Eric Kaufmann's and Oded Haklai's article provides a well informed and ambitious overview of how the relation between state power and ethnicity has changed over the past two hundred years in the world—no small task indeed. While necessarily lacking analytical depth—no causal mechanisms creating the sweeping changes in ethnic power structures are discussed—, the article succeeds in providing an overview of major trends and patterns and illustrates these with appropriate examples from all Continents.

All along the way, the authors seem to make three bold claims: a) the global history of ethnic relations is characterized by a shift from pre-modern ethnic minority rule to modern ethnic majority rule; b) ethnic majority rule in the modern age is to be distinguished from rule by nationalists, because broad, inclusive nationalist ideologies conceal the reality of a narrower ethnic majority or minority dominance; c) all of the above has been hidden from our view because the literature has been compartmentalized between the study of ethnic minorities on the one hand and the rise of majority nationalism on the other hand, thus loosing from sight the emergence of dominant ethnic majority rule (point a above); the literature on nationalism has also failed to realize that nationalism often conceals narrower ethnic dominance (point b above).

Of all these statement, the first one about the shift from ethic minority to ethnic majority rule is certainly the one most interesting for a non-specialized social science readership. While there is no doubt about the fact that in today's world ethnic minority rule (or ethnocracies for short) are rare and faced with serious legitimacy problems, I am nor sure whether the starting point of the grand historical trajectory is adequately described. Were pre-modern polities indeed characterized by ethnic minority rule? The authors themselves seem to be somewhat ambiguous about this (e.g. "bracketing" the question whether dynastic rule meant ethnic minority rule in one paragraph) but then end up re-assuring themselves and the reader that "the basic principle remains … : dominant minorities were the rule in the pre-modern world, and most of these were ethnically conscious". How can the authors make this claim without having undertaken a systematic study of the question at hand? Were the Ottomans of the classical age, whose ruling elite was recruited as personal slaves of the Sultan mostly from Rumelian (i.e. Christian) backgrounds, a "Turkish" minority"? Hardly so, if we believe the prime social historian of the classical empire, Inalcic (Inalcik 1973). Were the Swiss, Italian, and Dutch city states of the pre-modern period ruled by "ethnically conscious" aristocratic elites? It would certainly be a stretch to subsume the city patriciats of Berne, Amsterdam, and Florence under the heading of "ethnic minority rule" (cf. Padgett and Ansell 1993). Was Shaka's state in early nineteenth century Zulu land, the Aztek's confederacy at the time of Spanish conquest, the Toucouleur empire in the Western Sahara, the Durani empire in 19th century Afghanistan, the Ethiopian kingdom or Buganda, the Khanats before Russian conquest all based on "ethnic minority rule"? Difficult to know without a systematic empirical investigation. The authors, however, wisely resist from attempting to give an overview over the myriads of "pre-modern" polities and their ethno-political configurations in the space of a single article and offer a couple of European examples instead. Their claim that ethnocracy represented a pre-modern "rule" remains correspondingly weak. The readers are left wondering why they should not go with Kedourie's (1960), Ernest Gellner's (1983), Ralph Grillo's (1998), or Craig Calhoun's

(1997) assertion that ethnicity was *not* systematically and necessarily politicized in pre-modern polities (see also Wimmer 2002), all the while acknowledging that a gifted researcher can of course find examples of such pre-modern politicization if so motivated (see Smith 1986).

In short, the paper does not show that there was a shift from ethnic minority rule to ethnic majority rule, but merely that there is a shift to ethnic majority rule which delegitimizes ethnic minority rule *where it existed*—an important enough phenomenon, to be sure, on which many authors have reflected previously, as we will see in a moment. But let me first address the second claim, according to which we ought to distinguish systematically between ethnic dominance and nationalist dominance. What the authors seem to argue, if I understand them correctly, is that the modern age is not so much one of nationalism (i.e. state rule in the name of a inclusively defined citizenry), but rather of ethnic dominance which is *concealed* by nationalism. Thus, they argue, European and East Asian nationalisms have originally developed on the basis of the ethnic dominance of Franks, Tuscanese aristocrats, etc. who managed to generalize their ethnic particularities by assimilating everybody else into the ethnic core and thus create a more encompassing nation. Where this has not succeeded, they maintain, we can still see the reality of ethnic dominance behind the nationalist rhetorics of Sunni Arab, Alawi, or Tutsi elites in Iraq, Syria and Burundi respectively. That statement about the universality of ethnic (rather than national) dominance is again as admirable in its boldness as it is empirically problematic.

Some nationalisms were conceived, right from the principle, as multi-ethnic rather than mono-ethnic in nature, and elite recruitment into the new state apparatus was conformingly quite diverse. It is thus difficult to uncover the hidden ethnocratic agenda behind the nationalist projects of India, Switzerland, and many of the "rainbow" nationalisms of the Carribean. These countries do, however, exclude others that are considered to be outside of the imagined community of the multi-ethnic nation. While there is thus an exclusionary aspect of all modern nation-states (as I have tried to show in Wimmer 2002, perhaps without too much success), this exclusion does not always take the form of dominant ethnicity according to the author's definition. Besides multi-ethnic (or pan-ethnic) nationalisms, many assimilatory dominant ethnicity projects have been successful in expanding the ethnic boundaries to the entire national community, as the authors themselves write. Are these cases supporting or contradicting the claim that dominant ethnicity is universal? It depends on whether or not you find it meaningful to characterize contemporary French nationalism as a hidden ethnic project of the Franks (a position to which some authors come surprisingly close, see Hutchinson 2005). In short, sometimes we need to distinguish between nationalist dominance and (sub-national) ethnic dominance, sometimes not. Modern polities are exclusionary, to be sure, but they are so along (sub-national) ethnic lines in some cases, along the lines of more encompassing national boundaries in some others.

We are thus left with the claim that the modern age of democracy, national self-determination and the principle of "home rule" make ethnocratic minority governments problematic. How original is this insight? Has a split between ethnic minority studies and

the nationalism literature made researchers blind to the realities of ethnic or national dominance in the contemporary world, as the authors argue? In my reading of the literature (which suffers from its own selectivity problems, to be sure) there is a large current of research on ethnic minorities that has ended up investigating the exclusionary practices of the dominant national (or ethnic) majority. Such is the case of the "racialization" approach in the United States (Omi and Winant 1994) and Britain (Miles 1982) or the "ethnicization" literature in Holland (Rath 1991) or Germany (Bukow 1992). The literature on nationalism, on the other hand, has extensively discussed the issue of majority dominance, from Ernest Gellner's famed treatment of the fate of "Rurithanians" at the hand of dominant administrative elites, to the debate about the exclusionary nature of modern democratic nationalism (Nodia 1992; Wimmer 2002; Mann 2005). Incidentally, political scientist working in the modernist school have long emphasized the fact that modern states are ruled in the name of a national or ethnic majority (Modelski 1972: 9-108; Bendix 1979; Geertz 1977: 249-253). Finally, a vast bibliography emerging from the "pluralist" school has drawn attention to the fact that many colonial and post-colonial regimes in the developing world have been characterized by ethnic dominance of one sort or another (Furnivall 1939; Smith 1969; Young 1976, and so forth). Finally, there is a handful of authors who try to establish a connection between these three bodies of literatures (Williams 1989; Verdery 1994; Wimmer 2002) and to show how the emergence of national majorities and ethnic minorities in both the West and the developing "rest" go hand in hand and form an integral parts of modern nation-state formation. Stating that the modern world is one of ethnic or national dominance is hardly an original claim by now.

Given this state of the field, I would like to argue that the real challenge ahead is to comparatively explain the various ethno-political configurations of exclusion that the authors outline in their empirical *tour d'horizon*. Why is it that the assimilationist pan-Arabism of King Faisal and later the Baath was not able to convince Shi'a and Kurdish speakers that they are members of the great Arab national family (Makiya 1998), while the analogous project succeeded in France? What are the conditions under which a more inclusionary, multi-ethnic nationalism develops (including the more recent "multi-cultural" versions *à la Canadienne*), under which we find pan-ethnic nationalist regimes *à l'Ivoirienne* and under which more exclusionary ethnocracies emerge and survive? If the field of nationalism studies is to move beyond the stage of general debates about "the nature of nationalism" or the universal macro-historical trends that have changed (or not changed) its significance, these bread-and-butter issues of comparative explanation and analysis of different historical trajectories need to be addressed more vigorously. Eric Kaufmann and Oded Haklai's panopticum of ethno-political configurations provides an important stimulus to further pursue such a comparative exercise.

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