

## **Dominant Ethnicity and Dominant Nationhood: Empirical and Normative Aspects**

### Introduction

Current scholarship pertaining to ethnicity and nationalism ploughs three main furrows: state nationalism, minority nationalism and minority ethnicity. To this list, one may add the literature on migration, which is linked to minority ethnicity; citizenship studies, which examines the interplay between state nationalism and minority ethnicity; and normative political theory, which concerns itself with the interplay between state nations, minority nations, and minority ethnies. All three literatures therefore neglect the increasingly important phenomenon of dominant ethnicity. (Kaufmann 2004a)

The chapter begins by locating dominant ethnicity in the aforementioned literature. It probes the vicissitudes of dominant ethnicity in the developing and developed worlds. It registers the shift from dominant minority to dominant majority control in the developing world, while in the West, it finds increasing demographic and cultural pressure on dominant ethnic majorities. I next consider this volume's chief problematic of dominant nationhood. Here the paper introduces an optical metaphor of referent, lenses and symbolic resources which can help us better unpack the complexity of dominant nationhood. The Canadian case is treated as an instance of 'missionary' nationalism: a competing nationalism to Quebec's rather than the post-national alternative it claims to be. Finally the chapter examines the normative questions thrown up by dominant groups and the implications of dominant ethnicity and nationhood for federalism.

## Dominant Ethnicity

What then, is dominant ethnicity? To answer this question, we need to be specific about our terminology. Since 1980, great strides have been made toward differentiating the concepts of state, nation, and ethnic group, and sketching the linkages between such phenomena.<sup>1</sup> *States* place the emphasis on the instruments of coercion, government and boundary demarcation within a territory. *Ethnic groups* refer to communities of (supposedly) shared ancestry, almost always accompanied by notions of an ancestral homeland and cultural boundary markers. *Nations* comprise an uneasy hybrid of elements from ethnies and the *modern* state: they are better integrated, more politically self-conscious and spatially demarcated than ethnies, but can employ a myth of political or ideological origins which is not specifically genealogical. In addition, nations do not always control their own political apparatus nor must they maintain a monopoly of organized violence over their territory, hence the possibility of 'stateless nations.'

The connections between these entities are equally subtle, and are the subject of intense controversy between those of constructivist and historicist bent. According to 'ethno-symbolist' theorists, some ethnies were transformed into nations in the modern era, while others, often due to their territorial dispersion, lack of political ambition or low level of self-consciousness (i.e. Balinese, Cajuns, Aragonese), did not emerge as nations.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, of those ethnies that successfully achieved nationhood, many (such as Scots, Tibetans) have failed to achieve modern statehood. Dominant ethnicity refers to the phenomenon whereby *a particular ethnic group exercises dominance*

*within a nation*. Notice that the dominant ethnic need not dominate the state in which 'its' nation resides. This is the case, as Danielle Juteau points out, with the *pures laines* Quebecois, who dominate the nation of Quebec but not the Canadian state. (Juteau 2004) The same holds true for the mainly Protestant ethnic Scots of Scotland, some of whom have been accused of discrimination against the local English minority.

This flags up the myriad ways in which an ethnic group can be dominant: demographic, cultural, political, and economic. In pre-1960s Quebec, for instance, *pures laines* Quebecois dominated culturally and in provincial politics, but not economically or in federal politics. Today, many ethnic minorities in the developing world (i.e. Chinese, Indians, Lebanese and White trading minorities) control the local economy but are politically weak, hence, argues Sino-Phillipine Amy Chua, their vulnerability to genocide in a world of economic liberalisation and populist democratisation. (Chua 2003)

#### *From Dominant Minorities to Dominant Majorities*

The most common historical combination, however, has been ethno-political dominance over a culturally diverse state. Many empires were controlled by a *staatsvolk*, or dominant ethnic group, despite dynastic intermarriage at the very top. Austro-Germans in the Habsburg empire, ethnic Russians in the Tsarist empire, Afghan-Turkic-Persian Mughals in India, and Anatolian Turks in the Ottoman empire furnish several examples. In the medieval Baltic and Czech lands, German-speakers dominated the high culture, economy and polity, but the folk culture of the peasant masses remained as a springboard for the development of future Latvian, Czech and Estonian dominant ethnicity. In many colonial settings, settler ethnicities like the

Rhodesians, Americo-Liberians and Afrikaners have enjoyed the same political dominance, but not cultural dominance. In developing countries after 1945, dominant minorities like the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi, Alawi in Syria or Sunni of Iraq often retained power.

The aftermath of the Cold War and the attendant loss of ideological discipline led to a fracturing of ex-communist and post-colonial regimes along ethnic lines. This is because the nonaligned socialist (i.e. pan-Arab, pan-African, Yugoslav) ideology which unified the regimes of autocratic leaders like Tito, Stalin, Nyerere, Nkrumah or Mobutu has lost its legitimacy. The communist or post-independence coalitions, which generally rested on an uneasy alliance between different ethnic power bases, has fragmented because of the decline of socialism and the rise of the so-called 'third wave' of democratisation. Ethnic structures are generally the most dependable vessels for mobilising mass electoral support. Thus democracy, as Donald Horowitz has noted, lends itself to ethnic politics. This is the case even if - as observers of African politics point out - ethnic blocs are often composed of shifting coalitions of smaller ethnic groups. (Horowitz 1985; Mozaffar & Scarritt 2000) The new wave of democratisation in the former communist bloc and developing world has thereby inaugurated an era of ethnic party systems. Within these systems, dominant ethnic groups have emerged, such as the Kikuyu in Kenya, Akan in Ghana or Sinhala in Sri Lanka. They may speak the language of inclusive 'rainbow' nationalism, but underneath, they must satisfy their core ethnic constituency. The leadership of the Shi'ite dominant group (actually a sect) in Iraq, for example, maintains an outward narrative of Iraqi unity, but works privately to advance the Shi'ite interest through complicity in anti-Sunni violence.

What we are seeing today is an epochal shift from dominant minority to dominant majority politics brought on by democratisation. The downfall of Sunni minority control in Iraq, and its replacement with a Shi'a majority regime, is symbolic of this change. Dominant minorities functioned very well in empires or autocratic states, where it paid to narrow the circle of power as much as possible. This both increased the spoils to insiders and also ensured that there was a trustworthy base of support for the regime. Under a democratic system, however, the main principle is majority rule, and this gives demographic majorities the edge over traditional elite minorities. The decline of Russian minority privilege in the Baltic states and central Asia once again reflects the rise of the principle of popular sovereignty and the decline of older notions of imperial suzerainty.

#### *Dominant Majorities in the West*

Whereas dominant majority ethnic groups appear confident in the developing world, basking in the principle of majority rule, in the developed world they have been thrown on the defensive. The mechanisms differ between the two regions. The rise of dominant majorities in the developing world has been generated by political upheavals. In the developed world, by contrast, these happened long ago, and now, cultural, demographic and economic factors are weighing on dominant ethnies. Many of today's western nations are experiencing an unprecedented degree of pressure from the forces of global modernity. In particular, the spread of human and collective rights discourse since the 1960s has mounted an increasing challenge to the model of ethno-national congruence. Western nations, many of which were formed on the basis of dominant, 'core' ethnic groups, are thus facing pressure to shift their self-definitions

from 'ethnic' to 'civic' criteria. They are encouraged to look to their future rather than their past, to treasure their cultural diversity (past and present) rather than their homogeneity, to recognise the autonomy claims of minorities and to be open to foreign trade, foreign immigration, and foreign ('multi') cultural influences. In short, global narratives of liberal multiculturalism, embedded in both global and national institutions, are driving an ever-greater wedge between modern nations and their dominant ethnic groups.

Anglo-Americans typify the phenomenon of a dominant ethnic group under pressure, but it is worth remembering that this is a relatively recent development. Immigration has ebbed and flowed over time to the United States, attaining a peak in the two decades after 1900. After 1924, however, the National Origins quota immigration scheme effectively reduced the flow until the quotas began to be opened up some four decades later. This, along with gerrymandered congressional districts which reduced the power of immigrant-dominated northeastern cities, helped the dominant white Anglo-Protestant group to retain power and cultural influence. After 1965, the Anglo-Protestant group began to lose power, but a new 'Anglo' racial coalition of European Americans (Protestant, Catholic and Jewish) emerged as the dominant group. (Kaufmann 2004) Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, immigration from southern and eastern Europe to more prosperous northern and western Europe did take place prior to 1939, but on a small scale: the foreign-born generally constituted less than one percent of the population of receiving countries in this period. (Baycroft and Hewitson 2006: 328)

Though non-western immigration to Europe began after 1945, this flow remained small until the 1960s. Even today, a majority of the foreign-born in many western European countries are European immigrants. (Coleman 2006) This,

however, is beginning to change because of the so-called 'second demographic transition' in the developed world toward below-replacement fertility. Much of western Europe has had below-replacement fertility for three decades. The demographic echo of large numbers of baby boomer mothers moving through their childbearing years has allowed dominant ethnic populations to grow or remain stable, but these populations are now experiencing real declines. This means that immigration will be required to maintain population levels in the future. (Demeny & McNicoll 2006) In the coming decades, the young populations on the southern periphery of North America and Europe will contrast sharply with the advanced age profile of most western countries where some 40 percent of the population will be over 60 by 2050. (Goldstone 2007) Improved global communications and transport links may abet the flow of labour from developing to developed countries, increasing the pressure on dominant ethnic groups and widening the gap between the dominant ethnic and the nation-state.

### *Can Dominant Ethnicities Absorb Immigrants?*

What might be the social fallout from these demographic trends? As Fredrik Barth and other proponents of boundary theory remind us, populations can flow across a boundary and assimilate, leaving the ethnic boundary intact. (Barth 1969) Consequently, immigration need not pose a problem for dominant ethnic groups if the newcomers assimilate and thereby 'disappear'. Here I refer not merely to cultural assimilation, but to a complete process of ethnic assimilation through which the descendants of newcomers come to identify with the myths of genealogical origin of the receiving group. This is akin to Milton Gordon's 'identificational' and 'marital'

assimilation stages and is inseparable from inter-ethnic marriage. (Gordon 1964) This process typically takes several generations, but can be very effective. The success of Magyarisation in Hungary after 1778, Turkification in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Anatolia, or *mestizaje* in Mexico in the period to 1917 provide cases in point. (Francis 1976) In all these cases, large numbers of newcomers were grafted on to the ethnic core through intermarriage and cultural assimilation. In some cases, the only vestige of foreign origins are surnames, i.e. the Irish Gerry Adams' English surname, the French-Canadian Daniel Johnson's British surname, or the Italian surnames of some South Tyrolean Germans. Even 'established' surnames like the English 'Fletcher' or Anglo-American 'Revere' can have foreign immigrant origins (17<sup>th</sup> century French Huguenot in both cases).

Notice that ethnic assimilation requires a much deeper degree of change than mere cultural and economic assimilation, since the latter can coexist with strong minority ethnic boundaries. For instance, Ernest Gellner points out that religious resources can insulate a community like the German Jews or Pontic Greeks from assimilation, rendering it 'counter-entropic'. This is the case even if the community speaks the same unaccented language as its hosts and is thoroughly civically integrated. (Gellner 1983) Consider two distinct paths of integration in Europe today. Those of Caribbean descent are experiencing a process of rapid assimilation and intermarriage into the dominant ethnic groups of Britain and Holland, even if Caribbeans generally occupy lower-prestige occupations. Indeed, the proportion of 'pure' to mixed ancestry Caribbeans in Britain is 5:2, but stands at 4:3 among those under 4 in the 2001 census. (ONS 2001) It is now reported that there are more children being born to one white and one black parent in the UK than to two black parents. By contrast, Muslims (mainly of Bangladeshi and Pakistani descent) in

Britain marry into the dominant ethnic group at a rate of less than 5 percent. A similar picture characterises Turkish and Moroccan Muslims in Holland. (Van Tubergen 2006)

Most second generation Muslims in Europe are culturally and economically assimilated, but their resistance to ethnic assimilation means that further Muslim growth is perceived as a considerable threat to the demographic preponderance of the dominant west European ethnic groups. Current projections place the Muslim population at between 10 and 15 percent of the west European total in 2050. Not a large proportion, but enough to cause anxiety in specific high-immigrant locales like Marseille, Rotterdam or Leicester, where far right politicians have played upon the fears of downwardly mobile members of the dominant ethnies. Should the proportion of the national population comprised of members of the dominant ethnies continue to fall, dominant group members will experience an ever greater dissonance between their ethnic and national identities.

If the history of the United States is any guide, this process may lead to increasingly strident attempts to heal this breach through high-pressure '100 percent' assimilation and immigration restriction. A more extreme response can be seen in Assam in northeastern India, a Hindu enclave which has experienced considerable Bengali-Muslim immigration since 1948, leading to a Muslim minority of 31 percent which currently controls about 60 of Assam's 126 Assembly constituencies. Since the 1960s, Assamese militants like the AASU have called for the eviction of aliens and conducted a bloody terrorist campaign against Bengali immigrants from both West Bengal and Bangladesh. (Horowitz 1985; Hussain 2005; Ganguli 2007) We also see this in multi-ethnic states with significant internal migration, like Uganda, where the

settlement of ethnic Bakiga into Banyoro territory in Kibaale district has led to localised ethnic conflict. (Green 2006)

The confluence of forces at play in the developed world pull in different directions. Low native fertility, lower-cost air transport, a globalising economy and global communications all facilitate higher immigration, resistance to assimilation and thus the erosion of dominant ethnicity. Globalisation in particular allows diasporas to maintain cultural, economic and political connections to the homeland over long distances, retarding assimilation into the dominant group. (Kotkin 1993; Shain & Barth 2003) On the other hand, the increasingly 'loose-bounded', individualistic nature of western societies after the social revolutions of the 1960s enables assimilation. (Bellah 1987) For instance, the sharp rise in inter-faith marriage between Protestant, Catholic and Jewish Americans after 1960 was accompanied by a similar rise in inter-racial marriage which has arguably paved the way for high white-East Asian and white-Hispanic nuptiality. (Kaufmann 2004) Large scale immigration can thereby be digested far more quickly than in the past. At the same time, modern techniques of surveillance and record-keeping, and the international exchange of electronic informatio, make it possible for governments to control populations with greater efficiency. All of which enhances the ability of dominant ethnic groups to control unwanted immigration and retain ethno-national congruence.

Overall, though, the balance has probably swung against dominant ethnicity in the West because liberal norms mitigate against the use of border control technology to ensure ethnic dominance. Thus the kind of immigration controls applied by Gulf Arab or even East Asian regimes are currently viewed as politically unacceptable in western countries. The same is true when it comes to the narration of history, with dominant ethnic narratives subordinated to official 'civic' national histories which

emphasise immigrant contributions and diversity and irrupt the tie binding members of the dominant group to their heroic and mythic ancestors. Even the state's censuses and ethnic monitoring forms often only refer to minority categories as distinct ethnic groups, with the majority occupying the residual category of 'white'. Whether this reflects the unreflective power of the dominant group to hide itself as nonethnic (see Doane 1997), or demonstrates the political weakness of dominant ethnic lobbyists, the end result is a non-recognition of the dominant ethnic, whose members may only know who they are not (minorities), rather than carrying a positive sense of who they are.

Paradoxically, the increasingly fluid and porous society which enables the assimilation of outsiders simultaneously hinders the development of dominant ethnic associations, collective memories and political networks. While the state supports certain aspects of dominant ethnicity through the promotion of an official language, political history and public architecture, there is a vacuum at the level of vernacular culture, collective memory and political interests. With no associational life to fill this void, an absence of social capital results, which places dominant groups at a disadvantage. Combined with the second demographic transition, cultural liberalism/multiculturalism and the effects of globalisation, this stacks the deck in favour of long-term dominant ethnic decline. In short, civic nationalism provides little protection for the *ethnic* boundaries of groups like the Anglo-Canadians, Quebecois *de souche*, or ethnic Dutch of Holland.

Dominant Nationhood

Having marked out the terrain of dominant ethnicity, we now move to consider the distinct theme of 'dominant nationhood', and the idea of a majority approach to nationalism. Of course, the two ideas need not be coterminous. Dominant nationhood certainly could be applied by a minority nation towards its own ethnic minorities as part of a project of assimilation. Catalans and Quebecois can thereby act as dominant nationalists in Catalonia and Quebec. However, for the most part, dominant nationalism will tend to reflect the perspective of the nation which forms a majority in the state. In other words, dominant nationalism is often the same as majoritarian state nationalism. Thus the French nation is dominant in France, the English nation in Britain, the English-speaking 'Canadian' nation in Canada, the Japanese in Japan, and so on.

What of the relationship to dominant ethnicity? Here we would do well to remember that nations are not the same creatures as ethnic groups since nations are mainly communities of territory, political aspiration and mass culture and so may include a fringe of ethnic outsiders who are civically assimilated. The relationship between dominant ethnicity and dominant nationhood is not therefore automatic, for it is possible that dominant ethnic elites may invest their political energy in an inclusive state nationalism. This kind of 'civic' project may well involve significant contributions from minority ethnic groups, and may be a synthesis of these different ethnic contributions. At the mass level, ethnic outsiders may reciprocate with loyalty and fervour to the nation - as with Jewish loyalty to the German nation between 1870 and 1914.

That said, the mytho-symbolic connection between the myths and memories of the dominant ethnic and 'its' nation are typically robust. (Smith 1986) This means that most state nationalisms are controlled by members of the dominant ethnic group, with

minorities often ambivalent, or playing only token roles. This is clear in the realm of historiography. In the American case, history texts at the school and university levels were not only written almost entirely by Anglo-Protestants prior to the 1960s, but specifically by those of New England ancestry. Likewise, 'patriotic' societies like the Daughters of the American Revolution or American Legion often blurred the line between state nationalist commemorations and dominant ethnic concerns like 'qualitative' immigration restriction. (Kaufmann 2004) Though there are some exceptions (such as the disproportionate role of Christians in Arab nationalist movements), most civic nationalists tend to hail from the dominant group.

*Eyeballing Nationalism: A Majority Perspective on the Nation*

Before going any further in understanding majority perspectives on the nation, it behooves us to set out a paradigm for understanding perspectivism and identity, broadly construed. To wit, it is readily apparent that there is no single perspective on the nation. Indeed, this is a theoretical problem in the field of nationalism and political identity more generally. Let me briefly list some of the main issues raised by perspectivism. This is the idea that one's view of the nation varies, depending on one's location in terms of:

1. Ethnicity - Is the individual from the dominant ethnic group, or from a minority group?
2. Geography - Does the individual come from a specific region or locale? Do they reside in the nation or are they part of the diaspora?
3. Ideology - What is the set of universalist/ethical ideas that is influencing the individual in question?

4. Class/Status - Where in the system of economic, status and power relations does the individual reside?
5. Instrumental interests - Might one profit politically or economically by the national project, or might such a project adversely affect one's interests?
6. International and geopolitical context - Which other countries are the main reference points, friends and foes of the nation? Where are they similar and where different?
7. Other identities - Gender and lifestyle may affect one's perspective.
8. Psychology - Given the totality of an individual's social identities and ethical commitments, how compatible are these with national identity?

One may label these perspectives the *lenses* which one uses to view one's nation. (Kaufmann, 2008, forthcoming) The key question is how to square these diverse perspectives with the idea of 'a national identity', be this dominant or otherwise. Postmodernists contend that diversity fragments the nation to the point that it becomes meaningless to speak of an entity such as 'French national identity' and that any attempt to do so amounts to reification of the nation. (Hall 1996) On the other hand, ethnosymbolist theorists maintain that collective representations of the nation largely coalesce around established, path-dependent myths and symbols, which largely constitute the national identity, irrespective of how certain individuals incorporate such an identity into their psychic repertoires. (Smith 1991) Collective representations of the nation may also gain the backing of powerful institutions like the education system and the state, thereby achieving 'official' status and shaping the worldview of entire generations. (Weber 1976) Others propose that it is the overlap between different perspectives on the nation that constitutes the nation's identity. (Wimmer

2002) Wimmer adds that one needs to distinguish between the highly situational and fluid ways in which individual's construct their national identities and the more stable content of collective representations of the nation. (Wimmer 2007)

John Hutchinson and Oliver Zimmer make a different argument, drawing attention to the ways in which different class or ideological actors select differently from a common fund of symbolic *resources*. For Zimmer, there is no evidence for a distinct 'ethnic' or 'civic' nationalism, but only a set of symbolic resources and the volition of those who interpret them. Symbolic resources include landscape, political institutions and memories, language, genealogy, other aspects of culture, physiognomy, and so forth. Interpreters may choose to view these organically (i.e. 'ethnically') or in voluntarist (i.e. 'civic') terms. (Zimmer 2003) Language, for instance, was viewed organically by nineteenth century Polish nationalists, but is currently viewed as an instrument of civic inclusion by American, Quebec or Catalan nationalists. Genealogy may furnish the basis for a *völkish* nationalism, as in nineteenth century Germany, or, in 'diverse' plural form, can serve as a resource for civic nationalism, as in Canada or Britain today. Alternatively, certain symbols may simply be downplayed, such as the pre-Islamic past of contemporary Iran (though the anti-Islamist diaspora would seek to focus on these symbols).

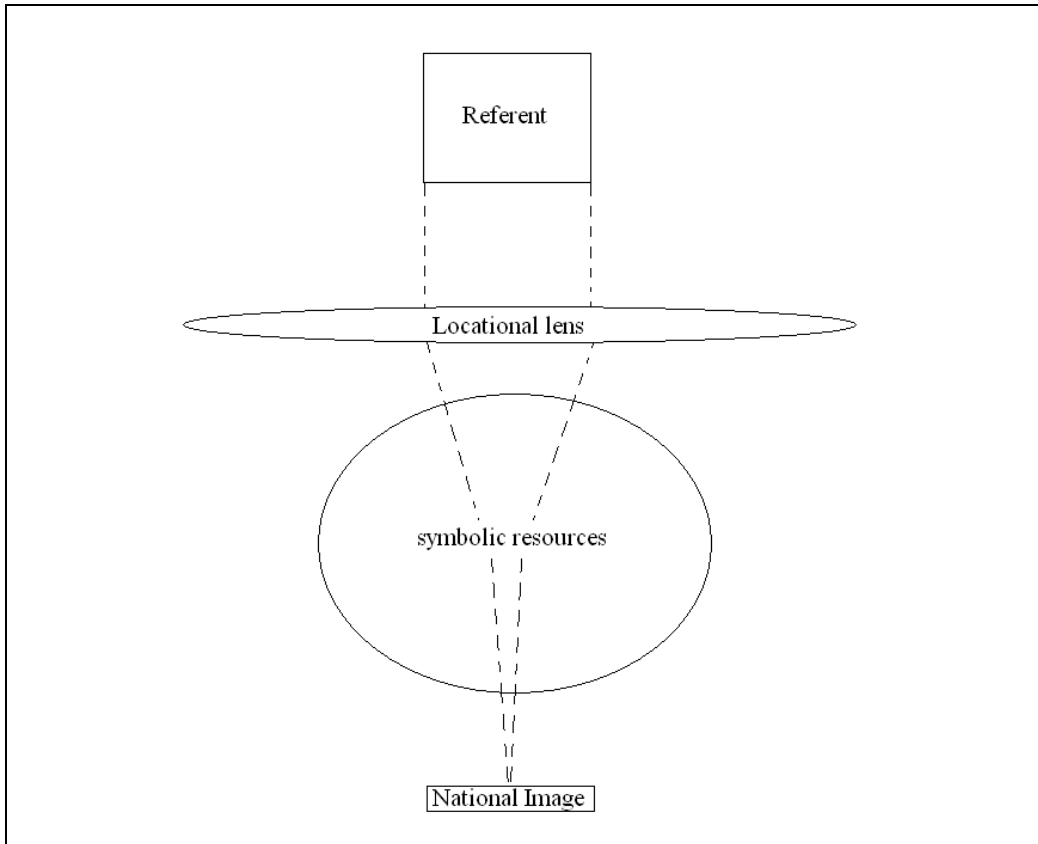
By constantly referring to their opposing visions for the nation, diverse actors paradoxically *reinforce* the reality of the nation. Thus the nineteenth century French republicans who invoked the 'free' tribal Gauls as their ancestors and their Catholic-conservative adversaries who instead extolled the aristocratic Franks as the true *ur-French* both helped reinforce the idea of a French nation with premodern ethnic origins. Genealogy was the resource, but its interpretation differed depending on the lens used. (Zimmer 2003; Hutchinson 2005) Moreover, though differing in their

views of the nation's symbolic content, competing actors operated within the same broad framework: that of a French nation with relatively fixed geographical and institutional forms. They thus focused upon a similar politico-geographic *referent*.

This discussion seems to have settled upon three basic elements within national identity, which I will term *referents*, *lenses* and *resources*. Referents refer to the politico-geographic framework. Thus an individual in Pamplona may be primarily interested in a local Pamplonan, provincial Navarrese, Basque national, Spanish national, European supranational or global political project. In viewing this referent, the said individual may apply different lenses corresponding to their geographic, social, ideological, instrumental, international, ethnic and psychic location. Finally, the individual would be operating with a fund of symbolic resources laid down by history. The stock of linguistic, archaeological, institutional, geographical, genealogical and historical resources is not infinite, and it is often difficult to plausibly invent these *ex nihilo*.

We might perceive the link between referent, lens and resource as similar to the way we perceive objects. Philosophers have long quarrelled over whether our perception of reality is mainly the result of sense-perceptions (i.e. Locke and empiricism) or innate Ideas hardwired into our mind (i.e. Plato, Kant and rationalism). Our eyes mediate between our inner world of reason, and the outer world of ultimate reality. Using this analogy, we can think of referents as real objects, lenses as our eyes, and resources as our internal ideas. In so doing, we can depict the process of national imagination as an interaction between referent, lens and resource, as in figure 1. Thus light from the referent (say a region) is refracted through various locational lenses to focus upon different interpretations of the existing stock of symbolic resources.

**Fig. 1 The National Gaze: An Optical Metaphor for National Identity**



*Dominant Nationalism Revisited*

With this optical analogy in mind, let us return to the problem of majority nationalism. Majority nationalism takes the political institutions and territory of the entire state as its referent. It views the nation through the lens of the majority of the population - be this an ethnic majority or a coalition of ethnic groups sharing the same language, race or religion. And this gaze in turn leads it to interpret its stock of

symbolic resources in certain ways. Let us now consider some concrete examples of how this works in practice.

Consider Revolutionary France, the paradigm case of state nationalism. The referent was the French territory and its state institutions. The interpretive lenses mainly included the liberal-democratic ideology of the Enlightenment, a Paris/Île de France regional inflection, an ethnic French (as opposed to Breton or Provençal) perspective, and the self-interests of disaffected nobles and the bourgeoisie. Though revolutionary French nationalism focused heavily on newly-created cultural resources like the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the *fêtes*, the flag, the army and monumental architecture, the old symbols were soon reinterpreted by republicans. The French language (as embodying liberty and rationality), its genealogy (linked to the Gauls), its land (the idea of the hexagon) and its premodern history (Joan of Arc as a republican hero) were all highlighted in particular ways by the lenses of revolutionary nationalists. (Baycroft 2006)

In the United States, we can discern many of the same lenses: a liberal-Enlightenment Whig ideology, a New England-influenced regional gaze, and the self-interests of expansionist backcountry small farmers and middle strata. These refracted the vision of the United States in peculiar ways. The genealogy of the Americans focused upon the Anglo-Saxons, the supposedly freedom-loving ancient inhabitants of England who had been conquered by the aristocratic Normans whose dynasty ruled in Britain. (Horsman 1981) This was in keeping with an older English Whig tradition which counterpoised the liberal Anglo-Saxons to the Tory Normans. (Hutchinson 2005)

The English language was of lesser interest as a resource since it failed to distinguish the Americans from the English, but Americans' low-church, dissenting

Protestant traditions were sometimes used to distinguish the new nation from England, with its established church. The small independent farmer, or Yeoman, a lifestyle symbol, was selected as the exemplar of the American republic, as opposed to the nobles and tenants of the Old Country. (Smith 1950) Politically, American liberals looked to their Greco-Roman republican traditions rather than their Roman imperial or Norman imperial resources. It is also worth mentioning that certain resources were simply unavailable to the Americans: the French language was not part of the American symbolic arsenal, no matter what advantages this might have conferred upon the revolutionaries in terms of calling upon the resources of their French allies.

A glance at the workings of minority nationalism can help throw dominant nationalism into sharper relief. Basque nationalism is focused on the Basque country as a referent. Prior to the late nineteenth century, many Basque writers lacked a vocabulary of Basque nationalism but viewed their Basque country through the lenses of Catholic conservatism, Spanish Imperial royalism, and juxtaposed it to the dominant Castilian core of Spain. Basque royalism does not mean that Basque identity was lacking, since many held the Basque country to be their principal referent. Yet in expounding their Basque national identity, they often spoke of the Basque country as the brightest light of the empire, or as exemplifying the Catholic virtues and enterprise of the Spanish empire. Urban Basque perspectives remained dominant in this worldview rather than rural ones. We can also more easily see how Basque *national identity* could antedate Basque *nationalism*. (Jacobson 2006)

*Canadian Dominant Nationhood*

The Basque case provides a neat bridge across to Canadian nationalism because both Basque and Canadian national identities were formerly viewed through an imperial lens. Canada has long presented a conundrum for nationalism. Canadian nationalism has been described as variously colonial, binational (McRoberts 1997), civic (Breton 1988) or even post-nationalist (Cook 2007; Sigurdson 2000). However, if we prise apart referent, lens and resources, Canadian nationalism comes into sharper focus. To begin with, Canadian nationalism has always focused on the entire Canadian landmass and state. On the other hand, French-Canadian and Quebec nationalism have always maintained a strong interest in the lower St. Lawrence River Valley as a territorial referent. Though Quebec nationalism - focused on Quebec's provincial institutions - is more recent, the constitutional concerns of French-Canadian leaders to maintain a French-dominated province go back to the 1841 partition of Lower Canada. In terms of ethnic and linguistic lenses, Canadian nationalism has largely been the brainchild of English-speaking Canadians, almost exclusively of British descent. They have largely imagined the Canadian nation, with occasional input from French and other Canadians. Regionally, central Canada (southern Ontario and Anglo-Quebec) has been the cradle of Canadianism.

Prior to 1867, and, for many anglophones, prior to 1945, Canadian national identity was primarily expressed through the idiom of British loyalism. This ideology championed the superiority of British institutions like the monarchy and liberal democracy, and stressed the unity of the empire - especially the British dominions. (Cole 1970; Buckner 2004) Despite this lens, anglophone Canadians were preoccupied with Canada. They thus saw themselves in relation to the British empire much as Basques did to Spain, as the cream of empire, whose virtues exemplified those of the imperial project and would shine the way for others. Thus Canadian

Loyalists were 'a superior breed of loyal Briton' who could rejuvenate a decadent metropole. (Rasporich 1968: 150) Like the nineteenth century Basques, Canadians also wore an international lens, and thus sought to define themselves in relation to the metropolitan core, in this case in England rather than Castile. At no point was Canadian loyalism oriented to the 'green and pleasant land' of England or other Old Country reference points.

A similar process can be observed today among Ulster-Protestant loyalists. Their referent, sometimes called their 'country', is Ulster (the six counties of Northern Ireland), not England or Scotland.<sup>3</sup> However, the main lens which they employ to interpret their homeland is British loyalism or Unionism rather than Ulster nationalism.<sup>4</sup> The interplay between these two generates many curious phenomena, not least the fact that most Ulster-Protestants describe their identity as 'British' and employ British symbols like the Union Jack, but would rather run their own affairs within Britain than live under British direct rule. (Kaufmann 2007, ch. 4) Canadians were similar, using British symbols and describing themselves as 'British', yet seeking the strongest possible measure of political autonomy possible while remaining within Britain.

As we move to the more recent period, Canadians (i.e. English-speakers narrating the nation) began to assert a distinct national identity based largely on the symbolism of the northern landscape. This emerged early in the twentieth century, embodied in, among others, the Native Sons of Canada movement, Group of Seven painters and the new designs for a Canadian flag. This largely reflected a shift from a British loyalist lens to a Canadian liberal-nationalist one, and resulted in a downplaying of British genealogical resources and the foregrounding of the Canadian landscape as a nationalist resource. (Kaufmann 1998) In the 1960s, the cultural

earthquake of the international New Left captured the imagination of many English Canadian intellectuals, as well as many of mixed heritage, like Pierre Trudeau. This ideological lens largely replaced the old liberal-nationalist one, resulting in a new interpretation of Canada's symbolic resources.

One of the lineaments of this new identity was an emphasis on a plural, or 'multicultural' genealogy, despite the fact that only a small minority of European Canadians in the 1960s had no British or French ancestry. British ancestry was downplayed even more strenuously than in the earlier liberal nationalism because of its associations with the ethnic domination of subaltern groups. Moreover, the northern landscape also came under attack for its 'macho' connotations and insufficient urbanity. (Russell 1966) As in the United States, a New Left ideological lens fused with a strongly urban perspective to colour dominant concepts of nationhood. In Canada, this new cultural radicalism shone light on some slender symbolic resources (such as Canada's limited non-British/non-French ancestry and its limited urban intellectual culture). Over time, non-traditional immigration and growing urbanisation has strengthened these symbolic resources and reinforced the emphasis on multiculturalism which characterises Canadian nationalism. A dash of American neoliberalism shares lens space with cultural radicalism, and emphasises mobility, technology, globalisation and futuristic architecture. Together, these cosmopolitan ideologies produce a narrative of futuristic multiculturalism in which traditional left-wing class politics is strikingly absent.

All the while, the main voices of Canadian nationalism continued to be English, though the pantheon of narrators expanded somewhat from the original WASP core. This begs our earlier question: can contemporary Canadian nationalism be described as 'postnational', 'postmodern' or 'global'? (Cook 2007; Sigurdson 2000)

This is certainly the claim of many anglophone Canadian intellectuals, but it does not bear scrutiny. Instead, what we can say is that the elite narrators of Canadian identity are viewing their nation through an ideological lens of futuristic multiculturalism.

Though the ideology contains the potential to become the basis for a global superstate, Canadian intellectuals and federal Liberals desire no such thing. On the contrary, like their loyalist spiritual ancestors, their national identity is inward-looking, focused on Canada rather than the world. Canada is thus placed at the centre of the universal ideology. It is held to exemplify the highest virtues of liberal cosmopolitanism: dynamic, wealthy and high-tech as well as diverse, tolerant and hybridised. Substitute the lens of British liberal imperialism for that of liberal cosmopolitanism and one is instantly transported back to the Canada of a hundred years ago.

Canada's liberal cosmopolitanism is potentially global, as was the socialism of the USSR and China. But, like Stalin's 'socialism in one country' or Iran's Islamism, this cosmopolitan ideology is used as a prop of national pride in which the nation claims a special role as the chosen missionary for a given universal idea. This was the mantle donned by the Russians in the Tsarist empire, the English in the British empire and the Austro-Germans in the Habsburg empire. (Kumar 2003; Roshwald 2006)

Missionary nationalisms in the past have often tipped over into imperialism, and it is here that the dark side of 'civic' nationalism becomes apparent. Missionary nationalists like the English or the Russians chose not to focus on ethnic exclusivity and particularism and are thus lauded for their open-mindedness. Yet, for this precise reason, they are often expansionist and intolerant of others' 'narrow' ethnic nationalist aspirations. Armenians who stood in the way of Ottomanism; Tatars, Chechens and Volga Germans who failed to wave the Soviet flag; Irish who spurned the British empire and the Basques who failed to be adequately enthusiastic about Spanishness

were victims of an expansionist 'civic' nationalism. We see this attitude today in many countries like Ghana or Indonesia, where autonomy claims are derided as parochial and out-of-keeping with the spirit of 'civic' national unity. (Brown 2000; Roshwald 2006)

On the contrary, ethnic nationalism, whatever its flaws, can serve as a restraint on expansion. Many of those, like William Jennings Bryan, who argued against American colonial expansion into the ex-Spanish colonies like the Philippines did so on the ground that the colonised could not become Americans. 'Are we to bring into the body politic eight or ten million Asiatics,' asked Bryan in 1899, 'so different from us in race and history that amalgamation is impossible?' (Love 1997; Moorhead 1994: 158) The ethno-nationalism of indigenous peoples in the Americas, or smaller groups like the Cornish, Bretons and Welsh, is often non-aggressive and cultural. In Russia, a minor chord of Russian ethnic nationalism, though exclusivist, also counselled against an expansionist *mission civilisatrice* into neighbouring areas (especially if non-Slavic) for fear of diluting Russia's soul and dissipating its energies. (Kaufman 1996) 'Little Englandism' and Kemalist Turkish nationalism bear similar relationships to the expansionist British and Ottoman projects. Indeed, a recent book claims that the fear of having to absorb large numbers of ethnic 'others' put a brake on Hungarian, Russian and Romanian irridentist aggression after 1989. (Saideman and Ayres 2008)

Canadian nationalism, like its American counterpart, is a missionary nationalism whose elite espouses a cosmopolitan liberal ideology. The Canadian variant may stress cultural radicalism more and espouse a (slightly) restrained enthusiasm for globalisation, but the two remain similar. Hence the lament of an American cultural nationalist like Samuel Huntington, who bemoans the global cosmopolitanism of the American intellectual elite. The flipside of Huntington's

cultural nationalism is a realist desire to limit American liberal imperialism overseas, which Huntington views as an ill-fated missionary project doomed to falter on the rocks of others' nationalism. (Huntington 2004)

Missionary nationalisms tend to be intolerant of particularism because they see themselves as universal ethical projects. Canada's missionary nationalism, based on the lens of futurist multiculturalism, has been forced to confront the particularism of Quebec nationalism. Though Quebec nationalism has exchanged its Catholic nationalist lenses for those of a left-wing secular nationalism, it has never embraced the kind of liberal cosmopolitanism espoused by anglophone Canadian nationalists. Canadian nationalists denounce Quebec for standing in the way of the multiculturalist-futurist vision, for being insufficiently tolerant, open and forward-looking. For example, the events surrounding the banning of an Ottawa soccer team (one of whose players wore a hijab) from participating in a Quebec tournament in 2007 grabbed national headlines. (CBC 2007) The event was deployed by Canadian nationalists as proof of the intolerant and backward nature of Quebec nationalism, and of Quebec's failure to celebrate the liberal cosmopolitan ideology of Canadian multiculturalism.

In the background lurks the claim that Canadian identity is based on universal values while that of Quebec is nationalist. In truth, however, only the ideological lens used by Canadian nationalists is cosmopolitan. The politico-territorial referents remain Canada vs. Quebec, thus this is not a contest of cosmopolitanism vs. nationalism, but rather a set of competing nationalisms. Canadian missionary nationalism dominates in Canada while Quebec's cultural nationalism dominates in Quebec (apart from federal powers). The Iranian case can be productively compared to that of Canada. In Iran, the universal Islamist ideals of the Revolution are inclusive

- stretching well beyond the 40-50 percent Persian ethnic core to encompass almost all Iranian citizens. However, for minorities like the Kurds, who harbour particularist desires, this universalism may actually be more coercive than the Persian ethnic nationalism of the Shah.

### Dominant Ethnicity and Dominant Nationhood: Normative Considerations

The foregoing inevitably raises the issue of whether dominant ethnicity and dominant nationhood can be morally justified. Normative political theorising on problems of ethnicity and nationalism has developed considerably since the pioneering work of Michael Walzer and Will Kymlicka in the late 1980s. Those operating within the mainstream liberal culturalist (or liberal multiculturalist) school of thought have sought to endorse a 'politics of recognition' in which collective identities are politically recognised through some form of multicultural policy. Taylor and Kymlicka both see value in ethnic and national identities, which they claim enhance the self worth and 'context of choice' of individuals, thereby furthering the aims of liberalism. (Kymlicka 1995; Taylor 1992) In order to reconcile their liberal and communal commitments, many liberal culturalists define ethnic groups and nations as 'cultures' which are associational in nature and involved in a process of constant change.

Elsewhere, I have criticised the liberal culturalist position as utterly unrealistic in its view of the way ethnic and national identities function, confusing culture and identity:

We have no grounds for speaking of cultures as 'synonymous with a nation or a people.' (Kymlicka 1995: 18) Instead, what we may say is that cultural symbols *may* function as markers for ethnic and national boundaries while cultural myths *might* furnish the material for group narratives. In all cases, however, the ethnic or national *community* is the active agent, not the culture. Therefore it is all the more pressing that we synthesise liberalism with active communities, and not merely passive cultures. Cultures may offer us contexts of choice, and this may further the aims of liberalism. However, what really ought to concern us is the manner in which liberalism can accommodate communities' *use* of cultural contexts for the purposes of boundary demarcation and mytho-symbolic group narration. (Kaufmann 2000: 1092)

Liberal nationalist writers like Yael Tamir and David Miller are more realistic, but it is unclear how their civic brand of nationalism can be squared with the recognition of ethnic minority rights without diluting the content (and hence popular appeal) of a national identity. (Miller 1995: 25; Tamir 1993: 65-6, 83) Kymlicka and Taylor have attempted to reconcile liberal multiculturalism (i.e. Canadian dominant nationalism) and liberal nationalism (i.e. Quebec dominant nationalism) by differentiating between minority nations and immigrant ethnocultural communities. This sleight-of-hand maintains the multicultural edifice while creating an exception for minority nations who want no truck with multiculturalism. Of course, this exercise basically involves twisting principles to suit political realities. Why Quebec's language laws are justifiable while America's Official English movement is not remains unanswered. Presumably, weight is being given to cultural threats and past injustices, but, if so, this

has not been systematically integrated into the argument (such a provision would open up a Pandora's Box of tricky issues).

Rather than liberal multiculturalism or liberal nationalism (which have many mutually antithetical properties), I favour a model of liberal ethnicity which is compatible with both nations and ethnic groups, whether these be majorities or minorities, dominant or subaltern. Dominance is a bad word for political scientists, but, in truth, no nation or ethnic group could maintain its corporate existence without dominance over a particular territory and/or some set of institutions. Even oppressed groups like the Tibetans dominate some spheres of life in Tibet, and could take a more tolerant attitude to their members who stray from Tibetan culture. We might wish to encourage the Tibetans and all others to adopt a relativistic attitude toward their communal narrative and boundaries out of an allergy to dominance. But this pose will produce a multiculturalist *reductio an absurdum* in which all institutions and territories are forced to be multicultural. Within each component of the mosaic we compel the same multicultural fragmentation-within-fragmentation, and so on, until we reach the level of the individual. Thus the end result of proscribing any kind of ethnic or national dominance over territory or institutions is to force people to divest themselves of trans-generational identities in favour of more ephemeral, individualistic identities like lifestyle or ideology.

If we accept a measure of dominance, as I feel we must, the key question is how to exercise it. Dominance needs to be sufficient for the nation or ethnic group to maintain its collective memory and boundary symbols over generations. The key is for dominance to be exercised within strict liberal limits. Also, ethnic groups should be as inclusive as is possible while still maintaining their ethnic boundaries. Groups should adopt a confident posture, tolerant until there is incontrovertible proof that

core ethnic or national symbols (ie language, religion, phenotype) are being irredeemably eroded. Ethnic groups sometimes maintain rigid barriers to entry (as in say Northern Ireland between Protestants and Catholics, or North India between Hindus and Muslims). In other situations, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas, ethnic boundaries are more fluid, with a good deal of assimilation taking place even as ethnic boundaries remain in place. (Wimmer 2007) I claim that the latter variety of 'liberal ethnicity' allows for a better balancing of people's needs for ethno-communal continuity and individual autonomy. (Kaufmann 2000)

#### Coda: Federalism and Democracy

The foregoing discussion throws up a number of issues for democratic federalism, a major concern of this book. Much has been encapsulated by Brendan O' Leary's brilliant article on the subject. He remarks that stable and democratic federations 'must have a *Staatsvolk*, a national or ethnic people who are demographically and electorally dominant'. (O' Leary 2001: 284-5) 50 percent may be considered a minimum threshold. From the USSR to Yugoslavia, Pakistan (East and West) to the Caribbean (St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla), East Africa (Kenya-Uganda-Tanganyika) to Malaysia (Malay-Singapore), breakup or a lack of democracy has been the norm for federal experiments. The few successful, democratic, truly multi-national federations - Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and India - stand out as the only exceptions to the rule of federal decomposition. Yet even here, all can plausibly claim a dominant ethnic or dominant nation to anchor them. It seems that a confident dominant majority is necessary to make the sacrifices (perhaps financial, or political - granting

asymmetrical power to minority-dominated federal units) which sustain mutual trust in shared federal mechanisms, constitutions and formulae. (O' Leary 2001: 285-92)

The *quid pro quo* is that the regionally-dominant nations/ethnies in the minority federal units cannot press their claims for self-determination to their logical conclusion, for the ultimate consequence of this behaviour is secession, which may spur the breakup of the federation. Scots, Catalans and Quebecois, for instance, would need to temper their desire for statehood to settle for autonomy. Much also arguably depends upon the presence of 'glue' in the federation, which is in turn a function of the degree of ideological allegiance (to, for example Soviet socialism, European Unity or Canadian left-wing nationalism), shared political projects or perceived economic benefits. What if there is no majority? O' Leary usefully suggests that consociational mechanisms (such as proportional employment of ethnic groups in the civil service, increased minority autonomy or minority vetoes in sensitive areas) can reduce the anxieties of federal minorities. This may transform the federation into a confederal or even international arrangement, but, as is true of the European Union, this may be the best we can hope for in the absence of a dominant majority.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined the phenomena of dominant ethnicity and dominant nationhood. I have argued that a series of contemporary pressures - globalisation, democratisation, the second demographic transition, liberalisation - have helped to foreground dominant ethnic groups, drawing them out from behind their national screens. The question of how to address the claims of dominant ethnic groups will become an increasingly pressing issue in the twenty-first century. I have argued that it

is unrealistic and normatively unjustified to argue for the extinction of dominant ethnicity upon the altar of civic nationalism. All ethnic groups need to be dominant over some territory and/or institutions to perpetuate themselves. We are all dominant ethnics somewhere. The question is how to manage and constrain dominance so as to respect liberal norms and minority rights.

Dominant nationhood is in some ways a less clear construct than dominant ethnicity because the nation tends to be more elastic in its definition than an ethnic group. Generally speaking, dominant nations are state nations, but it is possible to conceive of a sub-state nation exercising dominance over certain policy areas in its territory, as is true in say Quebec or Catalonia. The Canadian case presents us with something of a conundrum, and many Anglo-Canadian intellectuals claim that their vision is actually postnational. This premise is rejected, and is deconstructed through the use of an optical metaphor of national identity, consisting of a politico-territorial *referent* 'out there', an ideological *lens* and a series of symbolic *resources* which may be used or downplayed. This perspective reveals that dominant nationhood lurks behind the universalist ideologies under whose banner 'missionary' nations like the USSR, the United States or Iran often march. Canada's ostensibly 'postnational' ideology of multicultural futurism is in fact merely another lens through which English Canadians peer at the same Canadian coast-to-coast referent. There is no global gaze here. Canadian elites may labour on behalf of a universal mission of multiculturalism, but their focus is on Canada. Canada is thus located at the centre of the ideology, much as Khomeini viewed Iran as an exemplar for Islam, or Stalin viewed the USSR as the cockpit of socialism. In the end, the much vaunted postnationalism remains a species of dominant nationhood whose supposed moral universality makes it all the more effective in the battle to delegitimise competing nationalisms like that of Quebec.

Finally, the presence of dominant ethnicity and nationhood should not overly concern us - most groups need to be dominant somewhere if they are to survive. Indeed, the future of federalist democracy probably hinges on the existence of secure dominant majorities willing to underwrite them.

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<sup>1</sup> Leading works in this area include Smith (1986; 1991), Gellner (1983), Anderson (1983); Hobsbawm [1990] 1993, and Connor (1994).

<sup>2</sup> The classic exposition of the 'ethnie-to-nation' argument appears in Smith, (1986). See also Hutchinson (1987). A critique of ethno-symbolism can be found in Ozkirimli (2003).

<sup>3</sup> There are actually nine historic counties of Ulster, though three remained with the Republic of Ireland after partition in 1922. These 'border' counties of Monaghan, Donegal and Cavan all have significant Protestant minorities and Orange traditions.

<sup>4</sup> There is a narrative of Ulster nationalism and independence, but this has never garnered more than fringe support. (Patterson and Kaufmann 2007)