; and South Africa was clearly changing. In the long run, however, the one-party system weakened state nationalism among both leaders and the general population by tying ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ to ‘one party, one leader’ and the specific policies enforced by that
leader that lowered the status of other leaders and used power in ways they considered illegitimate.

By 1991, the vast majority of leaders from almost all parts of Zambia wanted to return to multiparty politics and to have government pay more attention to democratic procedures. They felt that ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ needed to be detached from ‘one party, one leader’. Some of them founded the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) as a new ‘nationalist movement’ that would be the effective agent for accomplishing this goal. Ethnopolitical (and a little ideological) strategic interaction occurred within the MMD before, and especially after, it was transformed into a party to contest the 1991 elections against UNIP and selected Frederick Chiluba, the head of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, as its presidential candidate. Under Chiluba, Zambian state nationalism was detached not only from UNIP and Kaunda but also from their statist and vaguely egalitarian policies, which were replaced by free-market economics, and from their specific authoritarian practices, which were replaced in part by different authoritarian practices (Simutanyi 2005). The Chiluba government remained state nationalist in ideology and in policies toward the international financial institutions (IFIs) – IMF and World Bank – on which the country was dependent because of many years of economic decline and very high external debt. IMF conditionality was accepted much more than it had been under Kaunda, but painful policies demanded by the IMF were still avoided or postponed when possible, and nationalist rhetoric was frequently used to justify such avoidance (Rakner 2003: 134–170). But just as state nationalism had guided the opposition to Kaunda, it also served as a basis for opposition to Chiluba because his participation in divisive ethnopolitical strategic interaction, as well as his corruption, increasing authoritarianism, and failure to effect economic growth, were seen as anti-nationalist.

After winning a second term in 1996 in an election that was not considered free and fair by impartial observers, Chiluba tried to change the constitution in 2001 to allow himself a third term. When this effort failed due to strong protests by other leaders in both the MMD and opposition parties, as well as by residents of Lusaka, he chose Levi Mwanawasa as his successor. Mwanawasa called his presidency the ‘new deal MMD’ to differentiate it from Chiluba’s policies. His approach to state nationalism involved:

1. overtly building the broadest possible ethnopolitical coalition by appealing to all groups;
2. achieving economic growth, primarily through the good luck of being able to meet Chinese and Indian demand for copper, but also through greater collaboration with the IFIs and donor governments, and more effective encouragement of the private sector (Taylor 2007: 83–86);
3. more nationalist economic rhetoric, including reintroduction of planning (which is only indicative); and
4. maintaining the powers of the presidency while exercising them in ways that make them seemed less oppressive to many Zambians.
The construction and persistence of ethnopolitical strategic interaction in Zambia

Ethnicity is important to Zambians as an extension of kinship, but it is not inherently political, so it needs to be shown how some but not all ethnic identities have been politicized. The argument presented in this section is based on Scarritt (2006, 2007), and elaborates on one part of Posner’s extremely theoretically sophisticated and empirically rich analysis of Zambian ethnopolitics. He indicates that there are many peaceful ethnic interactions in Zambia, including a high rate of intermarriage, but that ethnopolitical cleavages have been predominant in competitive electoral politics in Zambia because Zambians assume that having a member of their own ethnic group in a position of power will increase their access to patronage resources, they are inclined to join coalitions led by members of their own ethnic groups, to be sympathetic to electoral appeals couched in ethnic terms, and to be sceptical of promises made by leaders of groups other than their own.

(2005: 91)

He correctly argues that past institutions have made language and tribe the only available identity options (until 2006) for reasons discussed below. The choice between these two options, he believes, depends entirely on which is more likely to produce a minimum winning coalition under specific institutional rules. In multiparty legislative and presidential elections linguistic identities will be chosen in all constituencies because these elections are national contests among parties over the formation of a governing coalition. In multiparty contests,

notwithstanding the fact that many Zambian political parties have historically enjoyed significant support across ethnic lines, every major political party in Zambia since independence has been perceived, to at least some degree and by some citizens, to represent the interests of a particular ethnic group or region of the country.


Because there is no majority group, Posner states that,

To be nationally viable, Zambian political parties must win support across ethnic communities, and this means eschewing public identification with any single ethnic group…. The goal … is to construct a solid ethnic coalition in the party’s home region while still preserving the ability to win pan-ethnic (or non-ethnic) support in the rest of the country.

(2005: 110)

Posner (2005: 26–88) describes the construction of tribal and linguistic identities, with the former nested within the latter. He describes how the colonial
government developed NAs in rural Northern Rhodesia, each named for one highly amorphous precolonial tribal society, but some also including members of other such societies, usually smaller ones. After the effort was made to extend institutions related to the NAs into the towns, they and their urban extensions became the institutional basis of tribal identities. They were political/administrative entities from the beginning but were initially politicized in the national arena when they began selecting the members of Provincial Representative Councils and later a national African Representative Council.

Posner shows that differential impacts of the social changes discussed above as stimulants for state nationalism – education, urbanization, and the development of the line of rail – affected ethnopolitical group formation. The linguistic groups discussed by him are based on the adoption of the Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, and Lozi languages since the early colonial period by Zambians who did not speak these languages prior to that time, resulting in 43, 18, 19 and 8 per cent of Zambians, respectively, speaking these languages as their first or second language. Missionaries initially converted these languages into written form, translated the Bible into them, and taught in them. Later the colonial government continued to use these languages for primary schools. It also used them – along with English – for newspapers and radio broadcasting. Reducing the number of languages they used saved considerable time and money for both the missionaries and the government. In order to keep wages down, Northern Rhodesian mining companies reached an agreement with the government to recruit only Bemba-speaking workers for their mines on the Copperbelt and in Kabwe if South African mines, which paid higher wages, were prohibited from recruiting among the Bemba. Low wages increased company profits and thus taxes paid to the government. The best available transport routes directed Nyanja speakers to the capital city of Lusaka and Lozi speakers to Livingstone (which is surrounded by Tonga territory). Thus these linguistic groups were constructed before they were politicized. People from the Northwestern Province (12 per cent of Zambians) speak three different languages, but do not speak any of the four major lingua franca. Their provincial substitute for a language identity was constructed and politicized in response to the politicization of the other groups.

In the data set created by Scarritt and Mozaffar to analyze the complex patterns of socially constructed ethnopolitical identities (politicized ethnic identities) in African countries, Zambia was classified as having five separate but culturally similar ethnopolitical groups, with 12 less inclusive groups found within four of them (Scarritt and Mozaffar 1999: 86–91; see also Hulterstrom 2004). The 2006 election results indicate that one nested group within the fifth more inclusive group needs to be added. Although their coding was done before Posner’s data were known to them, their more inclusive groups are Posner’s language groups and the Northwestern Province group. Most of the less inclusive groups nested within the more inclusive ones differ from one another along what Posner calls tribal lines, but the Bemba and the Tonga are also divided by provincial boundaries. These groups are listed in Table 11.1, along with their politicization histories that are discussed below.
As indicated above, the split-off of UNIP from the ANC was motivated by tactical differences. But Nkumbula knew that the other leaders’ more militant tactics had much more support within the ANC than his more moderate tactics, so he retained control of the party by packing the crucial meeting with his loyal Tonga-Ila-Lenje co-ethnics, causing the other top leaders to leave. This was the beginning of overt ethnopolitical particization in Zambia, in which there is a high correlation between group membership and voting for a specific party (Scarritt 2007: 4–5). Since ANC’s support came largely from this one group until 1968, although it had pockets of support elsewhere, UNIP could paint it as ethnopolitical in contrast to the ruling party’s nationalism (Mancola 2008).

Politicians in UNIP from the dominant group in the Western (formerly Barotseland) Province – the Lozi – felt insecure about their place in UNIP because their organizational base was weaker than those of politicians from other prov-
‘One Zambia, one nation’, many groups

inces. Many were also angry because the UNIP government, in the name of fighting apartheid, had denied Lozi the economically vital right to work in South African mines and, in the name of national unity, had abrogated the special status awarded to their traditional leader in the independence agreement (Sichone 1999). In 1966 a few Lozi politicians formed the United Party (UP). Although it was banned before it could contest an election, this was almost certainly an ethnic party in terms of both its support and its articulation of ethnic grievances (Scarritt 2006: 244), and another ethnopolitical cleavage had been particized.

At its General Conference in 1967 UNIP held competitive elections for its Central Committee for the first time. Tonga leaders were represented in terms of the population share of their group rather than in terms of the group’s past support for UNIP, in the hope that this would give UNIP a victory among the Tonga in the next general election. A coalition of Bemba-speaking and Tonga-Ila-Lenje candidates defeated a rival coalition of Nyanja speakers and Lozi for all of the positions for which they opposed one another. Most importantly, ambitious Bemba leader Simon Kapwepwe replaced a Nyanja speaker as vice-president, while a Lozi lost the position as secretary general to a Tonga. Kapwepwe allied with the Tonga because their lack of voter support meant they were weak within the party. But this strategically logical move violated many leaders’ nationalist values. This was the only example in Zambia’s pre-2006 electoral history of a minimum winning ethnopolitical coalition that explicitly excluded other groups, and it had significant negative consequences, especially for Kapwepwe. It initially triggered an exodus of Lozi politicians from UNIP to UP, which led to the banning of the latter party prior to the 1968 elections. It later led to Kapwepwe’s downfall. It is recognized by Kaunda (interview, 2003) and other recent respondents, as well as by scholars, as a time of uniquely intense conflict in Zambian ethnopolitics that demonstrated the disadvantages of the strategic choice of an exclusivist minimum winning coalition, even in an intraparty election (Scarritt 2006: 245).

When UP was banned its leaders joined the ANC, which thus became multi-ethnic. In the 1968 elections UNIP’s campaign emphasized its official non-ethnic ideology, while that of ANC emphasized multiethnic resistance to Bemba domination. This was another change in cleavage particization but, as shown below, it was a temporary, although recurring, multiethnic alliance (Scarritt 2006: 245). It was Zambia’s only example of successful opposition coordination, but its proximate cause was government’s banning of one opposition party.

Agitation within UNIP to undo the results of the 1967 Central Committee elections began almost immediately. Kapwepwe’s position as vice-president and heir apparent was the chief target of this agitation. Kaunda eventually responded by dissolving the elected Central Committee and replacing it with an appointed one that included Kapwepwe but had fewer Bemba-speaking members. This change and the agitation that continued in spite of it alienated Bemba-speaking leaders, and in August 1971 Kapwepwe and a number of others resigned from UNIP to found the United Progressive Party (UPP). It is difficult to be certain whether it was an ethnic party because it was severely repressed during its entire
existence. Its only electoral participation was in the December 1971 by-elections, contesting five seats in an electoral alliance with the ANC. It obtained over 3,500 votes (in comparison to UNIP’s 9,450) and one seat (Kapwepwe) in two primarily Bemba-speaking Copperbelt constituencies that also contained some former ANC supporters, but few votes and no seats in three rural constituencies, two of which had homogeneous Bemba populations. In the Bemba-speaking Northern Province, it was reported that UPP had widespread support in previous UNIP strongholds, and was organizing covertly but very actively on the basis of ‘explicitly sectionalist’ appeals (Bratton 1980: 212–226). UPP pursued ethnic interests and received support almost exclusively from one ethnopolitical group. Kapwepwe’s prior and subsequent actions in pursuit of the Zambian presidency, as well as the party’s election manifesto, support the assumption that UPP aspired to expand beyond its ethnic base (Posner 2005: 111–112), but whether it would have done so if it had not been repressed cannot be known.

It is interesting to note that in the process of intra-UNIP conflict and the rise of UPP, Kaunda’s ethnopolitical identity changed from Bemba (based on his place of birth – he grew up in the same place as Kapwepwe – first language, and being made a Bemba by the paramount chief) to Nyanja (based on his parents’ place of birth – Malawi – and language).

In the years of the competitive nationalist struggle and the first post-independence multiparty period, UNIP remained a multiethnic dominant party, winning an average of over 70 per cent of the vote in the 1964 and 1968 universal franchise elections. The particization of ethnopolitical cleavages changed from Tonga vs the rest to Tonga and Lozi vs the rest, and was changing to Bemba vs Tonga and Lozi vs Nyanja and Northwesterners, probably to the end of UNIP dominance, and possibly to UNIP’s electoral defeat when multiparty politics was suspended by the declaration of the one-party state at the beginning of 1973. Ethnopolitical strategic interaction was muted at the national level by this move (Sichone and Chikulo 1996), but continued underground within the leadership of the party, including Kapwepwe and Nkumbula’s unsuccessful attempts to challenge Kaunda for the UNIP presidency in 1978. More localized ethnopolitical strategic interaction occurred more extensively and more openly in competitive legislative elections within UNIP (Gertzel et al. 1984: 29–57, 237–244; Posner 2005: 195–198).

In 1991, under strong pressure from the newly founded multiethnic Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), UNIP reluctantly agreed to return to a multiparty system. Chiluba, MMD’s presidential candidate, is a Bemba speaker from Luapula Province, and was selected because of strong Bemba and trade-union support and his claim to favour democracy (Chiluba 1995). Both MMD and UNIP, which selected Kaunda as its presidential candidate, fielded candidates for all 150 seats in the legislature. Both parties emphasized non-ethnic appeals and were multiethnic in organizational reality.

Dissatisfaction with UNIP and the one-party state was greatest among members of ethnopolitical groups that had supported the ANC and UPP in 1968–1971, and MMD handily won the presidential election and most of the leg-
islative seats in provinces inhabited by those groups, making it the new dominant party. The Nyanja speakers of the Eastern Province, who had never identified with an opposition party, who played a more important role in UNIP after the downfall of Kapwepwe, and with whom Kaunda was now identified, gave the latter his only provincial victory in the presidential election and elected UNIP candidates to all of the province’s legislative seats. The multiethnic coalition that led MMD to an overwhelming victory in 1991 was hastily assembled and fragile, and it soon began to fracture. Older, more experienced, more educated, and wealthier politicians from the Western, Southern and Northwestern Provinces had competed with Chiluba for the MMD presidential nomination. Ministers and other politicians sharing some or all of these characteristics, including several prominent Bemba speakers, soon fell out with the new president. They resigned from the MMD between 1992 and 1994, and most joined the National Party (NP) formed in 1993. In a crucial by-election in a Bemba constituency, MMD probably won because Chiluba assumed the ‘mantle of Kapwepwe’. Zambia appeared to be creating a party system comprised of three multiethnic parties, each having its own ethnopolitical base. But in 1995 Baldwin Nkumbula (Harry’s son) was defeated as NP leader by a Kaonde and resigned from the party; the Lozi leaders also left to form a new party. Thereafter the party’s Tonga and Lozi support declined rapidly.

In 1996 the MMD government revised the Zambian constitution to place a retroactive two-term limit on the president and to require presidential candidates’ parents to have been born in Zambia. Both of these changes were clearly aimed at Kaunda, who was greatly feared by the MMD. The latter provision probably also made Chiluba ineligible, but the courts ruled that it did not (Chitata 2006: 167–173, 286–324). UNIP decided to boycott the 1996 elections, which MMD won handily among all ethnopolitical groups, although their percentage of victory was highest in Bemba-speaking areas and lowest in the Northwestern Province where a local NP candidate stood for president (Burnell 1997).

Electoral politics were very intense for the two years preceding the December 2001 elections because of divisions within the MMD, the formation of new parties, and constant by-elections (Scarritt 2006: 248–250). Although 11 parties fielded presidential candidates, the following analysis will focus on the six parties (out of the seven largest) that ran candidates in both 2001 and 2006, to avoid confusing detail. UNIP selected Kaunda’s son Tilyenji as its presidential candidate. In 1998 Anderson Mazoka, former managing director of the South African mining multinational Anglo-American and a Tonga, formed the United Party for National Development (UPND) after he apparently received no takers on his offer to lead a united opposition. The NP was absorbed into the UPND.

In 2001 opponents of Chiluba’s aborted efforts to obtain a third term, some with presidential ambitions, were expelled from the MMD. Most of those expelled formed the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) and selected former vice-president Christon Tembo as their presidential candidate. Former vice-president Godfrey Miyanda, unhappy with the role he was offered in the FDD, formed the Heritage Party (HP). The winner of the contest for the
MMD’s presidential nomination was Levy Mwanawasa, Chiluba’s first vice-president (1991–1994), who had since been politically inactive but had remained in the party in spite of being approached by the UPND. Mwanawasa was of Lenje and Lamba ancestry, placing him at the edges of both the more inclusive Tonga- and Bemba-speaking groups. The MMD secretary-general Michael Sata, a Bemba speaker, had expected to get the nomination because he had supported Chiluba in his third-term bid, and protested so vigorously when he did not get it that he was expelled from the party. He became the presidential candidate of a new party, the Patriotic Front (PF).

Negotiations among opposition parties to form a ‘government of national unity’ failed once again. With the possible exception of the UPND and FDD, which believed that they might win on their own, these parties were too completely the personal vehicles for the presidential candidacies of their leaders to join a united opposition. This series of events created a larger opposition than had previously existed in Zambia, except perhaps for the ANC and UPP in 1972, although it was highly fragmented. While all parties aspired to obtain national support, almost all had ethnopolitical bases of support. The MMD was still strongest in Bemba-speaking areas, while the UPND was strongest in Tonga-Ila-Lenje and Lozi-speaking areas. Nyanja speakers split their votes between the UNIP and FDD, although the latter’s leadership was a multiethnic coalition of opponents of Chiluba’s third-term bid. The partizization of cleavages became Bemba vs Tonga, Lozi, and Northwesterners vs Easterners, although this partizization was less complete than in 1964, 1968, or 1991. Kaunda endorsed his son, but also Mazoka and another candidate; if UNIP had effectively endorsed Mazoka, he could have won by over 140,000 votes (Rakner and Svasand 2004, 2005).

In the years between the 2001 and 2006 elections, a number of changes occurred in the party system, some of which were related to ethnopolitical strategic interaction and the partizization of cleavages. By the time of the latter election only the MMD, UPND, FDD, UNIP, HP and PF from the former election existed, and serious splits occurred in all of them except the PF. The split within the MMD was between those loyal to Mwanawasa and those loyal to Chiluba. The latter apparently expected to be able to manipulate his successor and to be cleared by him of charges of massive corruption, and was deeply disappointed that Mwanawasa moved in the opposite direction on both points, reducing Chiluba’s influence within the party. Mwanawasa remained firmly in control of the party in most provinces, and the splits in the MMD were less serious than those in opposition parties.

The UPND began losing MPs, mostly from outside its Tonga core, in 2002 due to enticements offered by Mwanawasa, including junior ministerial positions (whose occupants were not required to change parties but were expelled from the UPND for accepting). But by far the most serious split and the one that most strongly affected cleavage partizization came with Mazoka’s death in May 2006. Although he knew of the seriousness of his illness, Mazoka had not named a successor, for which different explanations have been offered. Sakwiba Sikota, a
Lozi, had been acting president of the party during Mazoka’s illness, and apparently assumed that he would succeed him. But some Tonga activists insisted that the party president must be a Tonga, and Haikinde Hichilema, a wealthy businessman who had donated money to the party but had not otherwise been involved in it, was elected leader by more than 70 per cent of the vote at the party’s general assembly in July. Sikota and his supporters left the UPND to form the United Liberal Party (ULP) a few days later, and formed an electoral pact with the PF. The UPND thus became a potentially ethnic Tonga party. But the meaning of Tonga also narrowed when the former Lenje leader of the UPND, who was also Mwanawasa’s nephew, switched to the MMD in May. Although many leaders agree Hichilema would make an excellent president, his benefiting from, and presumed support of, exclusionist mobilization by Tonga activists in the UPND presidential selection, means that he will have to wait some time in a lesser position before having a chance to be president, as discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

The split in UNIP was over the former ruling party’s still considerable financial resources, the domination of the party by the Kaunda family, and whether to ally with the MMD or UPND. When those who favoured an alliance with MMD lost out to the Kaunda faction, many of them – led by Rupiah Banda – joined the MMD, enhancing its support in the east considerably. Kaunda endorsed Hichilema just before the election in 2006. The FDD and HP weakened rather than fractured.

In March 2006 the long-anticipated creation of the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) of UPND, FDD, and UNIP was announced, with Mazoka as its presidential candidate and the FDD president as its vice-presidential candidate. Their leaders together had out-pollled Mwanawasa by 370,762 votes in the 2001 presidential race, so this appeared to be an example of strong opposition coordination. But the splits and weakening of all three parties indicated even before Mazoka’s death that the UDA was by no means certain to defeat the MMD; the major split in the UPND that followed his death made it certain that the MMD would defeat the UDA.

While all this was going on, Michael Sata had reacted to his poor showing in 2001 by adopting a populist stance, promising to chase away Chinese, Indian and Lebanese investors, award miners shares in the mines, cut personal income tax, build modern houses, and create manufacturing jobs. Later he promised to stop the prosecution of Chiluba and others accused of corruption on the grounds that Bemba were treated differently than other accused. He quickly withdrew this promise but it was remembered, especially by the Bemba. Shortly before the election, Chiluba endorsed Sata.

The MMD’s Mwanawasa won the presidential race, increasing his percentage of the vote from 29 per cent to almost 43 per cent, although still a minority, with a substantial increase in turnout of just over a million voters (57 per cent). The percentage of his vote that came from the Bemba-speaking Copperbelt, Northern, and Luapula Provinces and the predominantly Bemba-speaking constituencies of the Central Province declined from 59 per cent to 40 per cent, and the
percentages from the Nyanja- and Lozi-speaking areas and the Northwestern Province increased substantially, resulting in the appointment of Banda as vice-president. Within the Bemba-speaking areas he won a majority of the votes in the primarily Lala-Lamba rural Copperbelt constituencies, where voters have long been looked down upon by urban dwellers from the Bemba heartland and resented this (Siegel 1989). He won even bigger majorities (averaging almost 80 per cent), substantially increased from 2001, in eight primarily Mambwe-Inamwange Northern Province constituencies, enabling him to win that province. Within the Lenje subgroup of the Tonga in the Central and Lusaka Provinces, he won in five constituencies that had gone to Mazoka in 2001. The same trends are found in the parliamentary election results, which produced a smaller vote gain (28 to 39 per cent) for the MMD. But this was enough to produce a narrow majority of 82 seats when nominated members were included. Sata’s dramatic second-place finish was based on strong support in Bemba-speaking areas and, multiethnic Lusaka, while the UPND was reduced to a predominantly Tonga-Ila-speaking Southern Province party, although it won some votes among Nyanja speakers because of its participation in the UDA. By 2006, the MMD and PF had attracted major parts of the 2001 UDA parties’ base, and the alliance finished third in both the presidential and parliamentary races.

The evolving relationship between state nationalism, ethnopolitical strategic interaction and democratization

The organization of the preceding two sections of this chapter has deliberately focused on the construction and persistence of state nationalism and ethnopolitical strategic interaction leading to varying degrees of cleavage partizanization separately to show that they have been different processes rather than merely macro and micro aspects of the same process. But, as its title indicates, this chapter focuses on the relationship between them and the effects of this relationship on democratization. It is now time to combine the theoretical framework and the historical detail presented in the previous sections to address these questions without being excessively repetitive.

The widely shared value of state nationalism in Zambia was constructed by relatively well-educated African agents as part of the struggle against British colonialism and its divisive policies of indirect rule, enabled by aspects of social structure and a multiethnic nationalist movement that sought to control national political institutions. Ethnopolitical strategic interaction began in the late colonial period as a tool in the competition for leadership of that nationalist movement. After independence, state nationalism was pursued vigorously by the new UNIP government that claimed democratic legitimacy for its policies based on its substantial electoral victory in the election held just prior to independence. Ethnopolitical strategic interaction increased substantially during the first eight years of independence, due primarily to competition within the ruling party over leadership positions below the presidency and the economic benefits to regions that were assumed to follow from occupancy of these offices. This form of com-
petition was seen by UNIP as out of control and thus a threat to state nationalism, necessitating the institution of a one-party state. It was alleged that at least some aspects of democracy had to be sacrificed to save state nationalism from ethnopolticial strategic interaction. Instead, many leaders became cynical about first president Kenneth Kaunda’s slogan ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ because it became part of the justification for the one-party state that was widely opposed.

By 1991 the majority of Zambian leaders had decided, based on almost 19 years’ experience with the one-party state, that allowing multiparty competition was a crucial norm in supporting their long-held value of democracy. But what about the relationship between state nationalism and ethnopolticial strategic interaction in such competition? The MMD has been a dominant party since then, except for a short period after the 2001 election, and its leaders have seen its dominance as necessary for fostering state nationalism. Under Chiluba, MMD dominance achieved this on the basis of a Bemba-centred coalition that successfully resisted challenges from leaders who came from other ethnopolticial groups. But the success of this ethnopolticial strategic interaction, including Chiluba’s support of Mwanawasa as his successor, was in conflict with state nationalism and democracy for Chiluba’s opponents.

Under Mwanawasa, and particularly since 2006, MMD dominance was restored on the basis of openness to all groups, including those that voted for his opponents, in the name of state nationalism and democratization. In response, other leaders often use Kaunda’s slogan ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ to criticize Mwanawasa’s actions to build an explicitly multiethnic coalition that they believe stimulated ethnopolticial strategic interaction and extended it beyond leadership competition to the general population at the expense of state nationalism. They say that since Mwanawasa benefited his own Lenje and Lamba groups, his efforts to build a maximal coalition stimulated demands from other groups. To the outside observer, it is too soon to know the long-term effects of Mwanawasa’s strategy. In spite of this unresolved question, under Mwanawasa state nationalism constrained ethnopolticial strategic interaction and the latter reconciled competition among shifting multiethnic coalitions with state nationalism, thus fostering relatively successful democratization more fully than has been the case in the past.

Mwanawasa died in August 2008 after suffering a stroke several weeks earlier, necessitating a presidential by-election on 30 October since vice-president and then acting president Banda had been appointed by Mwanawasa rather than elected. At the time of writing, the results of this election had just been announced. The MMD’s Banda was the winner by a narrow margin over the PF’s Sata (40.6 vs 38.6 per cent) and a greater one over the UPND’s Hichilema (20 per cent) with a substantially reduced turnout (64.5 per cent of turnout in 2006). Ethnopolticial and class support for parties appears to be very similar to that in 2006, with Sata picking up votes primarily against Hichilema outside the Southern Province and especially in the east. The PF and UPND at one point announced an agreement to support Sata as their joint presidential candidate who would appoint Hichilema as vice-president, but this agreement quickly fell apart and opposition coordination once again failed.
Zambian leaders, especially since 2001, have begun learning about the relationship between state nationalism and ethnopolitical strategic interaction and some aspects of path dependence are favourable for further learning (Bauer and Taylor 2005: 47; Bwalya 2006; Scarritt 2008a: 16–18). Democratization would be fostered more effectively by leaders explicitly recognizing: 1) the difference between the value of ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ and the virtually inevitable ethnopolitical strategic interaction in a society with many groups; and 2) the fact that the former can constrain the latter, while the latter can provide agency for peaceful competition among the shifting multiethnic coalitions of partially partitioned groups that have characterized Zambia since independence (as illustrated in Table 11.1).

**Future challenges**

Although the constitution is not entirely clear, the next combined presidential, parliamentary and local election in Zambia will probably have to be held no later than September 2011. Given the power and status of the presidency, it is not surprising that the author knows – on the basis of press reports or personal interviews – of more than 50 Zambians who aspire to be president. Only a few of these aspirants have a realistic chance of success, but the presidential contest will be far more open than ever before if Banda does not decide to run again. Ethnopolitical cleavages have always intensified in the runup to elections in Zambia, and the openness of the competition this time may maximize their intensity. Given the massive shift in multiethnic coalitions in the 2006 election, it is quite possible that another such shift will occur prior to 2011 as the competition for the presidency intensifies, and uncertainty about this possibility may also contribute to the intensification of cleavages. The MMD is the dominant party, but has been unable to win a majority of the votes in the last three presidential elections. It will therefore oppose constitutional change requiring runoff if a majority vote is not achieved in the first round. All parties are organizationally weak and subject to internal fractionalization. This combination of party system characteristics causes some leaders to think about party realignment, in which an essentially new dominant party capable of winning a majority in both presidential and parliamentary elections – probably because it will incorporate at least one of the two largest opposition parties – will emerge. A MMD–UPND merger – in which Hichilema would not get the presidency right away because of the 2006 exclusionism in UPND – seems most likely, but inclusion of the PF is also possible if Sata retires. Some will want the ‘new’ party to keep the MMD name, but others will want it to have a new name, arguing that people are ready for a change of the ruling party.

In these circumstances, strategic interaction on the basis of ethnopolitical cleavages, possibly combined with a class cleavage, may pose a greater challenge to state nationalism than ever before. However, as indicated above, Zambian leaders have learned some lessons over many years about how to control state nationalism–ethnopolitics conflict. The frequently voiced criticisms of
'One Zambia, one nation', many groups

Mwanawasa (and now of Banda) for stimulating ethnopolitics and the continuing appeals of virtually all politicians to state nationalism indicate that this value remains strong. Zambian state nationalism could be significantly reinforced or weakened by the next election.

Notes

1 Mubanga Kashoki, Zambia’s leading proponent of official multilingualism, defends it as compatible with ‘One Zambia, One Nation’ (1997).

2 Posner (2004) explains why this single group in Zambia has been politicized as two competing groups in neighbouring Malawi.

References


12 Unionism and pan-nationalism
Exploring the dialectical relationship between minority and majority sub-state nationalism

Allan Craigie

Within orthodox interpretations of nationalism, minority nations are framed as challenging the established order, while the state is framed as being neutral. This chapter challenges this interpretation along two reinforcing axes using the British state to exemplify its argument. First, it builds a theoretical framework for what can be termed “majority nationalism.” While many authors hint at and allow for this within their theoretical frameworks (Mann 1993, 1995; Hechter 2000; Deutsch 1966a; Billig 1995), it has received scant academic attention, with Kaufmann’s (2004) edited volume being a notable exception. Second, it outlines ways in which identity becomes problematized within the state due to majority nationalism and in doing so introduces two opposing interpretations of the state in multinational communities; unionist and pan-nationalist. Much of the current nationalism literature appears to interpret nationalism as being the “fault” of minority nations. This work seeks to establish that nationalism is the result of a dialectical relationship between the majority and minority nations and conflicting interpretations of the nature of the state, contributing to a wider understanding of territorial identity mobilization and the relationship between nation and state.1

Majority nationalism

Hechter (2000) outlines four manifestations of nationalism: state-building nationalism, the attempt to assimilate culturally diverse territories; peripheral nationalism, the resistance to state-building; irredentist nationalism, when a state attempts to expand its boundaries to incorporate co-nationals; and unification nationalism, the merger of culturally homogenous but politically divided territory. He also discusses patriotism, a movement centered on the greatness of the nation (Hechter 2000: 15–17). Tilly (1998: 475–476) argues that nationalism takes two forms: state-led or state-seeking. The former includes the creation and imposition of dominant languages, myths, symbols, rituals, and the like. Mann (1995: 46) claims there are three types of nationalism: state-reinforcing, in which the state and the nation match up; state-subverting, in which the state is bigger than the nation; and state-creating, in which the state is smaller than the nation (Mann 1995: 46).
The above theories outline cases where dominant nations use their position within the state to impose their culture upon the state. Unlike minority nationalism, nationalism in dominant groups in multinational states is not conscious. Billig (1995) refers to this as “banal nationalism.” Majority nationalism is not the “hot” nationalism that threatens the integrity of the state, and it is often interpreted as patriotism. According to Deutsch (1966b: 6), states must obtain the compliance or active support of the largest groups in a territory, and the majority of the population, in order to establish the legitimacy of the state. Poggi (1990: 26) argues that as the state grew, the “nation” became the basis of legitimacy for two reasons: it “has a primordial ring to it,” and it is based on other emotional bonds. This has led to the introduction of the misleading term “nation-state.” The idea of a nation-state presupposes that states and nations naturally share the same borders. However, this is rarely the case. States such as Britain need to attempt to craft a statewide national identity. This was accomplished after the Treaty of Union in 1707 by convincing the English that they were British.

States and nations are not synonymous, but they are intertwined in such a way that nation becomes the basis for state. The creation of both state and nation was a part of the process of transforming society from the premodern to the modern. As states grew, they needed to legitimize their rule, and in turn they were framed as the political expression of nations. Haas (1986: 708) claims that nationalism is intertwined with modernity, and Mann (1995: 62) argues that nationalism arose out of the democratization of the processes of modernization (also Yack 1999: 115). As nations became seen as rightful holders of popular sovereignty states benefited from framing themselves as nations (Lecours and Nootens 2008: 12). Even states such as Britain, which has a clear foundation in the Treaty of Union in 1707, can be recrafted so that English and British history are seen as synonymous. It was this interpretation of the British state that guided Thatcher’s governance of Britain (Cannadine 1995: 12–13).

States need nations because the successful transition to modernity happens when resources are found in the traditional culture, allowing for change and new practices (Taylor 1998: 203–205). This means that as long as a tie between statehood and nationhood persists, the advantage of a nation running its own state is substantial (Tilly 1994: 144), and the only way for people to achieve meaningful change in the organization of society is through the state. The nation is seen as the state’s ultimate constituency – the nation is the holder of sovereignty (Poggi 1990: 61–62). Hence, groups organize along national lines in order to achieve change, and the “nation” becomes the locus of change within the state. Even when there is no preexisting nation, the state must go about creating one. Upon the unification of the Italian peninsula and the creation of Italy in the 1860s it was stated: “We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians” (Massimo d’Azeglio in Hobsbawm 1996: 257), in Britain, England merely began to call itself Britain.

While nation and state are two separate entities in theory, in practice for a state to achieve legitimacy (especially democratic legitimacy), it must be seen as the expression of popular sovereignty. It is the nation, not the state, which is the
bearer of popular sovereignty, suggesting that nations have a political dynamic. In multinational states such as Britain, this means that there are potentially competing and overlapping sources of political legitimacy: the Union nations of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland as well as the British nation as a whole. To understand the link between state and nation, this chapter will briefly consider the merits of a non-national loyalty: patriotism.

At the risk of oversimplifying “patriotism,” an abridged version of the concept of patriotism, as outlined by Taylor (1998: 201) is used as a starting point. He argues that patriotism can have the same meaning it had for the “ancients:” a love of fatherland and what fatherland represents, a love based upon law. Patriotism unites people with a common love of a political system which grants them freedom and respects their dignity. Taylor (1998) claims that the modern democratic state needs a healthy degree of patriotism, a strong sense of identification with the polity and a willingness to give oneself for it. According to Viroli (1997), patriotism contradicts nationalism because patriotism is outward-looking while nationalism is inward-looking. He agrees with Taylor that nationalism has become the “most ready motor of patriotism” (1998: 202) and has left patriotism at the margins of modern political thought (Viroli 1997: 160). It does suggest the possibility of a loyalty to the state divorced from national sentiment.

Yack (1999) reunites nationalism and patriotism, arguing that as people are bound within the confines of the nation, constitutional patriotism only makes sense if it is grounded within the cultural horizons of the nation (Yack 1999: 108). Nationalism in established states becomes background noise, and when acknowledged it is termed patriotism. Billig (1995) claims that nationalism is not what “we” have, it is limited to the fringes, to the “others;” what “we” have is patriotism (Billig 1995: 55). In this sense the “greater good,” or “love of country,” patriots appeal to is formed by the identity networks that make up the nation upon which states are based.

As Lecours and Nootens (2008: 1) argue, nationalism is implicit when concealed by the label of patriotism. Indeed, the greatest challenge against the concept of patriotism may not come from political theory, but from anthropology and the study of culture. Kuper (1999) points out that national culture shapes a state’s policies and the outcomes of those policies. As a result, the confusion between nationalism and patriotism may be due to patriotism appearing very similar to civic nationalism, while nationalism may be confused with ethnic nationalism. Some argue that there are two distinct types of nationalism: civic and ethnic (Hutchinson 2001; Brown et al. 1999; Ignatieff 1993). Yack (1999: 104) believes that the distinction between ethnic and civic is a tool used by liberals to direct nationalism towards the good nationalism, the civic/liberal one. While the oppositional civic/ethnic definitions are what Weber (1974: 79) refers to as “pure types,” nationalism is based on a continuum rather than opposing types. At one end of the continuum you have a civic sense of the nation, and at the other you have an ethnic sense of nation – essentially different manifestations of the same phenomenon.
States need nations in order to achieve democratic legitimacy. Some states may not acknowledge they are based upon nationalist sentiment, arguing instead that loyalty to them can be patriotic. Yet patriotism is another way of describing civic nationalism with the state still deriving its legitimacy from the nation. Within modern democratic states one could not find systems more different from each other than those in the US, Britain, or France; yet all three are democracies. Each of these democracies is different due largely to culturally distinct attitudes towards how the state should be organized. If the liberal state were neutral with regard to issues of “good,” and “good” could be divorced from culture, it would seem to follow that one would find a convergence of democratic practice and structures among democracies. As there is no convergence, it may be the case that liberal democratic states present themselves as not being based upon cultural understandings, but this is done “by pretending to be a neutral locus of relationships between citizens” (Lecours and Nootens 2008: 2, my italics).

The British state needed to develop a statewide identity around which to build the support of its citizenry. In England the institutions of state became British, but in Scotland the majority of ways in which the state interfaced with its citizenry remained Scottish. A wide selection of Scottish institutions survived the Treaty of Union, including the Kirk (the Church of Scotland), the legal system (Scots Law), the education system (including the universities), and Scottish banking (Scottish banks still produce their own currency). As the state developed, more Scottish institutions were created, from the Scottish Office to the Scottish National Health Service. All of these organizations were not only Scottish in form, they were institutionally autonomous and Scottish elites guarded that autonomy carefully (Greer 2007). This has led to England being governed by “British” institutions and Scotland by Scottish institutions. It is important to note that this happened before the creation of the Scottish parliament in 1999.

Patriotism, state-building, state-led and state-reinforcing nationalism are all cases in which the dominant nation uses its position within the state to impose its culture on the geographic boundaries of the state. This, however, should not be interpreted to mean that the state is actively engaging in cultural-ethnic genocide. Indeed, the Scottish had huge swathes of autonomy within the British unitary state. It is not even to say that it is actively illiberal, rather that it is imposing the majority nation’s liberalism on the territory of the state, and in doing so expressing the nationalism of the majority nation, in this case, England.

That majority nationalism is overlooked in the wider literature on nationalism is seen in the following quote:

State-led nationalism has been rare in human history; over the roughly 10,000 years that states have existed somewhere in the world, most rulers have settled for assigning priority within their domains to their own cultural definitions and reading of their own interests, but coexisting more or less comfortably with composite subject populations having distinctive charters, cultures, and social routines.

(Tilly 1998: 476)
First, how the state was “governed” historically is irrelevant to an understanding of states and nations in the modern era. While in the modern era the state maintains control through its ability to coerce (Weber 1974; Mann 1995; Poggi 1990), its legitimacy to coerce stems from it representing the nation, the bearer of popular sovereignty. What may have been immaterial historically is now universal and fundamental.

Dominant groups in a multinational state do not express their nationalism consciously. Again Billig’s (1995) concept of “banal nationalism” is useful. Dominant nationalism is banal in that it is expressed through day-to-day things, such as images on coins, flags, and weather maps, to name but a few. Yet governments must obtain the compliance or active support of the largest groups in a territory and the majority of the population in order to maintain the legitimacy of the state (Deutsch 1966b: 6). As the state and the largest groups become intertwined the majority community will express its understanding of the way society should be organized (with corresponding interpretations of “good” and “just”) through the state. This was apparent during debates in the British parliament prior to the 1992 election in which defence of the Union was a key Conservative strategy. Given the opportunity to express their understanding of the British state, English Members of Parliament conflated British and English history. As stated by former Conservative Member of Parliament Tim Devlin:

The hon. Member . . . referred to the experience of other European countries, but they have very different histories. For example, Spain was brought together . . . as a single kingdom fairly recently, in the 15th Century.

(Hansard, 25 November 1991: C527)

While England may have a history that precedes that of Spain; Britain does not. It was a Northern Irish Member of Parliament who pointed out that this was long before Britain was formed.

Lecours and Nootens (2008: 3) argue that “dominant nationalism” usually entails the transfer of the largest groups’ (or its elites’) interpretations of self onto the state, turning the state into the expression of their nation. The state becomes the medium by which the majority community’s identity is transmitted, and this is something that even elites from the minority nations need to accept in order to be successful. For example, prior to becoming prime minister, Gordon Brown appeared anxious to affirm his “Britishness.” Giving a speech on Britain he spoke of:

a golden thread which runs through British history – that runs from that long ago day in Runnymede in 1215; on to the Bill of Rights in 1689 where Britain became the first country to successfully assert the power of Parliament over the King . . .

(Brown 2006)

This interpretation of Britishness is clearly not one crafted in his native Scotland, but is designed to appeal to the sense of Britishness in England as these exam-
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People are all English and predate the Union. Accordingly, as the majority nation expresses its culturally based interpretations of liberal-democratic values through the state, one sees how the minority community could interpret that as state-building majority nationalism. Individuals can only be truly free in an environment in which their culture and their values are respected, and while most modern states would argue that they rule according to universalistic norms, minority groups may disagree (Kuper 1999).

Majority nationalism is especially dangerous for political cohesion if a minority group in a state begins to feel that its way of seeing things is different from the majority; is generally not understood or recognized by the majority; and the majority is unwilling to alter forms of debate to accommodate this difference, leaving the minority systematically unheard with its voice unable to penetrate public debate (Taylor 1998: 204). Considering nationalism as a minority phenomenon makes its relationship with the state mainly antagonistic (Lecours and Nootens 2008: 4). It ignores the dialectical relationship between the majority and minority nation as they react to each other. As Greer (2007) notes, devolution was only accepted by Scottish civil society after its inability to defend the autonomy of Scottish institutions from the British state under Thatcher. Not only was the government imposing its will upon formerly autonomous Scottish institutions, it was doing so with only a minority of support from the Scottish themselves. Scottish civil society reacted to changes brought forward by English elites. To understand how this challenges democratic norms, and the relationship between majority and minority nations, this section will turn to an important yet oft overlooked aspect of democratic legitimacy; the consent of the loser.

Consent of the loser

The survival of political institutions is directly related to citizens’ perceptions of their legitimacy (Anderson and Mendes 2005: 92). For a democratic state to be legitimate, simply accepting majority rule is not sufficient. The perceived effectiveness of institutions is equally important to institutional arrangements in managing relations between national groupings. As Barry (1975: 485) notes:

The crucial point is that the institution of collective decision making by a simple majority of the popular vote is in itself the antithesis of “amicable agreement” as “amicable agreements” must be negotiated among people who either trust one another or do not need to because they can apply sanctions against defaulters.

In a democratic state, the first key component of legitimacy is rule of the people through fair, regular, and free elections. A second key component is the consent of the loser. In a stable liberal democracy elections are designed to produce winners and losers with the losers accepting the outcome as legitimate (Anderson and Mendes 2005; Nadeau et al. 2000; Nadeau and Blais 1993).
Through the electoral process all democracies are designed to create political inequalities among citizens and political elites at regular intervals (Anderson and Mendes 2005: 93). Liberal democracies have three basic premises that help mitigate some of the problems that may arise from this: all citizens are entitled to one vote, that is democratic equality; the same individuals will not always be in the minority, people have various claims upon the state and will win in some decisions and lose in others; and belonging to a shared national community mitigates being the loser, as belonging to the nation unites citizens at a deeper level (Lecours and Nootens 2008: 12). Support of the loser is a less obvious part of democratic systems which requires people to support the outcome of decisions unfavorable to them. Yet the viability of the political system rests on the support of substantial numbers of people who are displeased with the outcome of an election (Nadeau and Blais 1993: 553).

In essence, democracies function because people in a minority position see the majority’s rule as legitimate. In multinational states, this may be interpreted to mean the consent of the minority nations to be governed in state structures which will have to be responsive to a majority population residing in another nation. As Taylor (1998: 204) notes “if it appears that in some systemic way, there are obstacles to certain sections of the population being heard, then the legitimacy of democratic rule in that society is under challenge.” As Careless (1989: 52) notes, dominance is neither positive nor negative; yet it can have positive or negative consequences. Accordingly, state institutions need to be sympathetic to the aspirations of national minorities and be interpreted by both national minorities and majorities to be fair and equitable.

As legitimacy in a modern state rests not upon coercion, but on the fact that the state represents a nation, in multinational states the minority nation may find itself repeatedly on the losing side of decisions made by the state on behalf of the dominant nation. Being a part of the majority or minority after an election may have an impact on attitudes about the general workings of democracy (Nadeau et al. 2000: 10). If a minority nation is constantly on the losing side in the democratic decision-making process this may bring the legitimacy of the state into question. In this sense, as Scotland was systemically underrepresented in government during the Thatcher–Major era, and Thatcher was famously unsympathetic to Scottish concerns and autonomy (Bogdanor 1999: 195), one can see that the legitimacy of the British state may have come into question. As the stability and the functioning of the system “depend on actors’ incentives for institutional change” (Anderson and Tverdova 2001: 323), being deprived of voice and being in a minority position creates that incentive.

The winning and losing that is a fundamental component of democratic politics may have the result of framing the minority nation as a “loser” in the system. As the British state lost its legitimacy, support for change increased dramatically in Scotland. Prior to the Conservatives coming to power in Britain, the second option in Scotland after support for home rule/devolution was the status quo. By the end of the Conservative era the second option was independence. While other Conservative prime ministers such as Churchill and Macmillan dis-
played sensitivity to Scottish concerns, Thatcher was an assimilationist (Bogdanor 1999: 195).

The reaction to majority nationalism in England has generally been interpreted as minority nationalism in Scotland when it is a defence of the status quo against changes being made by the majority nation. Instead of this being an example of state-subverting nationalism (sub-state minority nationalism in its traditional sense), it should be seen through the perspective of actors in Scotland. These actors would see the intrusion of the British state as a threat to their existence, as the English nation has control of the state apparatus. Challenging the assumptions of the state held by actors in England and expressed through majority nationalism, Scottish nationalism forces elites to address fundamental questions as to the nature of the state. From the perspective of the majority nation, this would appear as an orthodox manifestation of minority nationalism as actors in the majority nation may not recognize their role. This chapter suggests that it is the dialectical relationship between majority and minority nations which brings the nature of the state into question and not sub-state minority nationalism. To show the complexity of the relationship between the majority and minority nation within a state, this chapter will outline the challenges of creating workable constitutional structures within multinational states.

Territorial identities and the organization of the state

According to Cheffins and Johnson (1993: 83), constitutions serve three purposes: they allow for the creation of the basic organs and institutions of the state; they detail the powers of the public institutions and their relations with each other and with the public; and they provide the processes by which laws are made and limitations are put on the power of public officials. This interpretation of constitutions is founded on what Tierney (2007) would argue is a mistaken implication that there is a single “people” to which the constitution applies. Accordingly, another purpose of constitutions must be that they describe who the people(s) of a state are and provide the political mythology necessary for the smooth functioning of a state.

According to Lijphart (2004: 96–97), divisions pose a grave problem for democracy, making it difficult to establish and maintain democratic government. With regard to the accommodation of territorial difference, Lecours and Nootens (2008: 7) note that the most intuitive type of government system would be a federal system as the purpose of federalism is conflict management. Lijphart (2004: 104) agrees with this point, although he sees federalism as being part of an overall strategy of consociationalism within divided societies.

McGarry and O’Leary (2006: 46) claim consociational democracies share the following principles:

I Executive power sharing – each of the main communities share in executive power;

II Autonomy or self-government – each community enjoys some measure of autonomy, particularly for cultural concerns;
III Proportionality – each is represented proportionally in key public institutions and benefits proportionally from government expenditure; and

IV Veto-rights – each is able to prevent change that adversely affects their vital interest.

While consociationalism and/or federalism may seem straightforward, for a multinational state to be successful and for either form of government to be successful in balancing majority and minority nations, all actors must first recognize what it means to be multinational. As argued by Tierney (2007: 733), the very structure of traditional debates concerning the constitutional arrangements of democracy are based on the problematic “unitary demos thesis,” that the state constitutes a single people or nation. In this sense, the British state has historically lacked any of these safeguards. Historically this may not have mattered as the state did not penetrate into society and the imperial project followed by the growth of the welfare state gave the Scottish and the English common goals to direct their national energies towards. Yet the majority opinion in Scotland and England deviated under Thatcher, and Scottish institutions simply had no defence against the British state.

According to Choudhry (2007: 612), constitutions can simultaneously serve two functions which may appear at odds: accommodation and integration. He argues that the terms accommodation and integration are potentially misleading as both have the same end-goal in mind, the territorial integrity of the state. Federal systems allow constituent units to have sovereign power over certain state functions, allowing for the accommodation of difference. Power can be divided vertically between the centre and the constituent components, but also horizontally within the central level. While minority nations may have majority control over the policy spheres assigned to their level of government, the state needs to strike some sort of balance within statewide decision-making as there are still shared responsibilities which will impact the interests of the constituent nations. In order to influence the decision-making process, members of these nations have to engage in the statewide political process, integrating elites from all sub-state nations into the centre. This is what devolution has done in Scotland; it has divided power between Westminster and Scotland.

Constitutions are not only expressions of power relations in a society, they are expressions of the compromises that led to their creation (Boismenu 1996: 99). As Cairns (1995) states, constitutions are tools of recognition and the denial thereof. Constitutions, however, cannot detail every aspect of the state apparatus, and this can lead to constitutional grey areas and friction (Cheffins and Johnson 1993: 84). According to Simeon (2006) constitutions cannot cover all aspects of institutional relations, but grey areas can be managed through negotiation if actors in the member nations can be flexible. Yet Simeon’s model assumes there is agreement on the way in which the state should be run, while in multinational states there may be more than one understanding of the nature of the state. According to Choudhry (2007: 632) this can manifest itself in two conflicting issues: whether there should be asymmetrical governance; and whether the minority sub-state nation should receive recognition and in what form. Yet in
Britain, part of the problem stems from the minority nations being recognized, while England is not. This new constitutional order has challenged the English conception of the British state, giving rise to the so-called English Question in British constitutional politics (Hazell 2006).

Keating (1998) asks the question: “What’s wrong with asymmetrical government?” Which he answers by explaining that asymmetrical governments can provide both the accommodation needed to satisfy minority nations, and the integration necessary for the state to operate effectively. Keating, however, does not appear to take into account differing conceptions of the state. Taylor (1993) argues that “deep diversity,” what Gagnon and Iacovino (2007) call “differentiated citizenship,” is required in multinational states to allow for this simultaneous accommodation and integration. Yet it is not clear if this can accommodate fundamentally different interpretations of the state. The call for “deep diversity” may not take into account the difference between administrative asymmetry and symbolic symmetry, a symmetry which may be important to actors within the majority nation. These actors may not recognize that there are multiple demos within a multinational state (or that their state is multinational).

So while constitutional arrangements may help create a sense of balance within the state, this assumes that constitutional arrangements will accommodate minorities, as well as integrate both the minority and majority nations at the state level, and that both the minority and majority nations can reach agreement on the constituent elements of the state and where the sovereignty of the state rests. However, a temporal dynamic intersects these points, namely that societies change over time. Just because agreement is reached on these issues in the year X, in the year X + N this may no longer be viable, especially if there are major changes in the way the state and society interact. When one takes into account major changes that have occurred in Britain since 1707, particularly the penetration of the state into society, the success of the British state may be found not in its constitutional arrangements, but in elites’ ability to manage the inevitable conflicts that arise. This is especially true given Britain has not had any mechanism for the views of its constituent nations to be voiced as it has lacked democratic institutions between local and state.

Majority nationalism becomes a threat to political statewide cohesion when the minority begins to feel that their way of seeing things is not understood or recognized by the majority and the majority is unwilling to alter forms of debate to accommodate them; this leads to the minority being systematically unheard as its voice is unable to penetrate public debate (Taylor 1998: 204). Billig (1995) argues that nationalism is legitimized within the majority nation because it is dominant and becomes the nationalism of the state. Majority nationalism reinforces the state; minority nationalism challenges it. As it does not challenge the state, rather it reinforces the state, it is not as noticeable as minority sub-state nationalism. Considering nationalism as a minority phenomenon makes its relationship with the state mainly antagonistic (Lecours and Nootens 2008: 4). It ignores the dialectical relationship between the majority and minority nation as they react to each other and bring the nature of the state into question.
Balance and the multinational state

Given that “universal norms” are actually articulated in a culturally understood and mitigated environment, nations and states rarely correspond fully, and it is the nation, not the state, upon which popular sovereignty and political legitimacy rest. One can see the genesis of conflict along territorial lines, but this does not automatically lead to territorial mobilization. By exploring the relationship between majority and minority nations within a multinational state, one may be able to elucidate the problematization of territorial identity. When the political environment changes, political elites’ ability to act also changes. Mobilization does not happen spontaneously, an incentive has to emerge to encourage it, or a disincentive has to be removed that was constraining it. The politics of identity are about persistent grievances, inequalities, and past wrongs (Hutchinson 1999: 399), but grievances are not necessarily objective. They are based on the more abstract notion of legitimate rule (Chaterjee 1993: 203). This, however, does not address the issue of what initiates these movements; what makes a certain time period “ripe” for mobilization? This section will explore the importance of “balance” in understanding regionalism, before introducing two competing pure-type interpretations of the state: unionist and pan-nationalist.

Territorial mobilization occurs alongside a breakdown in prevailing arrangements; what Keating (1988: 11) refers to as “territorial management.” Managing different nations within a single state is not a static process; it is linked to the evolution of the state through time, and changes in the wider society (societies) influence it. In multinational states, a sense of balance needs to be created among the constituent units. Without balance the state becomes overly responsive to the majority nation. This may lead to divergent aims as conflicting interpretations of the state come to a head. There are three potential problems created by the conflation of nation and state: the tyranny of the majority, a divergence of aims, and assumed homogeneity in the state. Concepts of nation and state become intertwined in multinational communities, leading to situations in which identity is mobilized. This is where the identity “fault line” within states lies.

Tyranny of the majority

 Democracies are not solely defined by majority rule, as the consent of the loser is key to a functioning democracy. In order to be seen and interpreted by national minorities and majorities to be fair and equitable, state institutions need to be sympathetic to the aspirations of national minorities who are faced with a political system in which they can never form a majority of the population. The perceived effectiveness of institutions is equally important to institutional arrangements in managing relations between national groupings.

 It is important for institutional arrangements to be perceived in a certain way, yet designing the institutions to reflect this is no easy feat. There are extreme difficulties in developing workable constitutional arrangements in multinational states. According to Choudhry (2007: 612) states can be structured to both
accommodate and integrate when there is more than one demotic people. But constitutions are compromises between the different nations (Boismenu 1996: 99), and as society changes, without continual renegotiation, the constitutional arrangements of the state may no longer ensure that “voice” is maintained by the minority nation within the democratic process. The accommodation/integration of the minority nation is a complex process and the majority nation may simply impose its will on the minority nation without realizing it has done so.

**Divergence of aims**

Balance is central to understanding how states comprising multiple nations need to accommodate different norms and values, and the eventual aims of these societies. Democracies create winners and losers, but in a multinational state this can be of particular concern to the minority nation(s), especially if they continually find themselves on the losing side of interpretations of what is considered “good” or “just.” As liberalism is actually a construct of cultural understandings of what is “good,” if a state has different nations within it, there may exist different national interpretations of “good.” Though the conception of good is articulated within a liberal-democratic discourse, it may lead to different outcomes if it is based on different assumptions.

Taking this argument to its logical conclusion, one sees how this could result in situations where the majority and minority nations simply want different outcomes from the state. This may take the form of policy outcomes or the manner in which the outcomes are achieved. If actors in the majority nation do not recognize the multinational character of the state, the reaction to majority nationalism within the minority nation may be regarded as a form of nationalism and a threat to the state. To balance distinctive aims within a single state may require “deep diversity” (Taylor 1993), yet for this to be successful the majority nation must recognize that more than one legitimate “demos” exists within the state.

**Assumed homogeneity**

Recognizing the existence of multiple demos in a single state is a challenge for political elites. States become the agent of the majority nation and actors within the majority do not see their position as being based on cultural norms. As dominant nations take control of the state, state institutions assume a homogeneous sense of nation, which is superimposed upon the state. Without recognizing the multi-demos aspect of multinationalism, the majority nation becomes the basis of the state rather than the state being the sum of the majority and minority nations working in concert. Since states derive their legitimacy from being the political voice of the nation (Lecours and Nootens 2008), the state seeks to derive its legitimacy from the majority nation. If elites treat the state in a way that does not adequately allow its constituent member nations to flourish, then the state itself may become a source of political conflict, leading to competition between state and nation.
Nationalism is not only a minority phenomenon and “friction” between the majority and minority nation should not be thought of as being the “fault” of either. The perspectives of both the minority and majority may be equally valid, they simply have different basic assumptions as to the nature of the state. The arguments presented above point strongly to nationalism (both majority and minority) as being the result not of competing nations, but of competing interpretations of the nature of the state and its constituent elements.

**Unionism and pan-nationalism**

Tierney (2007) makes the point that, within much of the study of the state, researchers assume a single demos exists, while in reality a multinational state has multiple demos. However, it is important to note that these demos are not discrete. In the UK, for example, there are distinct demos within the four Union nations, but there is a British demos as well. Individuals may have an attachment to the British identity, their particular national identity, or both to varying degrees – what Moreno (2006) refers to as “compound nationalities.” As a result individuals may have different understandings of the state, depending on which demos they most strongly identify with. Two opposing understandings of the state can emerge from this: a unionist understanding, in which the demos of the constituent nations is stronger; and a pan-nationalist interpretation of the state, in which the demos of the state is stronger. In reality, these interpretations may exist as two poles along a continuum, but here they will be developed as two separate concepts. These two different understandings of the state can lead to friction within the state, which reinforces nationalist movements and contributes to the friction that can occur between nations within multinational states.

Unionist interpretations privilege the concept of the partnership between the constituent nations of the state. This is not the same as the term “unionist” presented in British political discourse. While both interpret the state as being a “union,” in British political discourse “unionism” is centrist with loyalty directed towards Westminster. Here the term recognizes the existence of multiple demos within the multinational state and the multiple sources of legitimacy that this implies. It sees the nation as being formed by its constituent elements, and as nations are the bearers of sovereignty, this is where sovereignty lies. This is similar to Hechter’s (2001) unification model of nationalism in that the state is created from the bottom up as members come together, the difference being that the constituent nations keep their national identities. Loyalty to the state takes the form of a non-nationalistic “patriotism” as it recognizes that the community of the state is not built around a common national identity, but a constitutional order in which a citizen’s relationship with the state is mediated through membership in a constituent nation. The state need not be culturally neutral, it can incorporate multiple cultures and in respecting the dignity of individual citizens, it ensures the dignity of the member nations as well.

Pan-nationalist discourse, similarly to theories of state-building nationalism, envisages the creation of a new unified national whole and a single demotic
Unionism and pan-nationalism

It encourages loyalty and allegiance to the centre, along the lines of the model of civic nationalism (see Yack above). State-building nationalism is a top-down process whereby the state and nation expand outward from the centre. It focuses on overarching and statewide objectives and identities. While a unionist interpretation of the state sees sovereignty divided among its component nations, pan-nationalist interpretations see the state as the representative of a single unified demos, representing a single source of democratic legitimacy.

Literature on nations and nationalism in general shows that the nation is always being redefined and redrawn (Resnick 1994: 71). Current interpretations of “the nation” are the interpretations of the segments of the nation holding power. These segments control the national discourse and the manner in which the nation is defined. As such, neither unionist nor pan-nationalist interpretations of the state will be held by every member of either the majority or minority nation. Instead these two interpretations of the state will compete against each other. Returning to the British example, while in Scotland the English could have been seen as imposing their interpretations of the state on the minority, there were people in Scotland who agreed with what was happening. During the Thatcher years, the Conservatives may have had a minority representation in Scotland, but they did have representation. This highlights the point that universal agreement as to the nature of the state does not exist in either the majority or minority nation.

Conclusion

Unionist and pan-nationalist interpretations of the state are a result of the dialectical relationship between not only the constituent members of the state, but interpretations of the state that transcend membership within the constituent nations. That the interpretation of the state manifests itself along unionist and pan-national lines is a result of the nationalism of the majority community. This unconscious nationalism in turn imposes its interpretation of the state upon the entirety of the geographical area of the state. This chapter has attempted to sketch out an understanding of the dialectical relationship between minority and majority nations within multinational states to demonstrate that states are not neutral with regard to national cultures and concepts of “goodness.” The friction that exists between the majority and minority nations is not the fault of either but rather a consequence of the state’s need to present itself as the embodiment of a nation. The relationship between liberalism and culture is complex. Liberal democratic norms, which are thought to be culture-free by the majority, are challenged by the minority in multinational states. This chapter suggests that identities are mobilized due to conflicting interpretations of the basic nature of the state. The framework that this chapter has presented suggests that problems within multinational states do not stem from the fact that states are multinational, rather that actors cannot come to agreement on how the state is constituted. This would seem to refute nationalist claims that the state and nation should be congruent as it suggests that minority nations can be accommodated within multinational states.
Notes

1 Hobsbawn (1996: 257) notes that there are no more than a dozen states in the world where state and nation perfectly overlap. As such, multinational states are not an aberration, they are the norm.

2 This is the question of the place of England within the new constitutional framework, but as Hazell (2006) notes, this question is at least three questions depending upon one’s interpretation of the British state.

References


Unionism and pan-nationalism


13 A consociational democracy or
Anglo-Irish conflict management?

The St Andrews Agreement and the
political accommodation of Irish
nationalism

Adrian Guelke

The dramatic pictures of the firebrand Protestant preacher, Rev. Ian Paisley, sitting down at the same table with the President of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams in March 2007 and then of the same Ian Paisley enjoying a joke with Martin McGuinness, a former Chief of Staff of the Provisional Irish Republican Army on 8 May 2007 when the two took up office as First Minister and Deputy First Minister, have been hailed as a triumph for consociationalism. The term was coined, or perhaps, to be strictly accurate, appropriated by the Dutch political scientist, Arend Lijphart, in the 1960s to describe a form of government among some of the smaller European democracies that, Lijphart argued, underpinned their political stability despite their deep social divisions (Lijphart 1969). Lijphart focused in particular on the cases of Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria. Central to consociationalism is power-sharing in government, with its other elements of mutual vetoes, proportionality and segmental autonomy arguably of lesser importance. Indeed, the absence of one or more of the lesser elements has provided the basis for lively argument over whether this or that political settlement or political system should be considered truly consociational.

For the most part Lijphart himself has tended to take a very broad view of what consociationalism entails. In particular, he has been quick to claim success for the concept in circumstances in which the consociational elements have been decidedly thin. The most obvious example is South Africa’s transitional constitution. It provided for a place in government of any political party that secured over 5 per cent of the vote in the country’s first democratic elections in April 1994. However, this entitlement was limited to five years and did not involve any element of veto. Thus, the majority party within this Government of National Unity, the African National Congress, made the policies. Indeed, so unattractive was the holding of office in these circumstances that the National Party after only two years of its operation voluntarily resigned from the government. Be that as it may, the South African government itself has not been slow to promote the notion of power-sharing as a valuable item in the conflict-resolution toolbox in its own endeavours as a mediator in various African conflicts.

This includes the controversial case of Zimbabwe in which power-sharing has been seen by many Western critics as offering the means for Robert Mugabe to
legitimise his rule after flawed elections. At the time of writing it remains
unclear whether the power-sharing agreement arrived at by the parties under
South African mediation will hold up and prove durable. Much less controver-
sial, at least in the Western media, was the case of Kenya, notwithstanding the
evident similarities in the flaws in the electoral processes in the two countries.
Rather like Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, the incumbent President of Kenya,
Mwai Kibaki, ‘won’ re-election in highly disputed circumstances. An outbreak
of violence followed Kibaki’s prompt installation as President after the publica-
tion of the transparently doctored election returns. The emphasis on the ethnic
dimension of some of the violence provided the excuse that was needed for
Western intervention to shore up Kibaki’s position. This took the form of media-
tion, conducted by the ever-obliging Kofi Annan, designed to persuade the
Kenyan opposition, which like the Movement for Democratic Change in Zimba-
bwe had won the parliamentary elections that took place alongside the presiden-
tial elections, to accept the consolation prize of a place in a power-sharing
government and to swallow Kibaki’s re-election in a presidential system of
government.

Whereas the major Western powers wanted Mugabe’s rule ended and were
willing to use all means short of military intervention to achieve this objective,
the same powers favoured Kibaki’s continuance in office since they viewed him
as a strategic ally. In much the same way Western governments demonstrated a
willingness to turn a blind eye to President Musharraf’s violation of basic demo-
cratic norms in Pakistan because of the importance they attached to his stance on
the global war on terror, though they were unable to prevent his being forced
from office. Similar strategic considerations have played their part in the han-
dling of African conflicts, even when less might seem to be at stake strategically
in their outcome. Of course, the fact that external powers with a mediating role
have a strategic stake in the promotion of this or that power-sharing arrangement
is not a reason for rejecting such settlements. They may indeed provide the best
prospect for the achievement of some measure of order and stability in the soci-
ety in question. The point simply is that the wider context of such settlements
deserves very careful examination.

The focus of the literature on consociationalism tends to be on its use as a
mechanism for promoting political accommodation in divided societies. Admit-
tedly, its applicability to cases of ethnonational conflict has been a matter of
considerable debate. Among favourable conditions for the operation of con-
sociationalism, Lijphart includes the presence across society’s divisions of over-
arching loyalty to the country against a common enemy. By definition, such a
condition is going to be absent in the context of conflicts between sub-state
nationalisms. But it should be said that Lijphart does not treat any of the favour-
able conditions he lists as necessary conditions for consociationalism to be suc-
cessful. Indeed, the more difficult the circumstances, the more certain Lijphart
tends to be that consociationalism is the only form of democracy that is likely to
be durable. He also tends to see consociationalism as preferable to alternatives
such as partition or secession.
But Lijphart is by no means entirely consistent on these points and his stance on, for example, whether consociationalism is workable in Northern Ireland has tended to haver, according to political circumstances in the province itself. It should be noted at this point that, in contrast to debate over South Africa’s transitional power-sharing arrangements in 1993–1996, there is little disagreement in the academic literature in the field of Irish politics that the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement of 10 April 1998 and its successor, the St Andrews Agreement of 13 October 2006, were and are consociational settlements. My purpose is not to challenge the broad scholarly consensus on this point, but rather to raise questions about the centrality of the two Agreements to the peace process. To develop this argument further it is necessary to provide a brief account of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the factors that facilitated a peace process to end the conflict in the 1990s.

Although one of the effects of the partition of Ireland after the First World War was to entrench sectarian divisions, these long predated partition and the clash of sub-state nationalisms that gave rise to the creation of two different jurisdictions on the island of Ireland. In his book, *Holy War in Belfast*, Andrew Boyd charts the history of sectarian riots in Belfast. He records that there were significant sectarian riots every decade from the 1830s: 1835, 1843, 1857, 1864, 1872, 1880, 1886, 1893 and 1898 (Boyd 1987: 9). Irish nationalism and its Orange or Protestant counterpart, Unionism grew in strength politically only in the second half of the century. The main stimulus to Unionism as a movement seeking to maintain the political integration of Ireland within the United Kingdom was the threat of Irish home rule in the 1880s, when the first Home Rule Bill was tabled in the Westminster parliament. The mobilisation of the two sub-state nationalisms round the issue of home rule, which entailed a measure of devolution of power within the overall framework of the United Kingdom, continued well into the twentieth century. Popular support for complete independence from the United Kingdom only manifested itself after the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916.

The creation of Northern Ireland as a separate political entity within the United Kingdom dates back to the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. This unilaterally partitioned the island of Ireland. However, the partition of Ireland on the basis of a division of six and 26 counties had been foreshadowed by the negotiations that had taken place during the First World War between the British government, Unionists and representatives of the Irish Parliamentary Party, which favoured home rule – meaning in this context devolution of power to a parliament in Dublin. The Government of Ireland Act established a parliament in Belfast to rule over the six counties of Northern Ireland. It also provided for the establishment of a devolved parliament for the Southern 26 counties. Further, the legislation provided for a Council of Ireland to consider matters of mutual concern between the two parts of Ireland. However, due to the radicalisation of opinion among Catholics during the course of the war that was reflected in the triumph of Sinn Féin candidates across Ireland in the general election of 1918, the provisions of the Act were a dead letter as far as the Southern counties were
concerned. Violent conflict between British security forces and Irish nationalists culminated in negotiations that resulted in a treaty between the British government and Irish nationalists establishing the Irish Free State.

Civil war between supporters and opponents of the treaty ensued in which the pro-treaty forces emerged victorious. A common misunderstanding is that the civil war was fought over the issue of partition. In fact, partition was already a fait accompli by the time of the treaty and opponents of the treaty were more exercised over the issue of the sovereignty of the new state than over partition. A further factor reducing the salience of partition during the civil war was the treaty’s provision for the establishment of a Boundary Commission to determine what the border between Northern Ireland and the new entity should be. That raised nationalist expectations that areas contiguous to the border with the Irish Free State that had nationalist majorities would be transferred to Southern rule. In the event, these expectations were disappointed. The chairman of the Boundary Commission, Justice Richard Feetham, employed the argument of economic viability to propose only very modest changes on both sides of the existing boundary. So unsatisfactory were these proposals from a Southern perspective that the Irish government quickly agreed with the Northern Ireland government that the Commission’s recommendations should be set aside in favour of the status quo. Unionists commonly refer to this agreement of 1925 as representing Southern acceptance of partition. They argue that the 1937 constitution that was enacted by de Valera dishonoured this Southern commitment to accept the border through laying claim to Northern Ireland in Articles 2 and 3 of its provisions.

The issue of the legitimacy of partition has been at the centre of conflict in Northern Ireland. Unionists wish Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom, while nationalists wish to see the dissolution of Northern Ireland as a political entity and the creation of a united Ireland. What gives added force to this political division is its coincidence with the sectarian divide between Protestants and Catholics. The primacy of the Unionist/nationalist divide means that all proposals for the governance of Northern Ireland have tended to be viewed first and foremost from the perspective of whether they seem likely to advance or retard the possibility of a united Ireland. A difficulty for Unionists and for that matter for the British government is how partition tends to be viewed in the rest of the world. There is widespread sympathy for the view that Ireland should be a single political entity, as is also the case, for example, in relation to Cyprus. A further difficulty is that even if the principle of partition is accepted on the basis that Catholics and Protestants had different national identities (Irish and British respectively), it is hard to justify the particular border that was imposed on Ireland. On the basis of a provincial opt-out, the whole of Ulster and its nine counties should have been excluded from the Southern entity, while an opt-out on a county-by-county basis would have resulted in a four-county Northern Ireland.

At the time of partition, Protestants outnumbered Catholics by roughly two to one within the borders of Northern Ireland. From a Unionist perspective, maintaining Protestant unity appeared to represent the safest way of ensuring the con-
tinuance of the union with the rest of the United Kingdom and this was the strategy adopted by successive Unionist governments from 1921 until the early 1960s. The consequence was a further reinforcement of the divisions between Protestants and Catholics that had consolidated into an ethnic divide during the course of the nineteenth century. During the period, 1921–1963, the Unionist government defeated a succession of violent challenges to its rule by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). It did so with local security forces. Another factor also helped to keep the Irish Question out of British politics. It was a constitutional convention that anything within the remit of the parliament in Northern Ireland should not be discussed in the House of Commons at Westminster. Consequently, issues of discrimination against Catholics and the like did not get an airing in London. The people of Northern Ireland elected 12 representatives to the House of Commons but throughout the first 40 years of Northern Ireland’s existence these for the most part formed a barely noticed addition to the Conservative benches and had little impact on national politics.

Change came in the 1960s with a reformist government in Northern Ireland that led to political divisions among Protestants and that raised, but failed to satisfy, Catholic expectations. The result was increasing Catholic mobilisation behind a civil rights movement pressing for an end to discrimination in imitation of the civil rights movement in the United States. A Protestant backlash and violent clashes on the streets followed. This culminated in the onset of what is known in Northern Ireland as the troubles, the term used to describe a prolonged period of violent disturbances. The troubles are generally dated from 5 October 1968 and clashes in the city of Londonderry/Derry between civil rights demonstrators and the police after the banning of the demonstration by the Stormont Minister of Home Affairs. It is worth emphasising that this violent breakdown of the political system preceded the deployment of British troops in aid of the civil power. This followed in August 1969.

It also preceded the formation of what was to become the main Republican paramilitary organisation in Northern Ireland, the Provisional IRA. This was formed in December 1969. The main Loyalist paramilitary organisation, the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), was formed in September 1971. The term, paramilitary, is used in Northern Ireland to describe private armies, not official agents of the state. Indeed, the term, paramilitary organisation, can be regarded as a less pejorative way of referring to terrorist groups, though it should be said that some of the activities engaged in by paramilitary organisations during the early years of the troubles, such as patrolling their own neighbourhoods, did not amount to terrorism. The terms, Republican and Loyalist, are used to refer respectively to militant nationalists and militant Unionists, though the peace process has tended to undercut the implication that a readiness to resort to physical force or engage in actions of communal deterrence distinguishes them from their less militant counterparts.

The 1970s were the most violent years of the troubles. In the early years of the troubles, the British government sought to limit its involvement to reform of the security forces and to maintain the Unionist government while pressing it to
introduce reforms. This approach failed. It led to a radicalisation of Catholics who were fearful that after the limited reforms, the situation in Northern Ireland would disappear from the international limelight and they would be left to face continuing Unionist domination of the political system. Following further violence in response to the introduction of internment without trial in August 1971, the British government introduced direct rule from London in March 1972.

Direct rule paved the way for a major political initiative by the British government to reshape government in Northern Ireland. This culminated in the Sunningdale Agreement of December 1973. It led to the establishment of a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland, which took office in January 1974. The experiment in power-sharing lasted only five months. The Executive was brought down by a general strike by Protestant workers. The Protestant community was especially angered by the Sunningdale Agreement’s provision for the establishment of a Council of Ireland. This was widely represented by opponents of the deal as a slippery slope to a united Ireland. The collapse was caused by the resignation of the Executive’s Unionist members, who were responding to clear indications that the Protestant community rejected power-sharing, feared the Council of Ireland and preferred the alternative of direct rule from London. A prolonged period of direct rule followed.

A crisis in the prisons in the early 1980s further polarised opinion. It also precipitated the intervention of Sinn Féin, the political wing of the Provisional IRA, into electoral politics. The British government’s response to the rise of Sinn Féin was to seek to address Catholic alienation through involving the Irish government on a consultative basis in the governance of Northern Ireland. To the fury of Unionists, in November 1985 the British government signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement with the government of the Republic of Ireland that enshrined the basis of cooperation with the Republic in an international agreement. Protests on the streets of Northern Ireland failed to bring about the demise of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. This forced Unionists to contemplate negotiations to secure its removal and helped to create the basis for talks among the constitutional parties in the early 1990s.

The talks among the constitutional parties (i.e. those parties without paramilitary connections) failed to reach agreement, but, nonetheless, provided impetus for a broader peace process. By 1992 there were signs that the Republican movement was seeking an alternative to continuance of the Provisional IRA’s ‘long war’. Talks between the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, John Hume, and the President of Sinn Féin, Gerry Adams, prompted the British and Irish governments to issue a joint declaration in December 1993. This promised that if the Provisional IRA brought its campaign of violence permanently to an end, the way would be opened for Sinn Féin participation in negotiations on a new political dispensation for Northern Ireland. The response from the Republican movement was to seek further clarification of the governments’ stance, but finally at the end of August 1994 the Provisional IRA announced an indefinite cessation. This was followed by a ceasefire by the principal Loyalist paramilitary organisations in October 1994.
However, the paramilitary ceasefires did not lead immediately to negotiations among the parties. Indeed, the delay was a factor in the Provisional IRA’s abandonment of its ceasefire in February 1996. Elections for the purpose of establishing the parties to the negotiations were held at the end of May 1996. Despite the end of the IRA ceasefire, Sinn Féin fared well in the elections to the Forum, as it was termed, though the party remained excluded from the negotiations. However, in Sinn Féin’s absence, negotiations among the remaining parties made little headway. Following the election of new governments in both the UK and in the Republic of Ireland, there was a resumption of the IRA ceasefire in July 1997. This paved the way to negotiations among the parties, including Sinn Féin, but excluding two Unionist parties that left the talks on Sinn Féin’s entry into the process. Ultimately, these talks led to the achievement of the Belfast Agreement – commonly referred to as the Good Friday Agreement – on 10 April 1998.

The Good Friday Agreement was endorsed by large majorities in referendums in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. But in Northern Ireland this did not reflect a cross-community consensus since the basis on which the Ulster Unionist Party sought support for the Agreement was that it strengthened the union with Britain. By contrast, Sinn Féin campaigned for the deal as a stepping stone to a united Ireland. Further, the size of ‘Yes’ vote in Northern Ireland of over 70 per cent of those voting tended to mask the fact that whereas Catholics had voted almost unanimously for the Agreement, Protestants were evenly divided between ‘Yes’ and ‘No’. This became evident in the voting for the Northern Ireland Assembly in June, when pro-Agreement Unionists achieved only a narrow victory over anti-Agreement Unionists. Indeed, while slightly more pro-Agreement Unionists were elected than anti-Agreement Unionists, in terms of first preference votes, anti-Agreement Unionists had actually outpolled pro-Agreement Unionists. The picture was complicated by the fact that the anti-Agreement forces contained within their ranks a number of members of the Ulster Unionist Party, the leading pro-Agreement party. Henceforth, these anti-Agreement members of the Ulster Unionist Party waged a relentless campaign against the pro-Agreement leader of the party, David Trimble.

Disagreement over the interpretation of the Agreement in relation to the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons proved an obstacle to the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. A devolved power-sharing government eventually came into existence in December 1999, but lasted only until February 2000 after the IRA failed to begin decommissioning. After an IRA initiative to allow inspection of some of its arms dumps, the devolved government was re-established in June 2000, but the issue of decommissioning continued to cast a shadow over its existence. However, it was other activities by the IRA and not the issue of decommissioning as such that brought the power-sharing experiment to an end in October 2002. Thus, after allegations of spying by the IRA on government, the Secretary of State suspended the institutions ahead of expected Unionist resignations from the Executive over the spying scandal. By this time,
there had been two acts of decommissioning by the IRA. The full restoration of devolution eventually took place on 8 May 2007 under the terms of a new agreement, the St Andrews Agreement of 13 October 2006.

Two aspects of the period between the achievement of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and the St Andrews Agreement are worth highlighting. The first is that through the course of this period, there was an intensification of political polarisation, resulting in steady advances for the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin. This trajectory is most clearly evident in the outcome of the Assembly elections during and immediately after this period (see Table 13.1). The second is that despite political polarisation and the non-functioning of the political institutions established under the Good Friday Agreement for much of the time, the peace process itself remained in place. The logical implication of this point would seem to be that the peace process did not depend on the functioning of the political institutions and consequently that consociationalism cannot be regarded as the foundation of the peace process since it was inextricably linked with the functioning of the political institutions. An alternative interpretation was that the peace process was underpinned by conflict management by the British and Irish governments.

It might be argued as a partial counter to this line of argument that the disjunction between the political process and the peace process was less complete than it seemed. Thus, through all the suspensions of power-sharing, the two governments made strenuous efforts to revive the institutions. And it is not altogether unreasonable to argue that if all these efforts had failed, then the peace process itself might have been put at risk. In other words, there was an assumption though the long periods of direct rule from London that the power-sharing institutions would ultimately be restored. One reason for that assumption was that the principles underlying the settlement had come to be widely accepted. What was in doubt was whether the ‘other side’ was committed to them. Thus,

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Source: Information for this table derived from website of Northern Ireland election results maintained by Nicholas Whyte – see www.ark.ac.uk/elections.

Notes
DUP = Democratic Unionist Party; UUP = Ulster Unionist Party; SDLP = Social Democratic and Labour Party; APNI = Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.
Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly took place in 18 six-member constituencies, with MLAs elected on the basis of the single transferable vote system of proportional representation.
nationalists suspected Unionists of using the issue of the decommissioning of
weapons as a pretext for their desire NOT to share power with Catholics. Union-
ists for their part doubted the good faith of the Republican movement and
regarded the foot-dragging over the decommissioning of the IRA’s arsenal of
weapons as evidence of the movement’s overriding commitment to the pursuit
of a united Ireland. But neither side denounced the principles embodied in the
Good Friday Agreement.

Further, insofar as the Good Friday Agreement constituted a consociational
settlement, it might be argued that the general acceptance of its principles on
both sides of the sectarian divide was a triumph for the consociational model.
After all, the Northern Ireland troubles represented one of the longest-standing
conflicts within the affluent Western world and it had commonly been character-
ised as intractable, given the apparent impossibility of reconciling the wish of
the Unionists to remain part of the United Kingdom with nationalist rejection of
the legitimacy of partition and insistence on the goal of a united Ireland. It might
further be argued that the changes introduced by the St Andrews Agreement to
the operation of the institutions did not involve any fundamental changes in the
basic principles underlying the settlement achieved in 1998. That is reflected in
the jocular description of the St Andrews Agreement as Good Friday in a kilt, as
well as its slightly more mundane characterisation as the long Good Friday

But a weakness of this line of argument is that the British and Irish govern-
ments were far more enthusiastic about the nature of the settlement than most of
the parties in Northern Ireland. Indeed, the attitude of the main Unionist parties
and of Sinn Féin towards the principles that both the Good Friday and St
Andrews Agreements embodied is perhaps best described as one of reluctant
acquiescence. It took a great deal of cajoling by the two governments to per-
suade the necessary parties to accept, first, the Good Friday Agreement in 1998
and then the implementation of the St Andrews Agreement in 2007. In the case
of the Good Friday Agreement, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and two small
Loyalist parties linked to paramilitary organisations accepted the Agreement on
the basis that the alternative to doing so would be worse since the failure of the
negotiations would prompt the two governments to impose their own solution.
At the time, both the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the United Kingdom
Unionist Party (UKUP) rejected this argument and the Agreement. Nine years
later, after a considerable period of procrastination the DUP accepted the terms
of the St Andrews Agreement. It did so, using nearly identical words to those
that had been used in 1998 by the UUP, that the alternative to acceptance would
do more damage to the Unionist cause.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in these circumstances, the functioning of the institu-
tions under both Agreements has not been marked by any spirit of accommoda-
tion across the sectarian divide. And the general absence of such a spirit in the
wider society is most clearly manifested in the fact that the number of walls sepa-
rating communities has sharply increased since the paramilitary ceasefires of
1994. Shockingly, just after the Executive had taken office, the Northern Ireland
Office announced that it was spending £100,000 on a wall in the playground of an integrated school (Tomey 2007). The disappearance of gunmen from the streets has opened the way to a high level of low-level violence in the society. Ironically, the decline of lethal violence has created a context in which the general public can much more safely give vent to their antagonism towards those in the other community. The consequence has been that there is a higher level of residential segregation today in Northern Ireland than there was during the troubles. A precept that Lijphart has proclaimed that high fences make good neighbours is being put to the test in Belfast. However, it would be unfair to blame (or for that matter credit) consociationalism for these developments since the institutions created under the Good Friday and St Andrews Agreements have functioned for less than a third of the time that has passed since the ceasefires of 1994.

Notwithstanding outward shows of bonhomie since the restoration of devolved government on 8 May 2007, the two radical parties dominating the Executive remain poles apart on a whole range of contentious issues. The consequence has been virtual deadlock in the functioning of government. The disagreements between the parties are now sufficiently serious that they have created the spectre of a breakdown of the institutions that would necessitate a further spell of direct rule from London. Undoubtedly, such a development would be regarded as calamitous by the British and Irish governments since both have a considerable stake in being seen by their respective electorates as having conjured up a political miracle out of the unpromising conditions of Northern Ireland. Attitudes towards such a prospect in Northern Ireland are, by contrast, surprisingly sanguine. For example, an Irish Times column by David Adams, a leading light in the Ulster Democratic Party before this Loyalist party linked to the Ulster Defence Association was wound up, was headed ‘SF threats to scupper Executive do not scare unionists’ (Adams 2008). Adams argued that the problems affecting the functioning of the Executive had arisen as a result of overselling of the terms of the St Andrews Agreement by Sinn Féin to the party’s supporters with the consequence of Republican disillusionment when the party was unable to deliver the changes it had led its supporters to expect. The tactics of the party of threatening the settlement were in Adams’s view designed to persuade the two governments to intervene on the party’s behalf to secure for the party what it had been unable to achieve in the ordinary course of the functioning of the Executive. But Adams predicted that Unionists would continue to resist Sinn Féin’s main demand for an early date for the devolution of policing and justice powers.

At this juncture, something of the similarities and differences between the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement should be spelled out as they have relevance to the issue as to how the settlement is interpreted. On the surface, there was a very large difference in how the two accords were arrived at. On 10 April 1998, the chairperson of the multiparty talks, the former majority leader in the US Senate, George Mitchell, announced that the eight parties participating in the negotiations had reached agreement. The announcement was
The St Andrews Agreement

The St Andrews Agreement was greeted with euphoria since expectations that a political settlement would be achieved had been relatively low. Thus, at the beginning of the same week, the deputy leader of the Ulster Unionist Party had declared in relation to draft proposals that he would not touch them with a 40-foot barge pole. The timing of the agreement – Good Friday – seemed a favourable augury for ushering in a new dispensation. By contrast, when the British and Irish governments announced their plan for the future of Northern Ireland and called it the St Andrews Agreement at the close of difficult negotiations among the parties, it seemed like their last throw of the dice to save the Good Friday Agreement. There was no euphoria in Northern Ireland at the announcement of the agreement, since the two main parties, the DUP and Sinn Féin, immediately made it clear that they had not consented to its text and that as far as they were concerned St Andrews was merely a deal between the two governments. And for the superstitious, the publication of the St Andrews Agreement on Friday the 13th was a poor augury for its success.

However, the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement had more in common than was immediately apparent. While the Good Friday Agreement was presented as a deal among the parties in Northern Ireland, in reality, like the St Andrews Agreement, it too represented the best guess by the two governments as to what the Northern Ireland parties could be persuaded to accept. In short, the two governments were the real authors of both accords. That is also a potential weakness since it means that there has been relatively little sense of local ownership of either deal. But in the case of the Good Friday Agreement, a much greater impression of Northern Irish involvement in the deal was created. The role of American mediation proved especially valuable in this context. Thus, George Mitchell’s chairmanship of the multiparty negotiations helped to put enough distance between the Agreement and the two governments to enable the avoidance of any impression that the Agreement was a diktat, an impression that might have proved fatal to its endorsement by the electorate in Northern Ireland. His presence also made it possible for the governments to fine-tune their proposals to what the Northern Ireland political parties would be prepared to swallow, as Mitchell was a reliable sounding board on how far any of the parties could be pushed on the various issues.

Mitchell perhaps understandably gives a rather different impression of his role and emphasises the constructive contribution of the Northern Ireland political parties to the outcome, while underplaying the influence of the two governments on the process. This is Mitchell’s account on learning that the Ulster Unionist delegation was prepared to accept the Agreement.

I took a deep breath and felt tears welling in my eyes – tears of exhaustion, tears of relief, tears of joy. I had to sit down.

As majority leader of the United States Senate, I had learned that when you’ve got the votes, you vote. Delay can only hurt. After long and difficult negotiations, the votes were there for the agreement.

(Mitchell 1999: 5)
Mitchell does not mention that Sinn Féin reserved its position on the Agreement at this moment of the decision or that one of the reasons why the Ulster Unionist Party had accepted the Agreement had been its expectation that ‘Sinn Féin was unlikely to sign up to the GFA’ (O’Kane 2007: 159). Mitchell’s account can be contrasted with some of the salient points in Eamonn O’Kane’s careful reconstruction of the negotiations from a wide variety of sources and extensive interviews of how the Agreement was reached.

By December [1997] the talks had not even led to agreement on an agenda. . . . In an attempt to break the logjam in January 1998 the two governments drew up and distributed to the parties the document, Proposions on Heads of Agreement (HOA). . . . The document did give the talks a certain momentum, providing a focus for the discussions and marked the start of the serious negotiations leading to the GFA. . . . The next major intergovernmental draft of a possible agreement was that issued by Mitchell late in the night on Monday 6 April, 3 days before the proposed deadline for an agreement. The contentious aspect of this draft was the Strand 2 section, dealing with North–South bodies. Although Mitchell presented the whole document as his work, the two governments had drafted Section 2 and he was told he could not alter it.

Another important dimension in arriving at the Agreement was the element of ‘constructive ambiguity’ involved in the process. This meant that the Ulster Unionist Party could point to the assurance the party had been given by Tony Blair that decommissioning of IRA weapons had to begin straight away, while Sinn Féin was able to claim that the wording of the Agreement did not require decommissioning to take place ahead of their entry into government.

Much of the architecture of the Good Friday Agreement remains intact under the St Andrews Agreement. The main feature of both is devolved government in Northern Ireland under an Executive chosen proportionally on the basis of the parties’ number of seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly. A controversial aspect of these arrangements is that not only are the number of ministries determined in this way, but the parties choose the ministries they wish to run, with first choice going to the largest party, the second choice to the party with the next largest number of seats and so on, employing the d’Hondt mechanism. Similarly, there is a North–South Ministerial Council for the promotion of cross-border cooperation in Ireland, as well as a Council of Britain and Ireland as a forum for cooperation across the whole archipelago, as there was under the Good Friday Agreement. The major change between the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement lies in the mechanism for the appointment of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. The Good Friday Agreement provided that ‘The First Minister and Deputy First Minister shall be jointly elected by the Assembly voting on a cross-community basis’ (Cox et al. 2006: 465). What a ‘cross-community basis’ entailed in this context was ‘a majority of the Unionist
and nationalist designations present and voting’ (Cox et al. 2006: 463). Inciden-
tally, the first order of business in the Assembly was the registration of members
in terms of the designations (of Unionist, nationalist and other).

The provision in the Good Friday Agreement was designed to secure the elec-
tion of the First Minister from the largest designation and the Deputy First
Minister from the second largest designation. The joint vote was intended to
convey to the Northern Ireland electorate the start of a new era of cooperation
across the province’s sectarian divisions. The difficulty encountered in securing
Trimble’s re-election (with Mark Durkan as Deputy First Minister) in 2001 per-
suaded the two governments that a more automatic system for the election of the
First Minister and Deputy First Minister was necessary so as to avoid having to
ask DUP members to vote into office someone from Sinn Féin or vice versa.
Consequently, the St Andrews Agreement stated the following:

An amendment would be made to the 1998 Act on appointment of Ministers
in the Executive. The Nominating Officer of the largest party in the largest
designation in the Assembly shall make a nomination to the Assembly Pre-
siding Officer for the post of First Minister. The Nominating Officer of the
largest party in the second largest designation shall similarly nominate for
the post of Deputy First Minister.

(St Andrews Agreement 2006: para. 9)

However, when the legislation to implement the St Andrews Agreement was
being put through the British parliament, a very significant and remarkable
change was introduced. The rule was changed to the simple one that the largest
party in the Assembly as a whole (not the largest party in the largest designation
unless of course the same party) would get to nominate (and hence appoint) the
First Minister. But this new simple rule was stated in the most convoluted
manner in the fine print of the legislation. But the Northern Ireland political par-
ties had no difficulty in understanding the implications of the legislation. The
new rule meant that if Sinn Féin managed to become the largest party in the
Assembly, it would get to appoint the First Minister. Given the symbolic impor-
tance of the position of First Minister in the government of Northern Ireland, this
gave a massive incentive to Unionists to vote for the DUP to prevent such an
eventuality, a point the party fully exploited in the March 2007 Assembly elec-
tions. The poor showing of both the UUP and the SDLP in the Assembly elec-
tions reflected the rule’s impact on their support (see election results in Table
13.1 above). It can be taken as a measure of the British government’s late con-
version to the strategy of the alliance of the extremes that it should have gone so
far in rigging the electoral system to the advantage of the radical parties.

Another change that the DUP insisted on was that there should be less scope
for individual ministers to make decisions without reference to the Executive
than was the case in the previous brief periods of devolved government under
the Good Friday Agreement. The party wishes to prevent what has been dubbed
‘solo runs’ by ministers. However, with more decisions being referred to the
Executive and requiring cross-community support, there is an obvious danger that deadlock will be more frequent. A test of the new dispensation is going to be whether political paralysis can be avoided. This has occurred in some other situations where the representatives of two communities have each been armed with a veto over decision-making. The most notable example is Cyprus in the early 1960s. Before the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly on 7 March 2007, the stance of the major parties was that they expected devolved government to be a battle a day, but there was a marked softening of this rhetoric after devolution became a reality on 8 May 2007. For a brief period this led to optimism that the new dispensation would take root in a way that the Good Friday Agreement had not.

However, the radically different perspectives of the two main parties have since so slowed the progress of decision-making that questions are now being raised as to the settlement’s survival in the medium term. In particular, the DUP has refused to introduce the Irish Language Act envisaged in the St Andrews Agreement. The target date set in the St Andrews Agreement for the transfer of policing and justice powers to the devolved government of May 2008 has already come and gone without agreement on the issue. Further, the DUP has hitherto rejected the proposal to build a sports stadium for Northern Ireland on land donated by central government to the Executive at the Maze, because of its connection with a scheme that part of the prison at the Maze site should be preserved as a museum and a conflict transformation centre. The latter has been dubbed a ‘terrorist shrine’ by the DUP that the party is determined to prevent from coming into existence. Already the two governments have been drawn into discussions on how these blockages to the functioning of devolved government might be removed and political commentators have begun to speculate that the political impasse, which has prevented the Executive from meeting, will lead to the reimposition of direct rule.

But if current difficulties might seem to tilt the argument in favour of the view that Northern Ireland’s settlement is best viewed through the prism of conflict management, this does not necessarily mean that what has been achieved in Northern Ireland has little relevance to the resolution of other conflicts. What it does underline is the importance of recognising the role that external parties have played in the situation. And the same might be said about lots of other conflicts, including Bosnia, Macedonia, Cyprus and Iraq, to mention just a few cases, where the role played by external parties has been clearly crucial to any settlement that has arisen or might arise. Indeed, the point can be made that the consociational model is particularly attractive to external parties seeking to influence political developments, since its institutionalisation of differences facilitates the management of these sorts of conflicts by external parties. So it should not be surprising that an era that has seen increased use of consociational devices as a means of addressing conflicts in deeply divided societies should also be one in which there has been markedly more external intervention in the internal affairs of independent states. A factor that limited the relevance of the Northern Ireland case during the Cold War, that Northern Ireland was not an independent
state but merely a region within a state, has diminished in significance, with the increased propensity of particularly the Western powers to involve themselves in the internal governance of nominally independent states. Further impetus has been given to such influence within Europe as a result of the attraction of European Union membership and the security guarantees open to new states through membership of NATO.

What remains to be seen is how dependent power-sharing in Northern Ireland and other cases, where it is being used for the purpose of conflict resolution, proves to be on the external environment in general and the continuation of external mediation, in particular. The promise consociationalism holds out is that the engagement among political elites that operation of the institutions requires will generate genuine political accommodation among the elites that then provides a durable and stable basis for the governance of what remains a deeply divided society. There has been tendency by the British and Irish governments to promote the Northern Ireland settlement as a model of such political accommodation, as if this process had already been achieved and was not simply their fervent hope.

References


*Belfast Agreement* (1998) For text of this and other relevant documents of the Irish peace process, see Cox et al. 2006.


Good Friday Agreement, see Cox et al. 2006.


14 Conclusions

André Lecours and Luis Moreno

The contributions in this book sought to shed light on the complex and tension-filled relationship between nationalism and democracy. For most of the authors, the starting point was nationalism and the question was to understand how it related to democracy in a variety of contexts and situations. At the broadest level, we can distinguish three research orientations that emanate from this book. The first is a focus on how democracy features into nationalism as it involves a challenge by minority groups of a specific sociopolitical, institutional and constitutional situation. The second is the question of the impact of state nationalism on democracy and, conversely, of democracy on the nature and manifestations of nationalism as it emanates from the state. The third relates to situations of democratic transitions and consolidation and involves analysing how nationalism factors into these crucial yet complicated processes.

Let us now summarize what observations and conclusions come out of the authors’ reflections on nationalism and democracy.

Contesting political arrangements: nationalism, diversity and conflict

An important theme in this volume is the consequence of cultural diversity, more specifically, of national minorities and nationalist movements, for democracy. On this theme, the contributions of this book considered two angles.

The first angle is the compatibility of sub-state nationalism with democracy. In much of the literature, sub-state nationalism is depicted as a ‘problem’ that states need to solve because it threatens political stability and unity. In the context of democratic regimes, part of the perceived problem with sub-state nationalism stems from the notion that their democratic credentials are necessarily inferior to those of the states they challenge. From this perspective, sub-state nationalism is easily associated with exclusion and intolerance. In the last decade or so, however, much literature has argued that sub-state nationalisms in democratic regimes are profoundly wedded to democratic principles and that no fundamental contradiction existed between the search for autonomy, and even independence, and the democratic creed. Of course, the politics of nationalist movements present potential pitfalls when it comes to democracy; for example,
Benyamin Neuberger has explained well the problematic aspects of the principle of national self-determination for democracy. As Allan Craigie explains in his chapter, it is overly simplistic to always see sub-state nationalism as the problem. Ibarra and Maíz’s chapter on Spain shows that nationalist movements such as the Galician nationalist movement can be very successful in a liberal-democratic society when they accept its basic principle.

The second angle is the form that democracy can take to accommodate cultural and national diversity. As William Safran explains, the management of cultural diversity is one of the foremost challenges of Western societies and the particular approaches to the sociological reality of multiculturalism are highly contingent on national political traditions. Arguably, an even more complex situation for democratic practices are situations of multinationalism, that is, when a segment of a population challenges the nation promoted by the state. In this context, the question becomes the very possibility of democracy in the absence of a single ethos. It is a long-standing claim that democratic practices become very difficult in societies that are very diverse and/or where the narratives of groups go in different directions. An argument from consociational theorists has suggested that majoritarian democratic practices might not work in deeply divided societies but that power-sharing mechanisms that emphasize consensus can produce good results. Adrian Guelke’s analysis of Northern Ireland suggests that power-sharing can indeed offer possibilities of democratic governance in deeply divided societies, but that in this particular case at least the conflict management roles of the British and Irish governments were instrumental in making peace and democracy happen.

**State nationalism and democratic practices**

Several of the contributions in this book considered the relationship between state nationalism and democracy. At least three main points come out of these contributions.

The first point is that nationalism is not strictly a phenomenon of minority populations within a state who demand territorial autonomy or independence via movements and/or political parties. As Ilan Peleg has explained in his chapter, states also define themselves in relation to ethnonational parameters; they deploy nationalism too. After all, states typically attempt to promote, sometimes to impose, a particular nation. They articulate ideas about who is a member of the national community and what the characteristics of this community are. States also formalize these ideas through citizenship, which in turn determines who are the bearers of civil, political and social rights. Hence, the commonly held contrast between ‘patriotism’, associated with the state, and ‘nationalism’ linked to minority groups, appears deeply flawed.

The second point is that even when the nationalism of states comes with the veneer of patriotism or republicanism (in the case of France), it is most often not devoid of ethnic or cultural content. Liberal democracies are typically viewed as being neutral from an ethnocultural point of view. This assumption often leads...
to the argument that minority groups can blend into the nation, independently of their own ethnocultural features, if their members share with all other citizens a commitment to the protection of rights as well as a respect for principles of majority rules. As many chapters in this book suggest (for example, Peleg’s and Craigie’s), the ethnocultural neutrality of the state is mostly a myth. The chapter by Ray Taras makes the point that far-right wing populist parties in Western and Eastern Europe are typically (state) nationalist parties that articulate exclusivist visions of the nations based on culture and even descent.

The third point is that state nationalism impacts democratic practices. As we just mentioned, it would be misleading to think that some states are ‘neutral’, in the sense that they do not project any nationalism, and therefore more receptive to democracy than others that appear more evidently nationalist. All states promote a nation; it is the particular nature of the state nationalism, which conditions the extent, practices and quality of democracy. Several chapters in this book (for example, Ilana Kaufman’s) have used the notion of the nationalizing state developed by Rogers Brubaker to analyze the consequences of different forms of state nationalisms for sub-state nationalist claims and for democracy. Malinova and Casula have shown that a discursive analysis can be very useful for shedding light on the state nationalism-democracy relationship.

Nationalism and democratic transitions and consolidation

The effect of nationalism on politics is particularly significant for societies that undergo a democratic transition, or are still in the process of consolidating democracy. On these issues the contributors to the book make two observations.

The first is that the effect of state nationalism on the transition and consolidation of democracy is variable. On the one hand, nationalism can facilitate processes of democratic transitions. State nationalism can take many forms, but if it is reasonably successful at defining a nation above and beyond preexisting ethnic or national cleavages it can provide a basic political framework from where democracy can operate.

For example, in his chapter, James Scarritt explains that the strength of Zambian nationalism has served to reduce the centrifugal tendencies that could have been caused by political competition between the various ethnopolitical groups. Making a similar argument differently, Enric Martínez-Herrera suggests that a weak (state) national identity can make elites reluctant to commit to a democratic transition. On the other hand, as Elena Meleshkina explains in her chapter, when state nationalism involves an aggressive ‘nationalization’ of politics, the results are not nearly as positive for democracy. In the cases of the post-Soviet states of Eastern Europe examined by Meleshkina, state nationalism has often involved discrimination against minorities, who for all intents and purposes are excluded from the democratic community.

The second has to do with the importance of discourse. At the beginning of a period of democratic transition, political discourse typically goes in many different directions when it comes to both democracy and the nation. The degree to
which there can be a consolidation of discourse, not only on democracy but also on the nature of national identity, can heavily impact the stability of the new regime. For example, in their chapter, Casula and Malinova argue that Russian politics in the 2000s saw the consolidation of a dominant ‘statist’ discourse that served to stabilize the Putin regime but had ambiguous consequences for Russian democracy.

**Directions for future research**

There are many different directions where research on nationalism and democracy can go. Two seem particularly important.

A first is to further explore the democratic potential of sub-state nationalism. As we mentioned before, nationalist movements have often been viewed suspicously when it comes to democracy, especially when they challenge the structures of the liberal-democratic state. At best, sub-state nationalism in this context has been found to be modern and progressive, and to exhibit no tendency towards undemocratic forms of politics. It would be useful to venture a bit further and examine if and how nationalist movements can improve the quality of democracy for both the community on behalf of which they make claims as well as the larger (state) national community. In an attempt to highlight the difference between ‘their’ community and the ‘other’, nationalist movements can promote better democratic practices. For example, in making an argument for home rule, the actors of Scottish nationalists insisted that a Scottish parliament would mean practising democracy in a different, better, way. Investigating whether these types of statements actually translate into advances for democracy could shed light on the true democratic potential of sub-state nationalism. Researchers could also look at how the struggle of some nationalist movements for minority rights (for example, Kurdish nationalism in Turkey) impacts positively the larger rights regime in the country as a whole.

A second is to look into how nationalism can be taken into consideration to help democratic transitions. From this perspective, the idea put forward by Enric Martinez-Herrera on the creation of a ‘virtuous circle’ from the national and democratic sources of legitimacy of political systems deserves to be further explored. According to Martinez-Herrera, national identification can enhance the performance of a political system because it defines a common good. At the same time, a well-performing political system can foster a pride that can become national. In the context of a democratic transition, a process of reciprocal legitimation between a given political community and regime could be triggered, as Martinez-Herrera suggests, by political and constitutional settlements that provide self-government for minority communities in exchange for some type of loyalty, albeit not necessarily exclusive, to the (state) national community.
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