

## **'National Ethnicity' and the Modern State - Eric Kaufmann**

First of all, I would like to thank the conference organisers, especially Linas Eriksonas, for staging such a theoretically coherent and well-organised conference. Sweden is a country I have visited many times during my lifetime, and holds special significance for me since my father was born in Stockholm and has relatives here. Moreover, Sweden and my country, Canada, share many things in common, notably ice hockey, the forest industry, and an identification with the Northern landscape.

The theme of this conference, Traditions of Statehood, is a fascinating one. I am especially pleased to see a focus on the interplay between ethnicity and the state. This line of enquiry has not been subject to much academic scrutiny in the English language. Instead, the focus has been on nations and nationalism. Specifically, the ethnic-civic prism has been used to interpret national identity, a useful shorthand dichotomy, but one which obscures a great deal in scholarly terms. In fact, the amorphousness of the term 'nation' has been a great source of confusion in the discipline, and I remain convinced that we are better off concentrating on states and dominant ethnic groups - whether in the modern or pre-modern periods. For example, Almut Bues' fascinating speech showed how states and ethnies have been interacting since medieval times, and suggests that the rise of the nation merely provides a new aspect to the much longer story of ethnic vs. state interaction.

Turning to my paper, I have two main claims to make: one empirical, the other normative. On the empirical side, while I strongly endorse the analytical stance provided by this conference, my paper provides a counterpoint to the more optimistic claims of those who view state traditions as an alternative to dominant ethnic narratives. My main contention here is that traditions of statehood usually do not stand outside of dominant ethnicity, but instead help to constitute it. Ethnic minorities and liberals have tried to prise apart the purely political traditions of state in a bid to carve out a more inclusive society. However, this technique has often failed to gain mass acceptance within the dominant ethnic group. Where a 'civic'-style approach has succeeded, it has done so not because of the affective power of traditions of statehood, but because of the influence of liberal or egalitarian elites, and, to a lesser extent, the cooperation of ethnic minority groups.

Second, we should conceive of traditions of statehood not as a force unto itself, but rather as a resource which nationalists can use, similar to language, geography, religion, architecture or history. These resources rarely determine the character of nationalism. Rather, social actors - whether of cosmopolitan or nationalist stripe - interpret these resources in either an inclusive or exclusive direction. To be sure, there are limits on the fungibility of particular resources. In terms of traditions of statehood, for instance, pre-modern political memories are often too closely associated with the dominant ethnics to be credible as civic templates.

I have another, more normative, argument to make as well. This involves the scope of the claims advocated by state-nationalists. Traditions of statehood can help to bind together the citizens of a multi-ethnic polity, but I would also suggest that ethnic identities - whether dominant or minority - need to be recognised and will probably retain pride of place among people's affections. Likewise, traditions of state tend to share cognitive space with supra-national identities that place a further limit on the power of state traditions. Accordingly, I tend to favour a limited state-national identity which is expressed through state institutions. Dominant ethnicity, which also draws on these traditions, is best channeled through voluntary associations and private cultural activity. [ *Finally, universal or supra-national identities should find their appropriate outlets in trans-national and supra-national organisations. ] Any attempt to expand the scope of state-nationalism beyond these limited institutional parameters is, in my view, counter-productive.*

Let us commence with the empirical question of the power of traditions of statehood. One view of the relationship between state and nation, originally identified with the pioneering work of Friedrich Meinecke (1908), Hans Kohn (1945) and Alfred Cobban (1944<>), distinguished between 'Eastern' and 'Western' nationalisms. Those of the 'eastern' variety, which we now term 'ethnic' nationalism, were held to be based on an organic view of the national community as an extended kinship group. Influenced by nineteenth century Romanticism, the emphasis was placed on the genealogical continuity of the community through historical time, as well as the bottom-up or instinctive *geist* of the nation as expressed in language and culture. This in contrast to a 'western' variety of

nationalism, conceived as Enlightenment-influenced and based on rational ties between abstract citizens and a democratic polity. The implication was that the more fully 'Enlightened' societies of western Europe had embraced the state or 'civic' version of the nation as opposed to their breast-beating eastern cousins on the wrong side of the Rhine.

The ethnic-civic distinction continues to underpin much of the core literature in the field. Anthony D. Smith (1986; 1991; 1995), Rogers Brubaker (1992), Liah Greenfeld (1992), and Michael Ignatieff (1994) have all relied heavily on this dichotomy. Brubaker's comparative work on France and Germany is a case in point. Here, he traces the difference between French and German citizenship practices to a divergent set of cultural idioms which developed in the late nineteenth century and created a path-dependent social force that continued into the late twentieth. (Brubaker 1992<>) Brubaker's neo-institutionalist premise has gained a great deal of currency.

However, more recent research has come to contest this simplified view, suggesting the need for a finer-grained typology. Oliver Zimmer, for instance, suggests that political institutions, culture, history and geography are symbolic resources rather than social facts and are amenable to both 'organic' or 'voluntaristic' utilisation. In other words, 'traditions of statehood' (i.e. a blend of political institutions and history) can be interpreted/used in either an ethnic or liberal manner - with very different consequences in each case. (Zimmer <> p9; CRIA) Others point to the very contingent relationship between liberalism, democracy and ethnic/civic nationalism. (Brown 2000; Hjern 2000 - criac<>) Christian Joppke, for example, correctly identifies a great deal of dynamism and change in citizenship practices over time, confounding simplistic notions of ethnic or

civic types. Thus Germany has recently been moving toward a more 'civic' national identity, with an attendant citizenship regime based increasingly on *jus soli*. Britain, meanwhile, which used to maintain an unusually open immigration policy and expansive citizenship boundaries, abruptly changed tack with the restrictive UK Nationality Act of 1981 - a piece of legislation which introduced 'ethnic' criteria for the first time.

(<Baucom>) France has recently taken the same steps, tightening immigration control and suspending their historic *jus soli* citizenship regime between 1993 and 1997.

(<CRIA) On the other hand, a wide range of European and Anglo-Saxon societies have seen their citizenship and immigration regimes move in a more liberal or 'civic' direction during the past 30-40 years. All of which suggests the centrality of fluidity rather than continuity. (Joppke <>: 645-6; Breton <>)

How does the above concern traditions of statehood, the theme of this conference? Well, a generous interpretation of the notion of statehood traditions assumes a Brubaker-style logic in which these traditions have historicist power independent of ethnicity. In other words, an orthodox reading of the importance of political memories equates very nearly with the civic-nationalist argument that some national idioms are political while others are more ethno-cultural. I think this conception cannot withstand empirical scrutiny. Instead, I'd like to suggest that traditions of state, like those of geography and history, are more malleable in the hands of their nationalist or liberal interlocutors. However, there are limits to this malleability and one needs to also avoid the constructionist pitfall of granting too much freedom to social actors. To illustrate, I will first consider some theoretical counterarguments to the civic nationalist reading of traditions of state, then move to a discussion of particular examples - notably the United

States, France and Switzerland - all societies with long traditions of modern statehood which might be considered paradigm cases for civic nationalism.

#### Counterarguments to an Orthodox 'Civic' reading of Statehood Traditions

A fitting starting point for a theoretical counterargument to the Brubaker thesis [*against the civic nationalist reading of the role of statehood traditions*] is the work of Anthony Smith. Smith speaks of myths and 'historical memories' as being one of the cornerstones of what it means to be a nation. However, these memories are also viewed as critical for defining the ethnic. (Smith 1991: 14, 21) What is less clear is what kind of memory is required in each case. Smith's discussion of ethnic community suggests that political memories, no less than genealogical and territorial ones, are integral to ethnic communities. Typically, therefore, ethnic groups not only possess myths of territorial origin and ancestry but also some notion of a 'golden age' when the ethnic community was united and strong. (Smith 1986: 198-99) This almost always refers to a period of putative *political unity* which may be considered a kind of 'tradition of statehood'.

The political unit in question might have been a tribal confederation, as in the Zulu, early Israelite or Irish cases. It could have been a kingdom - as in the Welsh, Swedish, Catalan, Scottish or Javanese cases. Another option is empire: Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Turks and Russians - all pay tribute to their imperial heyday. City-states can even serve as a template - as with the Italians and Greeks. (Armstrong <>) Finally, a *bona fide* state, whether modern or absolutist, can serve as well. We see this in the French (Louis XIV), English (Tudor-Elizabethan), American, Ukrainian and Estonian cases. In fact, if

we think about it, we will recognise that many ethnic groups press more than one of the aforementioned political memories into service.

The above underlines the fact that we need to question the distinction between traditions of statehood and political memories more generally. In other words, where do traditions of statehood end and 'non-state' political traditions begin? Are we really trying to tie traditions of statehood to the modern period - the orthodox 'civic' position, or are we willing to allow earlier forms of political organisation some play? As the focus of latter-day nationalists roves from city-states and tribes through empires and kingdoms to baronies, absolutist states and the modern state, political traditions evolve.

To speak of traditions of statehood *per se*, to restrict our scope to the modern state alone, is to deprive many nations of their most evocative and romantic myths and memories. In a few cases - notably France, the United States, Ukraine and the Baltic states, memories of independent modern statehood are infused with emotional depth and popular resonance. But as I mentioned earlier, it would be a great mistake to see these memories as exclusive of earlier forms. In France, for instance, competing models to Revolutionary France would include the tribal Gauls and Franks, medieval kingdoms of Charlemagne and Hugues Capet, and the absolutist state under the Sun-King, Louis XIVth. In the Ukraine and Baltic, interwar independent statehood traditions are vital, but lines are still drawn back to shadowy kingdoms or earlier political formations, which are felt to endow the dominant ethnies with greater cultural substance. <Smith <>>

This brings me to a second qualification regarding statehood traditions, namely the need to problematise the hard line between traditions of ethnicity and statehood. The two appear commingled in virtually every ethnic myth-symbol complex and are not

easily disentangled. Even in the ancient world, there was a considerable degree of territorial 'contamination' of the idea of pure genealogical descent within tribal formations and city-state kingdoms. In short, there are both genealogical and political elements *within ethnicity itself*. Territorial/political co-residents could thereby achieve assimilation into an ethnic group even as myths of ancestry remained intact. (Grosby 2003: 9)

It seems to me that pre-modern polities are too deeply implicated in ethnicity to easily serve as legitimising devices for today's multi-ethnic states. The idea of Scottish Bengalis identifying with Robert the Bruce, Arab Israelis invoking the ancient kingdom of Israel or Swedish Kurds looking to the Swedish kingdom under King Gustav Adolf seems to me only to confirm the irreducible linkage between dominant ethnicity and traditions of (particularly pre-modern) statehood. Even in the French, Swiss or American cases, where modern statehood traditions are important, so-called 'founding fathers' of the modern state are usually charter members of the dominant ethnies and strike many ethnic minorities as representative of an alien culture. (<Kymlicka>) It is no accident that patriotic societies tend to be populated by members of the dominant ethnies while traditions of statehood are often read in an 'ethnic' manner: many of the world's nations draw from the same pool of myths, symbols and memories as the dominant ethnies. We can often spot mytho-symbolic continuities between dominant ethnic groups and the modern nation-states they lay claim to - not least through the sharing of similar name (i.e. Israel, Germany, France). (Smith 1991 <>)

Let us not be too pessimistic: I am only intimating that it is easier to render an ethnic than a civic reading of pre-modern traditions of state, but this does not mean that the latter is impossible. What I would suggest, though, is that a civic reading of statehood

traditions requires a liberal effort that runs against the grain of popular understanding. In that sense, I think that such a project would have difficulty in supplanting dominant ethnicity, though it might be able to serve broadly as a source of unity for the state and as an important secondary identity for many.

One of the themes of this conference is the potential for latter-day nation-states to draw upon the purely political traditions of statehood which exist in the modern or early-modern periods. I hope to have already highlighted the powerful symbolic connections between early modern states and today's dominant ethnies, ties which circumscribe their use as models for multi-cultural nation-building. What I now wish to consider are a number of studies of concrete cases - examples of where traditions of statehood are conspicuous and illustrious and therefore most promising in their potential for realising inclusive, post-ethnic nationhood.

However, we shall see that, even in these instances, there are considerable limits inherent in the idea of traditions of statehood. Along the way, we will consider how traditions of statehood are used as a symbolic resource which can be variously interpreted in what Oliver Zimmer terms an 'organic' or 'voluntarist' manner. The cases under study will consist of, respectively, the United States, France and Switzerland.

## United States

The American example is often used as a classic case of 'civic' nationalism in which a tradition of modern statehood holds sway over popular affections and underpins an essentially non-ethnic form of nationhood. (Lipset 1996; Zelinsky 1988; Greenfeld

1992) Yet a close reading of American history suggests that American nationalism displays a blend of ethnic and statist traditions in its symbolic repertoire - elements which are often conflated. The obvious exclusion - until recently - of black slaves, Chinese railroad workers, Hispanic agricultural labourers and, to a lesser extent, native Indians and Eskimo from the historiography of the nation is a point that has been made by many. (R Smith 1997; Roediger <>) Perhaps more important, however, is the way in which the dominant ethnic group in American society, now known as 'WASP' (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) but once termed 'American', 'Native American' or 'Old American', narrated the national story. Those whose origins fell outside the circle of British, Irish and Dutch Protestantism were not considered 'typical' Americans, and have at various points fell prey to the taint of disloyalty, as with Germans during WW1 and Japanese in WWII.

In 1776, when the nation was founded, non-British groups comprised no more than 15 percent of the white population, but this rapidly increased throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries until WASPs became a minority of the white population [*and an even smaller minority (25 percent) of the nation's population.*] At no point between 1776 and the 1960s were non-WASPs considered 'typical' Americans. Even today, many actors and popular musicians adopt Anglo-Saxon surnames while only two of the forty-five American presidents have been of non-WASP origin, notably Eisenhower (1956) and Kennedy (1960).

The congruence between traditions of state and ethnicity is nearly as strong. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the predominant strain in American historiography traced the nation's greatness to the libertarian impulses of Anglo-Saxon ancestors, independent Yeoman farmers who left the yoke of Norman conquest behind in

a decadent, hierarchical Britain. (Horsman <>; Gossett <>) In the early twentieth century, the ancestors of choice became the Anglo-Protestant pioneers who won and settled the west. The nation's new immigration policies of 1917 and 1924 reflected the understanding that the immigration flow must match the existing population stock (with the proviso that nonwhites were to be excluded).

Only with the rise of liberal and egalitarian social currents in the early twentieth century did a more 'civic' and immigrant-friendly interpretation emerge. For example, in the nineteen-forties and fifties, the statue of liberty and American constitution were held up in school textbooks as models of a new America, in which 'immigrants' contributed alongside the older-stock Anglo-Saxons. Between 1925 and 1965, this new interpretation gained ground among the American elite. After 1965 it emerged triumphant as immigration policy was reformed to eliminate ethnic bias and black Americans in the South gained important civil rights. (Kaufmann <>)

Throughout the later story, statehood traditions were promoted exclusively by those we would consider 'liberals,' namely social actors cleaving to a generally modernist and anti-traditional orientation. These were either economic liberals of the right like Seward or Taft, or libertarian leftists like the Liberal Progressives, Young Intellectuals and Muckrakers. In essence, traditions of statehood like the Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Flag were malleable resources in the hands of conservative ethno-nationalists and liberal-cosmopolitans. The tug of war between these two ideological forces led to a national consensus which increasingly centred on traditions of state after WWII. This does not mean that the United States is an inherently civic nation, but rather suggests that liberals will always interpret traditions of state differently from their ethnic

adversaries. If liberal-cosmopolitans gain ground, then 'civic' interpretations of statehood traditions will emerge as the consensus. If liberal-cosmopolitans were to become totally triumphant, then those statehood traditions would be dispensed with altogether and the state-national project downgraded in favour of a cosmopolitan project like the EU.

If, on the contrary, traditions of state are an independent source of social power running counter to ethnic traditions, one might have expected a state vs. ethnic nationalist divide which cut across ideological boundaries or ran alongside them. However, few traditionalist conservatives were seduced by the appeal of a purely state nationalism. Moreover, ethnic and statist traditions seemed to be intertwined. For example, patriotic societies like the American Legion, Grand Army of the Republic and Sons & Daughters of the American Revolution were all in the forefront of immigration restriction and strongly identified with old-stock America. Evidently loyalty to the state and dominant ethnicity could not be so easily separated. Patriotic historians of the 'consensus' school who eschewed both cosmopolitan and ethno-nationalist alternatives should be seen as centrists who latched on to traditions of state to legitimise their position.

Let us not be too pessimistic, however. Traditions of statehood have countered ethnic traditions in other cases, and have often worn a conservative cloak. One thinks here of Orthodox Jewry, which long opposed the Zionist idea of establishing a Jewish state. Meanwhile, many conservative bureaucrats and intellectuals have favoured the maintenance of an empire or 'greater nationalism' as against a more compact and homogeneous ethno-nationalism in cases as diverse as Britain, Russia, Turkey, Greece and Austria. So the political memory of, or nostalgia for, statehood (even multi-ethnic statehood) can act as a conservative tradition which may oppose the designs of upstart

ethno-nationalists. In established states, the imperative for unity is often the catalyst for a top-down state-nationalist conservatism which may run counter to the ethno-national cause. (<> Cobban) Evidence for mass popular support of traditions of statehood (as against ethnicity) is, however, scarce.

In the American case, one could catch glimpses of the state-unity imperative in the official rejection of ethnic nationalism during World War II which sought to counter the Japanese claim of the U.S. as a racist society. (<Fitzgerald>) More telling was the religious conservatism of the Protestant church elite in the pre-1882 period. It joined forces with established commercial interests and southern plantation owners in defense of free immigration from China in the 1865-1882 period. Here traditionalist ideas about divine providence and non-interference held sway over dominant ethnicity. This religious nationalism is not quite a tradition of state, but state traditions were briefly prised apart from their ethnic matrix and used as a resource to bolster these religious conservatives' case. (Kaufmann <>; Gyory<>; Higham <>) Once again, however, statehood traditionalism was a preserve of the elite that failed to win the hearts and minds of the masses. Conversely, the movement to restrict Chinese immigration (and later that of southern/eastern Europe) was driven by organised labour and supported by the rural majority. (Higham <>)

Throughout this story, one has the impression that ethnic and political traditions are not easily prised apart. At the same time, however, one can see how traditions - whether of state or ethnic - are resources which are appropriated very differently by conservative or liberal social actors. An extreme example of the flexibility of a cultural resource is Beethoven's anthem *Ode to Joy*, which has been a favourite of both the Nazis

and the European Union. Even myths of genealogical ancestry can emphasise either mingling or a unitary pedigree. Thus traditions of statehood are quite open to interpretation and hardly akin to Brubaker's path-dependent cultural 'idioms'.

## France

The French case presents another instance of where a glorious tradition of modern statehood, namely the Revolution, did not prevent the recrudescence of dominant ethnicity. This first became evident during 1792-94 when the Jacobin authorities turned against foreign revolutionaries and revoked their citizenship. Meanwhile, linguistic diversity quickly came to be subordinated to the aim of linguistic centralisation and homogeneity. (Giraudon 1991: 594, 601; Brubaker <>: 45-9) In the nineteenth century, medievalist references to a Gothic architectural heritage as well as ethnic heroes like Vercingetorix and the Gauls reflected an important alternative current of Romanticism which frequently ran alongside ideas of neo-classicism and republicanism. (Smith 1991: 88-9) And while the Franks were always dearer to the hearts of counter-revolutionaries, both Gaul and Frank found their way into the pantheon of the dominant ethnies. If you visit the Palace of Versailles today, you can walk through a room whose grand paintings mark the great moments in French history. The story does not begin with the Revolution, but with Clovis, the 5<sup>th</sup> century Frankish tribal leader, followed by a portrait of Charles Martel, the so-called 'Hammer of the Franks', triumphing over the Moors at the Battle of Poitiers in 732 A.D.

The rise of Action Francaise and the anti-Dreyfus faction during the period of the Third Republic, and the strain of thinking that links Vichy and Poujadism with the Front National of today bears ample testimony to the enduring power of dominant ethnicity in French history. (Winock <>; Sternhell <>) Once again, the key is in the interpretation. Consider the issue of language. This can be a hallmark of either statehood or ethnicity. In Eastern Europe, the stress on language as opposed to political affiliation is seen as the crux of ethnic nationalism. Thus when the French insisted on linguistic homogeneity after 1793, this might have been motivated by a desire to exclude non-ethnic French and assimilate linguistic peripheries into the French ethnic homeland. Yet, given the partly acquired, voluntary nature of language - as opposed to descent - it can serve to render the nation liberal and flexible in its attitude to ethnic boundaries.

Likewise with ancestry. On the one hand, the Gauls, like the Anglo-Saxons in England, were once linked with liberalism in that they were seen to represent the disenfranchised common people as against their Frankish or Norman aristocratic overlords. Today, however, they are often interpreted as the genetic ancestors of the 'true' ethnic French or English as against the immigrant interloper. Perhaps De Gaulle put it best when he remarked to a Senegalese visitor in the 1950's that while France was happy to count Africans who spoke the language and were part of the empire as French, it was also important that the numbers arriving in France be small or else 'France would not be France.' As with language and ancestry, so it is with history and politics: the French tradition of statehood can be interpreted in either an exclusive or inclusive way. It all depends how much emphasis you place on the 'civic' moments (i.e. Declaration of the

Rights of Man and participation of foreign revolutionaries) versus the 'ethnic' ones (i.e. territorial demarcation, linguistic standardisation, expulsion of foreigners).

## Switzerland

While the American and French cases are among the best known examples of glorious-yet-inclusive traditions of statehood, one should not forget the Swiss. Here, too, one can find a powerful tradition of statehood, namely that of the Swiss Confederation, celebrated as the only bulwark against feudal monarchy in pre-modern Europe. Moreover, the multi-linguistic nature of Swiss society appears to rule out any recourse to dominant ethnicity. Nonetheless, upon closer inspection, we can find the same organic trajectory as in the American and French cases. To begin with, as Zimmer notes, foreigners were gradually sidelined from participation in Swiss patriotic institutions like the Helvetic Society during 1760-85.

Liberals still rested their conception of citizenship on the republican ideals of the Enlightenment, but, as the challenge of Italian, French and German nationalisms mounted after 1870, this changed. In combination with the new Romantic sensibility which placed the accent on primitive nature, Swiss intellectuals stressed the notion of the Swiss as *Homo Alpinus*, a mountain people shaped by the geography of the Alps. This organic discourse remained central throughout Europe's great period of instability between 1870 and 1945. (Zimmer 2003: 26-7 <>) In this way, the Alps were interpreted by some as a force for ethnogenesis: members of one mountain *ethnie* speaking different languages but of similar geographic origin. While few would go so far, most concurred with the idea

that the Alpine experience shaped a common national character. (Zimmer and Kaufmann <>)

The organic-voluntarist tension in Swiss national identity is also reflected in the division between the largely urban, Protestant cantons, and the Alpine Catholic heartland ones - notably Uri, Unterwalden and Schwyz. For it is in the Catholic heartland that the Swiss-German collective memory of resistance to the Habsburgs has greatest popular currency. These myths and legends invoke key events like the Founding of the Swiss Confederation with the Oath on the Rütli meadow in 1307, the defeat of the Habsburgs at Sempach (1315) and Morgarten (1386) and the myth of William Tell and his assassination of the Habsburg bailiff Gessler. These myths were first chronicled in the White Book of Sarnen in 1471 and their continuity shows how pre-modern traditions of state are often highly associated with a particular dominant ethnic group, in this case the Swiss-Germans. By contrast, a liberal counter-tradition which dates the Swiss nation from the founding of the modern liberal state after the Civil War of 1847-8 still suffers from a deficit of popular appeal. (Zimmer <>)

A number of other points bear mentioning. First of all, while Switzerland is linguistically diverse, the component cantons exhibit a high degree of homogeneity in terms of language and religion. This, in combination with the fact that lines of language, religion and economic progress are cross-cutting, has ensured the stability of the Swiss state. (Lijphart 1977: 75-81) Where these cleavages reinforce each other, Switzerland poses no exception to the rule of inter-ethnic conflict. Take the example of Jurassien secession. [*The 1815 Congress of Vienna had granted the entire Jura region to the German-speaking, Protestant-dominated canton of Berne. With time, the southern,*

*German-dominated regions around Biel/Bienne and Moutier developed economically.]*

After World War II, the French-speaking, Catholic and relatively deprived north [of the canton of Berne] began to agitate - a separatist movement driven by linguistic grievances. Following upon a series of referenda and terrorist activity in the sixties and seventies, a new canton of Jura was created for the French Catholic minority in the north. (Steinberg <>, *Why Switzerland*)

Swiss become citizens of the nation through their membership in a canton, which is in turn contingent on membership in a commune. In a related way, the ethnic dimension of Swiss communal and cantonal identity colours Swiss perception of their nation. Hence one identifies one's commune or canton as a microcosm of the nation. Ethnicity thereby enters into national conceptions from the bottom up. This explains the persistence of a discourse of *Überfremdung* or 'overforeignisation' which dates to 1910, during a period of increasing immigration into Switzerland. The post-1945 guestworker regime recognised this Swiss ethnic homogeneity, rooted on a communal and cantonal basis. During the 1960's, popular pressure by ethno-nationalist parties led to the introduction of the so-called Regulation on the Limitation of the Number of Aliens. This system of immigration control is based on quotas which are renewed annually in an agreement between government, employers and representatives of organised labour. More recently, a referendum designed to win approval for the regularisation of the citizenship status of long-resident, settled Italian guestworkers has failed. (Wimmer 2002; Romano 1996)

So it appears that the Swiss case reinforces our main empirical themes. Namely, that pre-modern traditions of statehood are strongly wedded to dominant ethnic myths and memories, though there is still scope for them to be interpreted in either an organic or voluntary direction depending on historical circumstance. Brubaker's notion that traditions of statehood have an innately 'republicanising' effect should thereby be laid to rest.

Now at this point you may have noticed a certain tension in the argument, since I have argued that actors can mould traditions of statehood, like other cultural traditions, to particular uses, but, on the other hand, are constrained in the degree to which they can refine these traditions from the matrix of dominant ethnicity. I am not trying to reintroduce Brubaker's historicist path-dependency argument through the back door. The key point here is that the constraints on the appropriation of symbolic resources like political memories does not stem from a cultural idiom of nationhood, but rather from a plausibility structure created by the symbolic interaction of dominant and minority ethnic groups. The myths and symbols of the dominant ethnies are heavily suffused by traditions of statehood. Meanwhile, the dominant ethnies have come to view the state as an extension of itself. Ethnic minorities, meanwhile - especially if of recent immigrant vintage - often reinforce this linkage, viewing many older traditions of statehood as inextricably connected to the dominant ethnies. This partly explains minorities' reluctance to wholeheartedly assimilate into the dominant culture. In sum, this popular understanding, created through the interaction between majority and minority, establishes a strong association between older political traditions and the dominant ethnies which is not easily

altered. On the other hand, recent political traditions are more plausibly trans-ethnic. So Scottish civic nationalists will have an easier time selling Scottish Asians the new Parliament at Holyrood than the Covenant of 1638, the Auld Kirk or the medieval Kingdom under Robert the Bruce.

I would like now to briefly consider some of the normative implications of my argument. Numerous commentators have emerged to defend the idea of a civic nation since Yael Tamir's seminal work, *Liberal Nationalism*, appeared in 1993. One of the best known is David Miller, who views the nation as a linchpin of modern trust and civic order. (Tamir 1993: 65; Miller 1993: 25) Tamir and Miller are defending quite thick versions of national identity which embrace culture and historical memories as well as the 'thinner' institutional trappings of either republican patriotism (Maurizio Viroli) or constitutional patriotism (Jurgen Habermas). (Viroli <>; Habermas <>)

In the United States, there are few defenders of ethnic nationalism, but a very strong current of civic nationalism which stresses the need for a deeply shared official history and language. Arthur Schlesinger, Nathan Glazer, John Higham, Michael Lind and Seymour Martin Lipset are among the many attached to this school. (<>) This is also the mantra shared by nationalist intellectuals in separatist regions like Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland. All take great care to stress that the new nationalism must be civic and inclusive, yet based on a strong substrate of culture and history. These authors hope that the new nationalism will supersede older attachments to ethnicity, whether dominant or minority.

This paper would suggest that these hopes are too optimistic. Traditions of statehood - which provide much of the content of 'thick' civic nationalism - are simply too deeply implicated in dominant ethnic narratives to be fully refined from them. However, all is not lost, for statehood traditions, like those of language, can be interpreted in a more voluntarist direction. So a moderate version of civic nationalism, in which traditions of state are interpreted in a liberal mode, *can* succeed as an ideology for the state. What it cannot do, however, is supersede older ethnic attachments. Dominant ethnic groups like the WASPs in the United States, Germans of Germany, or Persians of Iran will continue to interpret their traditions of state in an organic manner. They will continue to see the nation's history as an extension of their own. Ethnic minorities, meanwhile, will not generally relinquish their ethnic identities, but may adopt a dual identity which weighs both civic national and ethnic attachments.

Is this a failure of civic nationalism? I don't think so. So long as the tradition of state helps to bind different ethnic groups into one political project, it has served its function. It need not provide a substitute for ethnicity. In fact, we need to allow the ethnic identity of both the minority *and the majority* to flourish. Dominant ethnicity is only a problem if it tries to control the state. What is urgently needed is what I have elsewhere termed *national ethnicity*: an indigenous ethnicity, freely expressed within civil society, which does not lay claim to a disproportionate share of state power, wealth or prestige. In this manner, individuals can express their Estonian, Scottish or Swedish ethnicity in a way that does not affect the rights or cultural recognition of, say, Russian Estonians, Scottish Asians or Swedish Kurds. (Kaufmann 2001<>)

## Conclusion

To sum up, this conference has correctly pinpointed a key dichotomy between traditions of statehood and dominant ethnicity. This is a superior framework for analysis to the established paradigm of civic and ethnic nationalism. Where I part company with some other papergivers is in my insistence upon the limitations of statehood traditions. I view these, particularly in their pre-modern forms, as heavily intertwined with narratives of dominant ethnicity. On the other hand, I have stressed that modern traditions of state, especially if very recent - like the post-1989 institutions in the Baltic or devolved assemblies in Britain - are a resource that is amenable to ecumenical interpretation. This will not, and should not, lead to the supersession of ethnicity, but rather ought to result in a system whereby both indigenous and immigrant groups are able to freely express their identities without exercising political domination. In this context, I see a role for both national ethnicity and the state nation, each interpreting traditions of statehood to suit their own different needs.