

Rethinking Ethnicity

Majority groups and
dominant minorities

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3 Dominant ethnicity and dominant nationhood

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Introduction

The editor of this volume merits our gratitude for having directed our attention towards an issue that remained absent, for a conspicuously long time, from the menu of the otherwise omnivorous social sciences. The reasons for this unusual restraint seem to be systematically tied to the subject matter itself: As long as the modern nation-state was the untested form of political organisation, the characteristic capture of this state by a particular ethno-national group – WASPs, Germans, Sunni Arabs, *mestizos* – did not appear as such, but as a perfectly legitimate form of representing 'the people' by its elite. 'Dominance' was a term reserved for the scandalous situations where one's own group was subject to the rule of ethnic others, either in the historical past before the nation shook off the yoke of 'foreign domination', or in neighbouring states where one's co-ethnics were not recognised as the *Staatsvolk*, but constituted an oppressed ethnic minority. Conforming, the term 'ethnic' was reserved, in common parlance as much as in the social sciences, for those that were *not* seen as the legitimate owners of a national state but as political, if not demographic, minorities (Williams 1989).

'Dominant ethnicity' therefore represents, in the eyes of the established orthodoxy, an oxymoron – which should make it all the more powerful as an analytical tool, precisely because it may allow us to take off some of the blinders of what Nina Glick-Schiller and I have called, using a term coined by Herminio Martins, 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Schiller 2002) – the naturalisation of the nation-state form and its ethnic power balance by the social sciences.

In order to reap the full analytical potential of a 'dominant ethnicity' perspective, we are well advised to avoid some of the pitfalls characteristic of the ethnicity and nationalism field in general. First, we should resist the temptation of conceiving ethnicity as a given basis for group formation and instead treat it as one among many other possible lines along which social closure may proceed. WASPs, to cite an example, may exist as a category of identification and few people so categorised hesitate to make a cross in the

corresponding box when they sit in front of the census sheet – which does not make them a group in the sociological sense of the term. It may therefore be misleading to conceive of dominant ethnicity as a relationship between given groups, as many authors do, including the most outspoken critics of the ethnic power balance of liberal nation-states (Young 1990). In other words, we should beware of 'groupist thinking' (Brubaker, in press) when approaching the question of dominant ethnicity. We can avoid this pitfall by looking at mechanisms of boundary making and social closure instead of 'group relations'.

This also bears upon the notion of dominance that we may want to apply. The degree of domination varies not only with the absolute power differentials 'between groups', but also with the relative permeability of boundaries, as Theodore Wright makes clear in Chapter 2. When everybody is allowed to join a dominant group, such as an open assimilationism *à la française ou mexicaine*, we certainly have less domination than when the boundaries are defined in racial terms, such as the 'one drop of blood rule' prominent in the history of American race relations. Again, rather than looking at relations between groups, we should direct our attention to the historical process of opening and closing boundaries – to echo the classic formula coined by Fredrik Barth (1969).

A final point relates to the question of how dominant ethnicity relates to dominant nationhood. Most nations have ethnic origins and ethnic cores and thus rather approach Meinecke's ideal type of a *Kulturnation* – a point that Anthony Smith has made repeatedly and with great force and clarity, again in Chapter 1. In addition, even nations that approach the ideal type of a *Staatsnation* may not exclusively rely on civic bonds as criteria of membership, but colour this notion with an ethno-cultural semantic (Brubaker 1999) – such as the French nation which is supposed to be held together by an 'everyday plebscite of its people', as long as this plebscite is held, *hélas*, in French. Other civic nations refer to a plurality of *ethnic* origins, without melting them into a single national stream of history and identity. The Swiss are a case in point for this apparent paradox of a *Staatsnation* based on several *Kulturvölker* (Centlivres and Schnapper 1991). The nation is defined as being pluralistic, embracing French, German, Italian, and Romance speakers as well as Catholics and Protestants into what is officially termed 'a nation by will' held together, *faute de mieux*, by direct democracy, multiculturalism, federalism and the Alps. Foreigners, even those speaking German, French, or Italian, however, are excluded from this nation by will on the basis of laws tying citizenship to national origin and descentance.

If most nations are defined in ethnic terms and if even the most civic nations are 'coloured' by ethnic references, we may be well advised not to treat dominance by an ethnic group as something analytically completely distinct from dominance by a nation. Perhaps ethno-national dominance is a term which usefully can embrace both: dominant ethnicity and dominant nationhood. This is, to be clear, not a matter of mere terminology but, as

with most definitional problems, one of underlying theoretical and normative assumptions. By including dominance by a nation over non-national others, we further reduce the space for naturalising ethno-national hierarchies. In this way, even the perfectly legal and internationally sanctioned form of exclusion on the basis of national citizenship laws is moved onto our analytical screen as a phenomenon as much in need of explanation – albeit not of moral justification – as the obviously illegitimate domination of a black majority by white South Africans during apartheid.

In this chapter, I should like to elaborate on this point by showing that, independently of the formula that defines the ethno-national core – ethnic blend as with *mestizo* or melting pot ideologies, ethnic pluralism as in the case of Switzerland – the modern nation-state includes as one of its essential characteristics an element of ethno-national dominance. In the following section, I will offer some reasons for this universality of ethno-national dominance in the modern world. The third section discusses three variants: dominant ethnic minority, dominant ethnic majority and dominant nationhood. In the fourth section, each variant is exemplified with a case: Iraq, Mexico, and Switzerland. Finally, I should like to address one of the guiding questions of this volume in a more straightforward way: does the rise of global standards for minority rights and the general drift towards more pluralistic definitions of nationhood lead to a decline of dominant ethnicity and nationhood?

The rise of the modern nation-state

How can we account for the prevalence and universality of ethno-national forms of domination in the modern world? The following summarizes a macro-historical framework of explanation that I have presented in more detail elsewhere (Wimmer 2002). It radicalises what Anthony Smith (Smith 1998) and others have termed the modernist position in the field of ethnicity and nationalism studies, by showing that nationalist and ethnic politics are not just a by-product of modern state formation or of industrialisation. Rather, modernity *itself* rests on a fundament of ethnic and nationalist principles. Modern societies unfolded within the confines of the nation-state and strengthened them with every step of development. On the one hand, the modern principles of democracy, citizenship, and popular sovereignty allowed for the inclusion of large sections of the population previously confined to the status of subjects and subordinates. On the other, shadowy side, however, new forms of domination based on ethnic or national criteria developed, largely unacknowledged by the grand theories of modernity as a universalistic and egalitarian model of society. Belonging to a specific national or ethnic group determines access to the rights and services the modern state is supposed to guarantee. The main promises of modernity – political participation, equal treatment before the law and protection from the arbitrariness of state power, dignity for the weak and poor, and social

justice and security – were fully realised only for those who came to be regarded as true members of the nation.

By contrast, pre-modern empires integrated ethnic differences under the umbrella of a hierarchical, yet universalistic and genuinely non-ethnic political order, in which every group should have its properly defined place (cf. McNeill 1986; Grillo 1998). This pyramidal mosaic was broken up when societies underwent nationalisation and ethnic membership became a question of central importance in determining political loyalty and disloyalty towards the state.

This politicisation of ethnicity is the result of the overlapping and fusion of three notions of peoplehood, on which the project of political modernity is based: (1) the people as a sovereign entity, which exercises power by means of some sort of democratic procedure; (2) the people as citizens of a state holding equal rights before the law; and (3) the people as an ethnic community undifferentiated by distinctions of honour and prestige, but held together by common political destiny and shared cultural features; these three notions of peoplehood were fused into one single people writ large – replacing the Grace of God as the nadir around which political discourse draws its circles. Democracy, citizenship and national self-determination became the indivisible trinity of the world order of nation-states.

The exact relation between the three principles evidently varied according to historical circumstances and the nature of the political process. The French and the Swiss states emphasise democracy, deducing nationhood and citizenship from it. Germany, Greece, and Israel stress the principle of nationality, from which common citizenship and democratic inclusion flow. The order of the nation-state thus has its own doctrine of trinity, with innumerable variations and much sectarian fighting – nourished, as was the case with theological disputes, by vested political interests. Variation also characterises developments in the newly founded nation-states after decolonisation or after the dissolution of the communist bloc. Differential emphases on citizenship, democracy or ethnos/nation as defining elements of the state's people can be discovered, different time scales, different international environments, and domestic political dynamics.

However, a unifying motive can be discerned in the multicoloured fabrics of history and context. The fragmentation of modern society into its many national segments, held together by statehood, democracy, nationality, and citizenship, had everywhere a profound effect on the political role played by ethnicity. Since being a part of the sovereign body and a citizen became synonymous with belonging to a particular ethnic community turned into a nation, the definition of this community and its boundaries became of primary political importance. Who belongs to the people that enjoy equal rights before the law and in whose name should the state be ruled, now that kings and caliphs have to be replaced by a government 'representing' the nation?

The answer was easier to find where absolutist states preceded national ones and created large spheres of cultural, religious, and ethnic homogeneity.

Where the ethnic landscape has been more complex – usually the heritage of empires based on some sort of indirect rule and communal self-government – the politicisation of ethnicity resulted in a series of nationalist wars aiming at a realisation of the ideal nation-state where sovereignty, citizenry, and nation coincide.

Forced assimilation or the physical expulsion of those who have now become 'ethnic minorities' and are thus perceived as politically unreliable; the conquest of territories inhabited by 'one's own people'; encouraging the return migration of dispersed co-nationals living outside the national home – these are some of the techniques employed in all the waves of nation-state formation that the modern world has seen so far. What we nowadays call ethnic cleansing or ethnocide, and observe with disgust in the ever 'troublesome Balkans' or in 'tribalistic Africa', have in fact been constants of the European history of nation-building and state formation, from the expulsion of the Gypsies under Henry VIII or of Muslims and Jews under Fernando and Isabella to Ptolemy's night in France or the 'people's exchange', as it was called euphemistically, after the treaty of Lausanne between Turkey and Greece. Many of these histories have disappeared from popular consciousness – and maybe have to be forgotten, if nation-building is to be successful, as Ernest Renan (1947) suggested some hundred years ago.

Dominant ethnic majority, dominant minority, dominant nationhood

Eventually, this conflict-ridden, warlike process leads to the fully developed nation-state, as we know it from Western societies after the Second World War. It is, indeed, a more inclusive, more accountable, more equitable, and universalistic form of politics than humanity has known before – except for those who remain outside the doors of the newly constructed national home and for those who are not recognised as its legitimate owners despite occupying one of its rooms. Political modernity – democracy, constitutionalism, and citizenship – had its price, as has every form of social organisation based on strong membership rights. Inclusion into the national community of solidarity, justice, and democracy went along with exclusion and domination of those not considered to be true members of the sovereignty/citizenry/nation: those that became classified as foreigners, as guest-workers or stateless persons. Adjusting our terminology to this book's major preoccupations, we may call the constellation of power in fully nationalised modern states one of 'dominant nationhood'.

This process of nationalising the principles of social inclusion and exclusion is not self-generating or consequential to the introduction of modern forms of statehood or, as with functionalist theories (Gellner 1983), a by-product of the rise of the industrial mode of production. It depends on a successful compromise between the new state elites and the various compo-

nent parts of society: an exchange of political loyalty for political participation, equal treatment before the law, and the symbolic capital associated with the rise from *peïës* to nation. If the state's élites are unable to provide these collective goods to the whole population of the national state, we expect similar processes of social closure on a sub-national, ethnic basis. The polity will then be compartmentalised and fragmented into ethnic groups perceiving themselves as communities of shared destiny and political solidarity. Politicised ethnic groups and nations are thus both children of modernisation. They owe their contemporary appearance and political salience to the hegemony of the nation-state as the sole model of political organisation.

Perhaps I should outline the mechanisms of politicising ethnic differences in more detail here, since it most directly relates to the topic of this book. In weak states lacking the resources for a non-discriminatory treatment of their citizens and lacking an established network of civil society, ethnic ties become the channels through which the new élites distribute the collective goods of the modern state in order to legitimise their rule, now that the state should be responsive to the needs of 'the people'. In this way, the diffusion and rooting of a national identity are undermined, and ethnic groups are transformed into communities of shared political interest.

Two variants of this process of political closure along ethnic lines may be distinguished: dominant majority and dominant minority. In the first case, the élite of the most powerful ethnic group takes over the new state apparatus after the end of empire, while the subordinated groups continue to remain on the margin of political life and public culture. As part of the nation-building project, the state aims at assimilating these 'minorities' through education and language training and thus realising the vision of a unified citizenry, nation and sovereignty. Resulting from these endeavours, an educational élite of previously marginalised groups may emerge. It enters into direct competition with the established bureaucrats, who close ranks, particularly during hard times (Smith 1979), and make 'passing' into the dominant group through cultural assimilation difficult (Rothschild 1981: Chapter 5). The minority élite then begins to protest against discrimination and to question the ethno-national basis of the nation-state or demand one of its own. The Indian movements in Latin America, the ethno-nationalist awakenings of the Oromo in Ethiopia, minorities in the Soviet Republics, and Christian minority groups in southern Sudan are good examples of this process.

In the second variant, relations of power and demography are less clear. The new state apparatus becomes quickly compartmentalised on ethnic grounds and a fight erupts over which group will dominate the political centre. Depending on the previous position of the different ethnic élites in the colonial edifice and depending on shifting power balances and institutional arrangements, the outcome of this fight may be different, with varying degrees of inequality and domination between ethnic groups.

Perhaps the least dominant are so-called consociational democracies (Lijphart 1977), where a grand coalition of elites of differing ethnic origins negotiates a stable institutional compromise. Thanks to ethnic quotas in government and bureaucracy, reciprocal veto rights and regional autonomy, the power distribution may be balanced enough to classify this as a case of non-dominance, which may imply low intensity of conflicts and allow for mass political participation through elections without the destabilising effects that democracy often has in ethnicised politics. However, in resource-poor states with a weak tradition of civil society politics, these regimes proved to be rather unstable. If the power balance between ethnic elites changes, the capacity to renegotiate power sharing formulas is lacking (van den Berghe 1991: 191ff.). Unfortunately, as Simpson has remarked, 'the list of cases where consociational arrangements applied reads like an obituary page' (1994: 468).

In the dominant minority variant, representatives of different ethnic clientèles negotiate the price for political support behind the scenes, in the lap of a monopoly party or a bureaucracy where representatives of one region (such as 'those from the North') or ethnic category control key ministries and positions. Here, the ethnic clientelism does not manifest itself in public politics and the dominance of the state apparatus by persons sharing the same ethnic-regional background is not a matter of public contest. Donald Rothchild described this type of political system as the 'hegemonial exchange model' (1986). The one-party systems in Kenya under Kenyatta, the Ivory Coast under Houphouët-Boigny (Rothchild 1986) or Indonesia under Suharto (Brown 1994) are examples.

While such arrangements may prove to be stable and durable, they may break apart when the resources to satisfy the various ethnic clientèles run dry or when the political system is forced to 'democratise' and the emerging party system organises along ethnic lines. Politics then often centres on the question of which ethnic party – or coalition of parties – gains control and thus may exclude all others from the spoils of state power.

Finally, we find the most extreme case of dominance in authoritarian regimes where the elite is recruited from one single ethnic group, or most often even from one of its subgroups. Given the obvious break with the modern ideal of 'representing the nation', the ruler can only rely upon a narrow circle of relatives or ethnic acquaintances, which even further reduces his legitimacy and enhances the need for relying on 'his own' people. And so, often in a round dance of coups and palace revolts, ever smaller and more closely knit groups assert themselves (see Horowitz 1985: 486–501). Syria can serve as an example of this type of political regime. Its state apparatus is dominated by the Numailiyya clan of the Matawira tribe, a small subgroup of Alawites (Batatu 1981). Until the American intervention of 2003, similar conditions prevailed in neighbouring Iraq, where the al-Begat section of the Al-bu Nasir tribe of the Sunni town of Takrit held all the threads of power in its hands (Batatu

1978: 1088ff.). And finally in Burundi, the Hima, a Tutsi subgroup, gained power following a number of coups and purges. The example of Burundi shows that minority regimes are often only able to hold on to power thanks to ruthless deployment of military and police forces. Yet repression increases the very tensions which it is intended to suppress (Kuper 1977).

The three major variants of ethno-national dominance certainly differ with regard to the constellations of conflict they entail and therefore also with regard to political stability. Dominant nationhood represents the most legitimate mode since here citizenry, nation, and sovereignty fully coincide and thus correspond to the modern ideals of statehood. Excluding non-national citizens on the basis of legal discrimination is perfectly sanctioned by international and constitutional law and wholly naturalised in the eyes of the world's population. Given this legal and moral legitimacy, dominant nationhood represents perhaps the politically most stable form of ethno-national dominance. Conflicts are expected to arise from major challenges to dominant nationhood. An enlargement of the circles of citizenship to include persons perceived as non-national others may be answered, by those most dependent on a privileged relationship to the state, by xenophobic or racist movements (Wimmer 2002: chapter 7). The modern anti-Semitic movement answering the 'emancipation' of Jews or the rise of scientific racism after the abolition of slavery are the most prominent examples. Xenophobia targeting refugees (in Europe) or illegal immigrants (in the USA) represents more recent attempts at reinforcing or re-establishing a hierarchical, dominant relationship between nationals and others.

In countries with a dominant ethnic majority, sovereignty and citizenry are not fully congruent with the nation, since the nation comprises a majority thought of as the true *Staatsvolk* and the ethnic minorities who contributed less to the heroic history of national liberation. Sometimes, as in the more exclusivist variants of dominant majoritarianism, they are barely tolerated and openly treated as guests rather than full residents of the national home. Sometimes, as with contemporary multiculturalist states, they are welcomed as permanent members of a colourful family. The distinction between more inclusivist and more exclusivist variants of dominant ethnicity already delineates a field of political tension, where the nature of the ethnic power balance is at stake. It is therefore a more contested, conflictive mode of ethno-national dominance than that previously discussed.

This is even more the case in dominant ethnic minority situations where the state apparatus is controlled by a group that is obviously not representative of the majority of the national population such that one of the fundamental principles of modern nation-states is violated: that of the ethnic-national representativity of government stipulating that 'likes' should rule over 'likes'. This lack of legitimacy produces a constant pressure on the

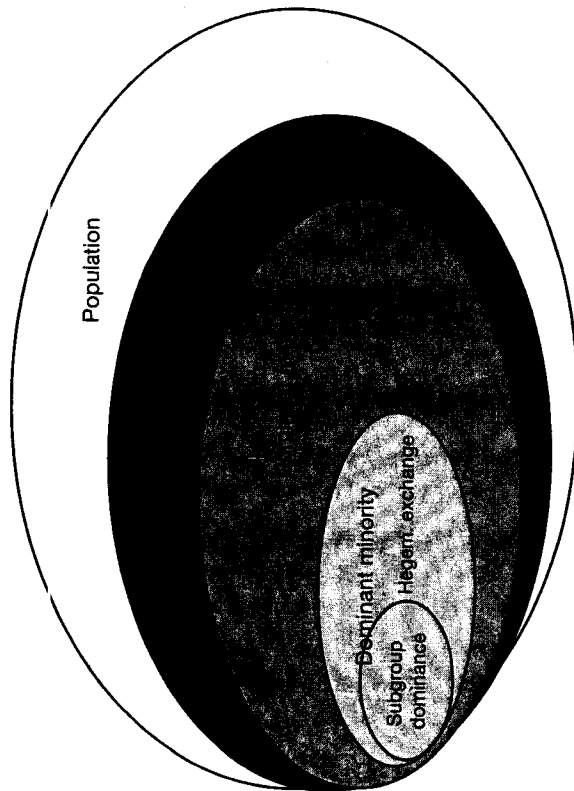


Figure 3.1 Three types of ethno-national dominance

ethnocratic regime and makes democracy a very risky and unlikely institutional companion to minority dominance.

In summary, we can grade the three types according to the degree of exclusiveness and to the degree of conflictivity and instability that they entail. Figure 3.1 illustrates this in a perhaps overly simple and straightforward way. The usual caveat of typologies applies: individual countries do not fit nicely into the three circles. A specific case may show traces characteristic of different types: a dominant minority, say South Africa's whites during apartheid, may be exclusivist towards non-national aliens as much as towards its own black majority. A sub-group (and hence: minority) of an ethnic majority may dominate the state apparatus while citizenship and immigration laws exclude large sections of the resident population. In the following section, I should like to save the reader from these complexities and present three rather more unequivocal examples.

Three examples

Mexico may serve as an example of a state with a politically dominant ethnic group transformed into a nation. Shiite Arabs and Sunni Kurds long contested the hegemony of Sunni Arabs in Iraq in vain – an example of a

dominant ethnic minority. Switzerland illustrates dominant nationhood especially well, because here national closure entailed the integration of various ethnic constituencies without establishing a relationship of dominance between them.

Colonial Mexico was governed by other principles than those of the modern nation-state and ethnic distinctions conformingly played a different role from the one they played after the country became independent. They did not provide the main principles for defining membership in legal, political, and cultural terms, which were, instead, couched in the universalist language of religion that legitimised imperial rule – the integration of the Americas into the Christian (that is: Catholic) world and the eradicating of native customs contradicting 'natural law'. Universalist inclusion was combined with a hierarchical distinction between different status groups according to their 'purity of blood'. This so-called caste system differentiated the rights and obligations of the subjects towards crown and church. It implied unequal rights, indirect rule, legal segregation and paternalist protection with regard to these different status groups, including the Indian population.

The leaders of the Mexican independence movement destroyed the transnational structures of Catholic Church and Spanish empire, and abolished, in the name of the equality of citizens, the system of indirect rule and all the legal provisions that had kept the different groups apart. As a consequence, those groups that remained outside the newly defined nation of Creoles and (socially) white *mestizos* who enjoyed a privileged access to state power were rapidly subordinated, marginalised, and impoverished – they were now seen as remnants of another 'people', inferior in civilisational, and later also racial, terms compared to the newly born nation of Mexicans.

The politics of land reform and clientelist integration of post-revolutionary Mexico laid the basis for a more inclusive concept of nationhood encompassing the majority of the population. *Criollo* elitism was replaced with *mestizo* populism as the cornerstone of state ideology. However, the Indian population again remained excluded from this enlarged realm of the nation. They now became regarded as an 'ethnic minority' left over by the history of nation-building. They were to be absorbed into the melting pot of the *mestizo* nation by a benevolent politics of assimilation.

This classificatory divide between national majority and ethnic minority has become more and more politicised since it has been taken up by social movements led by a newly formed Indian intelligentsia. Its members started to challenge the dominant order according to which the Mexican state, its citizenry and the *mestizo* nation are seen as congruent, and to counter it with their vision of a multinational, pluricultural Mexico. The nationalism and social closure of the majority were finally contested and at the same time mirrored by the mini-nationalism of the excluded.

Iraq under the Ottomans shows certain structural similarities to pre-modern Mexico under the Bourbons. Under Ottoman rule, the

universalistic, explicitly non-ethnic doctrine of religious integration into the *umma* was combined with a hierarchical system of ranks defining the rights, privileges and duties of the subjects, the amounts of taxes to be paid or to be received, the degree of political influence they would have, and the economic activities open to them. But contrary to the Spanish imperial model, these estates were not framed in racial, but religious and military terms. The administration governed its domains through indirect rule, dealing with the notables of the various religious groups, at the end of Ottoman rule the well-known *millet*s, but also of guilds, villages, and tribes or tribal confederations.

The introduction of nation-states, as was the case with Mexico, led to the politicisation of the dividing lines that had separated the mosaic pieces of imperial society, because the new national elites had to choose one of them as being the 'people' in whose name they would now rule. *Millet*s were turned into ethno-national groups (Maronites, Shiites, Sunnis, Druze, Armenian orthodox, Greek orthodox, and so on), and the leaders of semi-independent tribal confederacies or emirates tried to forge nations out of their former subjects and allies.

In post-independence Iraq, the new elites narrowed their concept of the nation to those sharing their own background, i.e. to the Sunni Arab population. Accordingly, political closure quickly proceeded along ethno-religious lines. Exclusion from access to the increasingly Arabised state gave rise to a strong and militant Kurdish nationalist movement, which at various points in post-war history was able to secure control over large parts of the Northern territories. The Iraqi state was neither willing nor able to respond to the rise of Kurdish nationalism. A politics of accommodation and consociational power sharing, redefining the national character of the state by including the Kurds as one of the state-embodying groups or integration through equal rights and political inclusion, might eventually have made the nationalist outlook attractive enough in order to motivate Kurdish speakers to join the Arab nation in greater numbers than they had over the previous decades – as with other processes of nation-building through ethnic amalgamation. Instead, the nationalist movement was received as a dangerous enemy of ethnic others residing within the newly constructed national home. The polity was more and more divided along ethnic lines, the ruling regime ever more exclusive with regard to its social bases of recruitment, and 'minorities' more and more estranged from the regime. At the end of this process stands a systematic attack on the Kurdish population by the Iraqi army (during the so-called *Anfal* operation of 1988). The Kurdish population was no longer considered part of the citizenry of the state, but an enemy population to be held in check by means of terror and force.

The modern logic of ethno-national dominance proceeds along a different and certainly much less exclusionist path in fully nationalised states, where a strong civil society had already been established and rights of

participation and protection were accessible to all citizens independent of their ethno-national background.¹ Switzerland is our example here. I have shown elsewhere in greater detail that multi-ethnic, inclusive nation-building was made possible because early bourgeois patriotic associations, such as the Helvetic Society, the *Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft*, or the thousands of rifleman associations, had already spread across the entire territory and were firmly rooted even among the non-elite population *before* modern state-building had started. These provided the channels for political mobilisation for the new state elites, which therefore saw no reasons for appealing to *ethnic* solidarity in winning a following and legitimising their rule. The new state was also strong enough, in political and administrative terms, to guarantee equality before the law, political participation, protection from arbitrary violence, and later welfare benefits to all citizens irrespective of their ethnic background. In this way, a strong patriotic sentiment, later transformed into the civic nationalism of being a 'nation by will', could develop and overarch, if not entirely replace, older forms of political loyalty centred on the province and the commune.

However, this process of inclusion along national lines again had a shadow side. It excluded those who were not considered to be members of the multi-ethnic nation: travelling people and Jews until the 1870s and, up to the present day, immigrant workers and their families. The main mechanism that interlocks inclusion within and exclusion against the outside is, somewhat surprisingly, the establishment of the welfare state: the integration of the working classes into the national political framework, achieved through welfare state incorporation and power sharing, was paralleled by the deterioration of the status of immigrants and foreigners.

For the first sixty years after the foundation of the modern Swiss state in 1848, immigrants enjoyed almost the same rights and privileges – except voting rights – as citizens, and naturalisation was seen as a device fostering cultural and linguistic assimilation. With every step of the integration of the labour classes into the nationalist compromise, the distinction between foreigners and nationals became more and more important. The rights to sojourn and settlement, to free choice of profession and place of residence, to a family life, and to free speech were gradually taken away from foreigners and reserved for full citizens. Tellingly enough, access to citizenship was now made dependent on *previous* linguistic and cultural assimilation and usually not granted before at least a decade of permanent residence in the country.

The history of Switzerland shows that political modernisation may lead to ethno-national dominance even when the nation is conceived in almost purely political, plural, and multi-ethnic terms. One of the most republican, least ethnic, most democratic, least authoritarian state-building experiences of the Western world has given rise to a distinctively hierarchical and segregated relationship between different parts of the country's population, between nationals and foreigners.

Beyond ethno-national dominance? A few caveats

How deeply rooted is the relation between the modern nation-state and ethno-national dominance in the three forms that I have described above? And in which direction is it currently evolving, given actual trends of globalisation that put, in the eyes of most observers, a question mark against national sovereignty? A look at the historical origin of this relationship may help to determine its future. As Michael Mann has shown (1993: Chapter 4), the link between democracy and citizenship, on the one hand, and national self-determination, on the other, was greatly reinforced in the course of the Napoleonic wars. The allies of the cause of freedom had turned out to be oppressive conquerors. In much of central Europe and beyond, this constellation produced an enduring marriage between nationalist and democratic principles.

This marriage was also concluded, one could add, where Napoleon has never appeared, from South America at the beginning of the nineteenth century to India over a century later to Lithuania and Uzbekistan after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In all these different instances, national movements and eventually nation-states grew on imperial soil. The egalitarianism of nationalist thought, replacing earlier hierarchical conceptions of society, bears a family resemblance with democratic ideals of equal participation in politics. Political practice and discourse therefore mingled, claiming freedom from 'foreign' dominance with fighting for popular sovereignty, because both were opposed to the principles of imperial rule. Overthrowing kings and lords (or Napoleons, British colonialists or communist cadres) more often than not meant opposing peoples with other ethnic backgrounds, speaking other languages, 'belonging' to other nations. Thanks to this parallel logic of opposition, democracy and nationalism became the twin principles of modern nation-states. It is safe to assume that the world would look different today if the first modern states had emerged from within a framework of tribal politics or of city-states, where such a double logic would hardly have made any sense (Wimmer 2002: Chapter 3). The link between citizenship *cum* democracy and nationhood is therefore not a historical accident – contingent upon the birth of Napoleon – but part of the structural conditions of their emergence in all the successive waves of nation-state formation that have been set in motion by the collapse of great empires.

But how thoroughgoing is this relationship, if we look beyond the historical conditions of its emergence and focus instead upon its further trajectory? Once we break away from a view that takes the national state as the naturally given entity of modern politics and thus naturalises its particularities, we see that this relationship has affected far more realms of social life and plays a much more central role than it does in the standard accounts of the social sciences. Ethno-national criteria define the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of most major subsystems in functionally differentiated

modern societies. I will briefly relate to the legal, the political, the military and the territorial systems and take the dominant nationhood type as an illustration.

From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, citizenship rights turned away from the medieval principle of *quidquid est in territorio est de territorio* and were more and more restricted to persons sharing a specific national background – whether defined in cultural or in civic terms (see Withol de Wenden 1992, for France; Franz 1992, for Prussia). Moreover, citizenship became a lifelong, inheritable status difficult to change, as France, Germany, Britain and the USA gradually included – albeit to varying degrees – elements of *ius sanguinis* in their legal definitions of citizenship (Bös 1997: 139–57), whereas, before, citizenship rights extinguished with permanent emigration.

Voting rights are in most countries restricted to national citizens and being elected to the highest government posts is usually reserved for persons born national citizens – a striking contrast to the transnational ruling elites of empires. Military service and duties are meant for national citizens only, since the *peuple en armes*, mobilised through general conscription, replaced the mercenary armies of diverse ethnic, religious, and national background. Full participation in the emerging welfare state was in most countries limited to legally employed persons, not to citizens. However, permanent, lifelong dependence on welfare is a privilege largely reserved for national citizens. Finally, the rules defining who is allowed to enter and settle on the state's territory were nationalised as well. On the one hand, citizens and non-citizens with appropriate national background were given the right to choose their domicile wherever it was on the entire national territory. And they obtained the right to leave the country and return there at any time without risking the loss of their civil rights. On the other hand, aliens were gradually deprived of the free choice of residence within a country and of the right of free entry and exit.

Nationalist principles thus deeply penetrated modern societies by granting most rights to members of the nation only and by excluding ethnic others. The marriage between ethno-national dominance and citizenship *cum* democracy may therefore be less arbitrary than most would have it. However, there are in principle no reasons why they could not divorce, institutional inertia and path dependency notwithstanding. And, indeed, there are actual signs of a decoupling. For citizens of Europe, equality before the law no longer depends on national citizenship. On the global level, we have witnessed the rise of a deterritorialised, transnational regime of citizenship rights (Soysal 1994; Kleger 1997). Supra-national institutions such as the UN, the Council of Europe or the OSCE have greatly contributed to the spread and enforcement of a pluralistic model of society as universally desirable, including ethnic and religious difference as a major dimension of diversity.

Multiculturalism is an important element of this vision of a post-hegemonic, tolerant liberal state stripped of its ethnocentric and nationalist characteristics. The principles of multiculturalism appear in the UN conventions against discrimination, in the UN debates on the development of a convention for indigenous populations, in ILO convention 107, in the Council of Europe convention regarding minority rights as well as in the recommendations of the OSCE. Development cooperation also increasingly aids to observance of 'liberal' guidelines with regard to minority issues. And this global system of both hard and soft law as well as various political pressures show their effects on all three forms of ethno-national dominance.

It has become almost impossible to legitimate an apartheid-type regime based on extreme forms of minority dominance. Although many regimes of this type still exist around the world, they do so in the shadow of media and politics. Dominant majorities also face increasing challenges and have to treat minorities according to the new rules, granting parliamentary seats for the underrepresented, accepting minority languages as official idioms, allowing schools to educate children according to minority cultural traditions. The development of 'advanced' legal instruments of minority protection in the new member states of the European Union and the remaining candidate states in Eastern Europe testifies to the power of the 'liberal' international regime (see for Romania, Ram 2000). In fully nationalised states, too, the trend goes towards easier access to citizenship at least for second generation immigrants, with Germany's spectacular swing towards a *jus solis* regime representing the most visible of these developments. In addition, the legal discrimination between aliens and nationals has been greatly reduced in most Western countries (Mahnig and Wimmer 2000).

Thus, the supranational regime of minority rights and multiculturalism seems to compel nation-states to rethink the link between state and nationhood, forcing dominant ethnic groups either to loosen their grip on the state, open their ranks to members of other groups or de-ethnicise the state altogether (Joppke 2001). I wonder, however, if these changes indeed represent an epochal trend that eventually will take us to another type of society – or rather a momentum in the swing of a pendulum that may go back in the other direction as well. I thus would like to offer my company to Anthony Smith, who stands heroically alone facing a group of augurs that predict the arrival of the post-national age. Smith argues that there will be no alternative way of providing the sense of dignity and security that nations and nation-states have so far given to ordinary peoples (Smith 1995).

My scepticism is nourished from different sources, however. A second look at the modern history of nation-state formation reveals that post-war societies, with their characteristic exclusion of immigrants and a hegemonic stance towards ethnic minorities, do not represent the appropriate starting point from which we would then observe, as, for example, Hollifield (1992) does, how the liberal logic of inclusion unfolds its dynamics and finally also

embraces immigrants and ethnic minorities. Largely forgotten in our mind is the much more tolerant, integrative, yet hierarchically structured stance that multicultural empires had towards minorities – as long as they accepted the superiority of the ruling elite and the legitimacy of their claim to power. Starting from such a basis of hegemonic tolerance, the exclusion of non-national others was, in most cases of nation-state formation, a gradual process. In addition, open borders for immigrants characterised most European and Latin American nation-states before the First World War. Immigrants enjoyed the same rights – except in the realms of politics and the military – as citizens. Open borders and equal treatment of minorities and immigrants came to an end when, from the 1870s onwards, the process of nationalising state and society gathered momentum. Rather than a linear trend, we thus have a curvilinear pattern starting from inclusive, relatively non-dominant modes of relating ethnicity and statehood, leading to a phase of closure along ethnic and national lines, accompanied by the three different forms of dominance discussed above, and finally the current phase of reopening.

Conforming to this movement of closure and reopening, the definition of peoplehood varied over time, being more 'civic', according to standard classifications, in times of opening, and more 'ethnic' in times of closing. In much of Western Europe the first half of the nineteenth century was characterised by an emphasis on the principles of citizenship. After the gradual extension of voting rights throughout the second half of the century, democracy became the most important defining criterion. The turn of the century, and even more so the outbreak of the First World War, saw the rapid nationalisation and ethnicisation of the notion of peoplehood, a process to be gradually reversed from the 1970s onwards. By the end of the millennium, most Western societies had apparently returned to older, de-ethnicised forms of defining those who belong to its people and those who don't (Joppke 2001), giving rise to the ideal of the post-hegemonic national state that was then projected to the global level by Western-dominated international institutions.

Much of the non-Western world, however, does not seem to be synchronised with this pattern, notwithstanding international pressures and post-national global discourse. The demise of the communist empires of Eastern Europe gave birth to a series of rapidly nationalising states that resembled early twentieth-century developments much more than the post-nationalist identity struggles of contemporary Western Europe. The global hegemony of the ideal of the civic, liberal state certainly tamed these developments and may be credited for having prevented a spiral of escalation into nationalist war and ethnic cleansing (van der Stoep, in press). But this has certainly not been enough to substantially modify the logic of nationalising states and ethnicising politics that dominated the course of history in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and much of Central Asia. A parallel reading of the chapters by Chetan Bhatt and by Theodore Wright (in this volume)

offers a rich illustration of this 'simultaneity of the unsimultaneous' by juxtaposing the gradual de-ethnicisation of the US elite with the renationalisation of politics in India.

If we could observe processes of national closure and reopening from a global perspective, a very complex pattern would emerge. We would not only have to take into account the interrelations between various, desynchronised developments, but also allow for feedback mechanisms between closure and development which may well be of a non-linear type. More globalisation may sometimes lead to more closure, not less, while more closure may lead to more globalisation (Wimmer 2001). Despite these complexities, the basic tension between globalisation, especially of economic relationships, and national closure would perhaps still be visible as a guiding structural principle.

It may be a fruitful, while certainly not novel, hypothesis to see this tension as characteristic of the world system from the early nineteenth century onwards, i.e. since the parallel rise of capitalism and the nation-state. The balance between these forces depends on the factors alluded to in the preceding paragraph: on the interrelation of desynchronised developments in different world regions, on causal feedbacks, etc. We do not know what temporal pattern will emerge from this formula (and, unfortunately, we have only one unit of observation). It may be an oscillation between more globally integrated and less nationally closed societies, on the one hand, and less interconnected societies closed along national lines, on the other; it may be a pattern of bifurcation where several stable equilibria are possible at the same time; or perhaps a cyclical movement at the beginning that later breaks out into a linear trend; or we may enter into a chaotic pattern as soon as we achieve a certain degree of globalisation.

Leaving the technocratic language of non-linear systems theory aside, some of the main questions we may want to ask ourselves read as follows: are current trends of denationalisation and de-ethnicisation strong enough to break out of the back and forth movement between closure and openness that we can observe over the past 150 years? Should this be the case, which political and legal institutions will replace the nation-state if we tame our ethnocentric instincts and regard the European Union as an exotic exception not suited for export to the rest of the world? And if the trend is not strong enough to produce a new, post-national political regime, will we soon approach another peak in a cyclical development that will then tip over and produce a collapse of global interconnections, perhaps parallel to a demise of US hegemony, and a leap in national closure, similar to the period after the First World War? For the time being, the social sciences seem to lack the analytical precision and the empirical sophistication necessary to read the weather from the colours of today's sunset.

Note

- 1 Albeit not, for the first decades, for women and persons without property.

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Part II

Dominant ethnicity in transition