The myth of the civic state: a critical survey of Hans Kohn's framework for understanding nationalism

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Abstract

Hans Kohn's definition of a more "liberal, civic Western" and "illiberal, ethnic Eastern" nationalism has been highly influential in providing a framework for our understanding of different types of nationalism. This article challenges the Kohn framework as idealized and argues that it did not reflect historical reality and is out of step with contemporary theories of nationalism. Its continued use also ignores the evolution from communist to civic states that has taken place in central-eastern Europe during the 1990s. The assumption that Western nation-states were always "civic" from their inception in the late eighteenth century is criticized and a different framework is proposed that sees Western states as only having become civic recently. In times of crisis (immigration, foreign wars, domestic secessionism, terrorism), the civic element of the state may continue to be overshadowed by ethnic particularist factors. The proportional composition of a country's ethnic particularism and civic universalism has always been in tension and dependent *not* on geography but on two factors: the historic stage of the evolution from ethnic to civic state and nationhood and the depth of democratic consolidation.

This article makes two arguments. Firstly, Kohn's (1944, 1982) division into 'civic Western' and 'ethnic Eastern' types is idealized and does not match up to historical or theoretical scrutiny. Pure civic or ethnic states only exist in theory. *All* civic states, whether in the West or East, are based on ethno-cultural core(s). Each nationalism and nation has elements and dimensions that include both types of nationalism elaborated by Kohn ('organic, ethnic' and 'voluntary, civic'). 'No nation, no nationalism, can be seen as purely the one or the other, even if at certain moments one or other of these elements predominate in the ensemble

of components of national identity' (Smith 2000, p. 25). This ideal typology has been criticized by other scholars (Smith 1991, Kymlicka 1996, Yack 1996, Brown 1999); yet, it continues to remain highly influential within academic, government and journalistic discourse (Ignatief 1993, Brubaker 1995, Freedland 1998). Scholars have often pointed to the US as the archetypal civic state (Kohn 1957, Lipset 1968). Green (2000, p. 84) looks to the US as an example of a state where identities are already 'cosmopolitan', 'postmodern' and 'multiple'; and Habermas (1996) as an example of a state built around 'constitutional patriotism'.

This article makes two original contributions to the scholarly literature on nationalism. Firstly, by critically engaging with earlier scholarly criticism of the Kohn framework within the broader 'civic West: ethnic East' study of nationalism. Secondly, by replacing the Kohn framework of a civic identity exported back into history to the end of the eighteenth century by an alternative framework. The Kohn (1944) idealization assumes that Western states were *always* civic from their inception. This article advances an alternative framework that discusses the history of Western states as an evolutionary process from ethnic to civic state and nationhood (Kaufmann 1999, 2000b). The broad and all-inclusive political community that has taken shape since the 1960s is how political theorists, such as Dahl (1971) and Kymlicka (1996), would define a civic state. Western civic states from the 1960s are very different from the Western ethnic states that existed from the late-eighteenth until the mid-twentieth centuries. Western civic states that pride themselves on their liberal present 'had illiberal pasts' (Aner 2000, p. 231).

This article is divided into three sections. The first section surveys Kohn's framework and then discusses its implications within six key areas. The second section argues that civic states are a myth. This myth of the civic state is discussed within the context of how ethno-cultural factors have always played a role in civic states, the role played by nationality in civic states, and the influence of historical myths in civic states. The final section outlines a different framework from Kohn's which adds to the literature on nationalism by understanding statehood and nationality as a process of change that incorporates tension between civic universalism and ethnic particularism.

Western and Eastern nationalism

Hans Kohn revisited

The tradition of depicting Western nationalism and nation-states as inherently superior to those in the East has a long tradition in Western political thought and is deep-rooted among academics, policy-makers and journalists. Kohn (1944, 1982) is perhaps best remembered for developing this dichotomy between two types of nationalism, although

other scholars have continued this tradition. The depiction of a 'liberal, civic Western' and an 'illiberal, ethnic Eastern' nationalism is still accepted by some scholars and, to an even greater extent, by policy-makers and journalists (Ignatief 1993, Freedland 1998, pp. 142, 146, 148–49).

In Kohn's view, Western nationalism had a social base in civic insti-tutions and a bourgeoisie. In contrast, in the East the absence of these institutions and social classes meant that its nationalism was more 'organic' and reliant upon intellectuals to articulate a national idea. In the East intellectuals fashion and orchestrate national consciousness through the manipulation of memories, symbols, myths and identities. In the West nations began to develop before the rise of nationalism whereas in the East this only occurred afterwards. Nation-building took place in Kohn's West within what he terms a political reality without the use of extensive myth making. The differences between the two nation-alisms were:

- in the West nationalism was a political phenomenon and was preceded by the launch of nation-building, or coincided with it;
- in the East nationalism arose later, in conflict with existing states and within the cultural domain;
- nationalism in the West did not dwell on historical myths whereas the opposite was true of nationalism in the East;
- nationalism in the West was linked to individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism whereas in the East the opposite was the case (Kohn 1944, pp. 329–30).

Kohn (1944) includes within his definition of the 'civic West' five examples: the UK, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland (Kohn 1956) and the USA. In all these countries, apart from the USA, a national state emerged before the rise of nationalism; in the USA this occurred simul-taneously. In the East nationalism took place within a 'backward socio-political development', where the frontiers of the state and nation rarely coincided. Ethnic groups demanded that boundaries be re-drawn in their favour. The use of historical myths and legends was far greater and pri-mordial ties were stressed. German nationalism, for example, rejected Western concepts of individualism, rationalism and parliamentary democracy and instead focused upon folk culture, language and ethnic-ity (Kohn 1994, pp. 162–65).

Kohn believed that the rise of nationalism in the West in the eight-eenth century took place at the same time as the growth of political, civic and individual rights. This was particularly developed in England, where nationalism had been evolving from the sixteenth century (Kohn 1940). In the states of the north Atlantic, individual rights were on the ascendancy, a middle class was established, property rights were

codified, absolutism was on the decline and government was considered to be dependent upon trust from freely consenting citizens. This nationalism was closely tied to Protestantism and based on the civic rights of England in the seventeenth century and late-eighteenth century US and French revolutions. These democratic values became part of their respective national ideas. The French revolution synthesized these democratic values with a growing allegiance to the national community. The American national idea, Kohn believed, was imbued with 'individual liberty' and 'tolerance' that, 'endowed America with a unique power of voluntary assimilation and of creating a spiritual homogeneity at a time when the European continent, with the exception of Switzerland, followed the opposite pattern' (Kohn 1982, p. 64).

When nationalism spread to Spain, Ireland, central and eastern Europe, often as a reaction against Bonaparte Napoleon, it found a weak middle class, an entrenched aristocracy and weaker civic institutions. Nationalism in these regions became dominated by cultural – in contrast to civic/political – elements. This rejection of Western civic ideals was especially pronounced in Germany where romanticism and cultural nationalism were strong, chauvinistic and hostile to the democratic, universalist ideals of the US and French revolutions. Elsewhere, in Italy and Ireland, nationalism, cultural and democratic rights merged into movements for independence. Nationalism in the East was, in Kohn's view, not tied to libertarian values but to a 'divisive nationalism' where, 'Individual liberty and constitutional guarantees were subordinated to the realization of national aspirations'. Whenever the two objectives of nationalism and democracy conflicted, 'nationalism prevailed' (Kohn 1982, p. 61).

Other scholars have built on Kohn's divisions. Ignatieff (1993) defines his civic nationalism, 'as a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of patriotic practices and values'. He contrasts this with ethnic nationalism where, 'an individual's deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen' because, 'it is the nationalist community that defines the individual; not the individual who defines the national community' (Ignatieff 1993, pp. 7–8; Kymlicka 1995; Freedland 1998, p. 142).

As a modernist, Gellner (1983) may dispute the claim of Kohn and his supporters that nations began to emerge before the onset of industrialization and the rise of nationalism in the late-eighteenth century. Nevertheless, he accepts Kohn's basic 'civic West: ethnic East' division of nationalism as correct. Gellner (1983) argues that in the West nations were unified on the basis of a high culture, 'which only needs an improved bit of political roofing' (Gellner 1983, p. 99). In the East, in contrast, there was a lack of a well defined and codified high culture and therefore ethnic factors played a more prominent role. Eastern nationalism was active on behalf of a high culture still in the making. It was in

intense rivalry with competitors, 'over a chaotic ethnographic map of many dialects, with ambiguous historical or linguo-genetic allegiances, and contagious populations which had only just begun to identify with these emergent national high cultures' (Gellner 1983, p. 100).

Six problems with the Kohn framework

The division of nationalism and states according to Kohn's framework fails to stand up to objective historical scrutiny and the civic state reflects more, 'a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking' (Yack 1996, p. 196). This section therefore discusses how the Kohn framework is problematical in six areas.

Firstly, *all* states in the West share cultural horizons, values, identities and historical myths in a common identity that is the 'nation'. Yack (1996, p. 201) believes therefore that: 'All of these concepts – civil society, the people, the nation – rest on the notion of a community set apart from and using the state as a means of self government'.

Liberal theorists have tended to assume that the 'People' are in place and thereby they tend to ignore the process of nation-building. In a discussion of the evolution of the US political community,[1] R. M. Smith (1997, p. 9) therefore points out the dilemma faced by political theorists:

> The failure of liberal democratic civic ideology to indicate why any group of human beings should think of themselves as a distinct or special people is a great political liability in this regard.

Liberalism has been traditionally realized within national communities that are committed to shared principles. Without a cultural legacy there will be no shared consent to live together, 'since there would be no reason for people to seek agreement with any one group of individuals rather than another' (Yack 1996, p. 208). This is as true of Western as it is of Eastern nations, something I survey in greater detail in the second section where I discuss the myth of the civic state.

Secondly, the Kohn framework disregards any anti-democratic, 'non-Western' nationalisms that have existed in the West, while also ignoring manifestations of democracy and civic nationalism in the East. Kohn lumps into one category all those nationalisms he disliked as 'Eastern', many of which are not geographically in the East (Symonolewicz-Symmons 1965, p. 224). For example, during the inter-war years Czechoslovakia was a democracy.

Kohn's West selectively groups together five countries while ignoring the majority of other states that geographically belong to this region. Ireland, Greece, Germany, Spain and Belgium are sometimes defined as lying in the West but are, nevertheless not included within Kohn 's five examples because they would call into question his framework. In their

study of European nation-states Krejci and Velimsky (1996) concluded that of the seventy-three ethnic groups in Europe, forty-two were *both* ethnic and political nations. Of the remainder twenty-three were purely ethnic and only eight were purely political. Those they classified as both ethnic-political in the West included the English, French, Irish, Portuguese, Scots, Spanish, Danes, Finns, Icelanders, Norwegians, Swedes, Flemings, Walloons, Dutch, Maltese, Frisians, Germans, Greeks, Italians and the Swiss (Krejci and Velimsky 1996, pp. 212–17). Four out of five countries in Kohn's West (England, France, The Netherlands and Switzerland) were consequently classified by them as *both* ethnic and political. The US was not included within this survey but should also be classified as both ethnic and civic because the former dominated over the latter until the 1960s (Foner 1998, p. 38, Kaufmann 1999, 2000b).

Thirdly, an artificial division of nationalism by geography ignores ethnic and territorial violence that has taken place in Western states. This discourse which believes that ethnic nationalism and conflict are only endemic to the East is still highly influential. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for example, only deals with ethnic and civic problems in the East. Yet, arguably there are as many ethnic conflicts in the West as there are in the East, although the OSCE does not intervene within the former. In post-communist Europe ethnic conflict has only turned into violence in three regions: Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo); Moldova (Trans-Dniester) and Russia (Chechnya). Meanwhile, the West has experienced inter-ethnic conflict in the UK (Northern Ireland), France (Corsica, Brittany), Belgium (Flanders), Canada (Quebec) and Spain (Basque). Many of these are ongoing, sometimes turning to violence, and their long-term nature suggests that they may need an outside, neutral body, such as the OSCE, to intervene. Ongoing ethnic and religious conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque region are as deep as any that can be found in post-communist Europe. But, OSCE intervention in these conflicts would challenge the very nature of the still influential discourse that ethnic and civic problems only exist in the East – not in the West.

Kohn also negatively assesses nationalism in the 'East' by reflecting on their territorial disputes with neighbours. At the same time, he ignores how the 'West' created large-scale overseas empires during this period and he does not discuss the numerous territorial disputes that the West was involved in itself during its state and nation-building projects. The Kohn view of a benign US that did not meet resistance to its territorial expansion is still influential. Freedland (1998, p. 86) argues that the US pioneers saw only 'emptiness' when they moved Westwards 'to conquer the territory and fill the void'.

The UK had ethnic and imperial problems throughout the period prior to the mid-twentieth century, both in Ireland and further afield. The wars of the revolution (1792–1802) and the Napoleonic wars (1803–1815)

immediately followed the French Revolution and led to French terri-
torial problems with most of Europe and local territorial conflicts with
Germany and Belgium (Snyder 2000, pp. 154–68).

The US invaded Canada in 1812 and the expansion of American terri-
tory westwards and southwards brought it into territorial and ethnic
conflict with Native Indians, Spaniards and Mexicans. The US Civil War
in the early 1860s produced 600,000 casualties, a huge number for the
time (in contrast, the US had only 50,000 casualties a century later in a
longer war in Vietnam when its population was proportionately far
larger). After the US-Spanish war in 1898 the US occupied the Philip-
pines, Guam, Hawaii and Puerto Rico but only reluctantly admitted the
latter two into the union in 1900 and 1917 respectively. The Philipinos
were 'uncivilised' and 'unassimable' and therefore could not be brought
into the union (R. M. Smith 1997).

Fourthly, Kohn's division of nationalism into two groups idealizes
nationalism in the 'West' as a civic phenomenon that was *always* fully
inclusive of social and ethnic groups. He ignores the exclusion of Native
Indians (and blacks) from the US civic nation throughout most of the
nineteenth century. Indeed, eleven southern states denied civil rights to
blacks until as late as the 1960s in what can only be defined as a regional
policy of apartheid.

American policies, 'worked tirelessly to obliterate all customs that did
not meet their view of civilized actions' among Native Indians (Nichols
1998, pp 28–29). The Puritans defined Indians as 'Satanic', something that
excused numerous instances of savagery against them. These English
views of Native Indians had a long tradition: England as the 'New Israel'
provided an ideology that could look to the Old Testament for guidance
when God destroyed his heathen enemies. English, Anglo-Saxon culture
and Protestant religion were on the side of 'good' in a battle with 'evil':

> The earlier English ideas about the backward and savage Irish, the
> undeserving power, and the ever-increasing negative ideas about the
> black slaves expanded gradually to include Indians. . . .
>
> Recent experiences with the Irish had prepared them to consider
> their tribal neighbors as backward and savage (Nichols 1998, pp.
> 59–60).

As North America experienced a rapid growth in colonists the number
of Native Indians rapidly declined because of 'genocide' and enslave-
ment (Nichols 1998). Intolerance grew, the Indians became subject,
'defeated' peoples, entire tribes (nations) were destroyed and others
forcibly cleansed and their lands taken away (Nichols 1998, p. 108).
English laws, language and culture were forcefully and unequally
imposed upon Native Indians. This ethnic cleansing of Indians, accom-
panied by 'fraud, intimidation, and violence' became, 'indispensable to

the triumph of manifest destiny and the American mission of spreading freedom' (Foner 1998, p. 51).

In the 1940s the US was also finally opened up to Asians. Throughout 80 per cent of American history US legislation disbarred most people in the world from becoming US citizens due to their race, nationality or gender (R. M. Smith 1997, p. 14). Race and ethnic restrictions on immigration were introduced in 1882 and a system of permanent quotas for ethnic groups in 1924 (R. M. Smith 1997, p. 118). This policy of 'ethnic defence' from the 1830s to the 1920s was followed by four decades of 'Anglo-conformity' which established Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the US (Kaufmann 2000b).

Nevertheless, scholars have traditionally defined the US after 1776 as a civic state. Kaufmann (1999, p. 443) disagrees and defines the US as one of the first Western 'ethnic' nations that was defined by contemporary writers in the early-nineteenth century as the 'English race in America' or 'Anglo-Americans' (Kaufmannn 2000b).

In 1776 the colonists in North America were 80 per cent British and 98 per cent Protestant. Most states introduced anti-Catholic statutes that grew out of the French and Indian wars of 1754–1763. After the US revolution an exclusive, ethnic Protestant consciousness evolved of a 'chosen people' based upon an identity of being white (not black or Indian), Protestant (not French or Hispanic Catholic), English in speech and Liberal (in contrast to the royalist British). Other immigrants from north western Europe and Britain were assimilated into a 'WASP' (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) identity.

Kaufmann (1999, 2000a) therefore sees the US experience as a similar evolution from ethnic to civic statehood as in the remainder of western Europe with a core ethnic group creating an ethnic state that only gradually evolved into a civic state much later. The evolution of the US from an ethnic to a civic state is not unique but part of a broader trend among Western states (Kaufmann 2000a).

The evolution of the US into a civic state from the 1960s only occurred *after* Anglo-Saxon hegemony had been established and only as a consequence of change forced upon it from within and outside (Kaufmannn 2000a, p. 1097). This growing trend in favour of civic nationalism was not embraced voluntarily in the US; a purely state nationalism failed to supplant sub-state ethnic loyalties to which citizens may often hold their primary allegiance (Kaufmann 2000a, pp. 1097, 1102–03).

Tension between civic and ethnic factors in Britain until the 1960s was subsumed within the conflict between the national English 'here' and the imperial British civic 'there' (Baucom 1999, p. 37). With the empire gone the ethnic: civic conflict came back to England. Therefore, English nationalism should not be treated as civic since the sixteenth century, as Kohn (1940) argued, but as ethnic, a nationalism only constrained by the civic nature of British and imperial identity that allowed non-White

imperial subjects to be British but never English. Threats from immigration from the former empire, for example, can lead civic states to return to their ethnic basis, as with the 1981 UK Nationality Act. This drew much of its strength from racist ideas promoted by Enoch Powell in the 1960s who himself 'draws on a long history of the reading of Englishness as primarily a racial category' (Baucom 1999, p. 15). This tension between the liberal-labour and conservative wings of British politics over regional devolution, immigration and multiculturalism continues to this day.

Canada went through a similar process of evolution from ethnic to civic nationalism as the US where the central preoccupation of state builders was to preserve cultural unity so that political and linguistic boundaries coincided (Breton 1988). Rational-legal (civic-territorial) factors came secondary to this endeavour. Unlike the US, the Canadian state inherited two, not one, ethnic cores: British and French (Kaufmann 1997). Both were initially based upon ethnic nationalism and attempted to separately construct ethno-cultural societies. In French Quebec this ethnic nationalism was more often than not defensive against British Canada's attempts at assimilating it. In Quebec and Catalonia the evolution of nationalism from ethnic to civic variants since the 1960s still demands that non-titular nationalities assimilate into the titular ethnic group (Harty 1999, pp. 672–73).

Until the 1950s in Australia, a government policy of forced assimilation forcibly took children from Aborigines and placed them in white-only schools and families. The Australian government still finds it difficult to apologise and pay compensation for these policies. Aboriginal peoples were only given the vote in 1967 after an Anglo-Saxon, British 'White' Australia policy was replaced by multiculturalism.

Fifthly, the Kohn framework ignores the fact that, as in the West, nationalism in the East can also evolve towards a civic variety over time. This was certainly the case during the 1990s throughout most of post-communist Europe where states have been constructed along civic, inclusive lines (although their democracies may, as yet, be still unconsolidated). In 1999 the US think-tank Freedom House defined all post-communist European states as 'civic', with the exception of Belarus and Yugoslavia (Aner 2000; Kuzio 2001).

Sixthly, what has been traditionally regarded as positive 'nation-building' processes in the West have been described by (Brubaker 1995, see Kuzio 2001) in a negative manner as 'nationalizing states' in the East. Both 'Western civic' and 'Eastern ethnic' states traditionally homogenized their inhabitants. Assimilation in civic states, such as France, meant the loss of one's culture and language as the price for becoming part of the French political community. Brubaker's 'nationalization' of the state on behalf of the core, titular nation in the East is little different from the assimilation, by both peaceful and violent means, of national minorities

in the West (Connor 1972). It ignores the positive role that civic national-ism has played in dismantling empires (e.g. the former USSR, Czecho-slovakia), the removal of dictators (President Slobodan Milosevich in Yugoslavia) and opposition to apartheid (the ANC in South Africa). Civic nationalism and liberal democracies are allies – not enemies – in central and eastern Europe (Aner 2000, p. 245). Both played a role in the transition from feudalism to modernity in the West; there is no reason to believe that they will – and should – not play a similar role in the East.

The myth of the civic state

Ethnic and civic states

This article argues that the Kohn (1944, 1982) framework is fundamen-tally flawed. *Both* the West and the East only became civic from the 1960s. Western or Eastern states will continue to exhibit ethno-cultural elements even when their nationalisms are civic. This article argues that because all states are composed of both civic and ethno-cultural criteria at different periods of history the proportional mix of the two will be different (Kymlicka 1995, p. 88, 115; A. D. Smith 1996, pp. 100–101; A. D. Smith 1998, pp. 126–27). 'The fate of democracy depends on which one dominates the other' (Habermas 1996, p. 286). Racist views can sometimes go together with strong support for democracy, an inclusive state and respect for fundamental civic and social rights and freedoms.[1] This may reflect the view discussed earlier when civic rights for immi-grants and minorities are only reluctantly granted, particularly to those perceived as outsiders to the ethnic nation.

In the early period of Western states its nationalism was more ethnic (exclusive) than civic (inclusive) (A. D. Smith 1989, p. 149). The stronger presence of ethnic nationalism in the early stages of state and nation-building may be true of the East as well as the West. That the East seems more 'ethnic' today may be therefore more to do with the different timing of similar processes.

Kymlicka (1996) has criticized the claim that only Eastern nationalism is both ethnic and cultural. He believes that cultural nationalism is as much at home in the West as it is in the East. The rise of English national-ism in the Tudor and Elizabethan eras, to which Kohn gives much credit for later developments, was built on cultural nationalism and propagated by intellectuals, poets and writers. This English ethnic nationalism re-equipped it for later colonial conquest (Baucom 1999, p. 25). There is nothing intrinsically anti-liberal, Kymlicka (1996) argues, if an ethnic group wishes to defend its cultural identity within a civic state.

Kymlicka also criticizes Western scholars, such as Ignatieff (1993), for wrongly assuming that civic nationalism has no cultural component because all those who are citizens of civic nations participate in a

common societal culture. Turner (1997, p. 9) believes that 'Citizenship identities and citizenship cultures are national identities and national cultures'. He continues:

> When individuals become citizens they not only enter into a set of institutions that confers upon them rights and obligations, they not only acquire an identity, they are not only socialised into civic virtues, but they also become members of a political community with a particular territory and history.

The symbios of civic and ethnic actors found within civic states determines the vitality and mobilization capacity of the demos and civil society (Miller 1995, 2000; Canovan 1996). Although particularism and universalism are hostile and competing ideologies in practice nationalism has been the midwife that has brought liberal democracy into the world and has connected the two ever since. If the nation and community are weakened or decline the demos is also affected. The solidarity that holds together a democracy is the civic nation.

Kymlicka (1996) sees no reason to regret the fact that most civic states have always been, and still are, also composed of different cultures. By denying this factor civic states seek to justify internal homogenization to the dominant culture and language: whether states should therefore be defined as civic or ethnic, in Kohn's terms, has less to do with the absence or existence of cultural criteria but if anybody, 'can be integrated into the community regardless of race or colour' (Kymlicka 1996, p. 24) and what qualifications for membership are in place (Canovan 1996, p. 19). Kymlicka (1996) therefore stresses that *both* Western and Eastern nationalism have cultural components and identity in *both* is therefore grounded in culture.

National identity

How do political communities and civic nations hold together? Few scholars would dispute that modern societies require a *fraternity* (Nisbet 1953, pp. 153–88), a 'community of values' (Parekh 1995, p. 436), a 'single psychological focus shared by all segments' (Connor 1972, p. 353), a 'nationality' (Miller 1995, p. 140), a 'high degree of communal solidarity' (Canovan 1996, pp. 28–29) and a 'We' where the nation and the people are one (Finlayson 1998, p. 113). Nevertheless, liberal democratic theory assumes a 'We' is in place and therefore ignores the difficult process of forging a 'People' for the political community. Ignoring nationality serves to create a false illusion that 'civic' states are purely civic and are devoid of ethno-cultural factors. It also makes it easier to discuss 'Western civic' states as having *always* been civic from their inception.

Despite the close inter-connection between liberal democracy and nationhood since the late-eighteenth-century political theory tends to ignore nationality. Nevertheless, nationhood is at the heart of political theory even though its particularism has an uneasy marriage with the universalism of liberalism. How a 'People' and political solidarity are created is often ignored and taken for granted even though it is nationhood that generates the 'We' and collective power. Successful polities require not only a degree of societal trust but also unity and stability, factors which 'have always been at the root of politics' (Canovan 1996, p. 22).

Advocates of individual rights usually argue that civic states by definition are indifferent to ethno-cultural questions. Advocates of cultural pluralism, on the other hand, such as Kymlicka (1996), will counter those promoting only individual rights by arguing that all civic states include ethno-cultural elements. No civic state can possibly hope to be neutral when deciding which ethnic groups' language, culture, symbols and anniversaries to promote at the state level (Beissinger 1996, p. 101). Although 17 million Americans count Spanish as their first language only one per cent of US federal documents are in non-English languages (Freedland 1998, p. 147). Liberals remain concerned that group rights and cultural pluralism inhibit the creation of a shared identity that civic states promote. They ignore the fact that this shared identity in Western civic states is not ethnically or culturally neutral but based upon that of the ethnic core (s). Kymlicka (1996) poses a double paradox. Multi-ethnic states, which represent the majority of nation-states, 'cannot survive unless the various national groups have an allegiance to the larger community they cohabit' (Kymlicka 1996, p. 13). If states ignore this question and pursue radical homogenizing (or in Brubaker's term 'nationalizing') policies this will alienate national minorities and may lead to ethnic and social unrest. Civic states have therefore to balance between forging an overarching unity in the public domain while allowing, and sometimes fostering, polyethnic rights and identities in the private sphere (Kuzio, forthcoming).

The inclusion of polyethnic rights and the recognition of the value of cultural pluralism is a relatively recent phenomenon in civic states. Without the recognition of these rights and pluralism, and a concomitant rejection of homogenization, the imagined civic community will not include large numbers of people who do not belong to the ethnic core. Kymlicka (1996) and Connor (1972) do not believe that civic states assimilated non-titulars 'voluntarily'. Few national groups voluntarily assimilated from the eighteenth century and the majority of civic states pursued homogenizing policies until the 1960s. France and the US, two of Kohn's civic West, still do not legally recognize the concept of national minorities because they believe that to do so would undermine their civic states by prioritizing collective ethnic over individual civic rights. Only

Canada and Australia adopted multicultural policies in the 1970s (while none of Kohn's five 'civic' states adopted similar policies).

Linz and Stepan (1996, pp. 35–37) define 'nationalizing' policies as attempting to homogenize multi-ethnic societies in the East. Yet, the majority of states both in the West and the East have *always* been multi-ethnic. The newly independent states of the East, if they are indeed adopting homogenizing policies, are merely mirroring the examples set by the West from the eighteenth century onwards. These homogenizing policies pursued since the late-eighteenth century in the West were only modified in some cases from the 1960s. Majority cultures in civic states have had a 'perverse incentive' to destroy the cultures of national minorities and, 'then cite that destruction as a justification for compelling assimilation' (Kymlicka 1995, p. 100).

Nation-building in the West was, as Connor (1972) commented, both 'nation creating' and 'nation destroying'. All European governments, including those in the West, 'eventually took steps which homogenized their populations' (Tilly 1975, p. 43). Nation-building in France was accompanied by the destruction of local cultures and languages in the periphery and the imposition of a hegemonic *Île de France* culture that was promoted as a beneficial *'la mission civilisatrice'*. Weber (1979) describes the slow and uneven process of national integration in France in the nineteenth century as that of a 'colonial empire shaped over the centuries'. These territories had been 'conquered, annexed and integrated' by the *Île de France.* Parisian officials sent to regions such as Brittany felt and behaved as if they were going to an overseas colony.

Gellner (1983, pp. 142–43) sees homogenization as an inevitable by-product of modernization and a functioning national economy. Nation-building welded together different peoples into a single community, 'based on the cultural heritage of the dominant ethnic core' (A. D. Smith 1991, p. 68). Thus, Western states were not neutral in their nation-building projects and these often marginalized national minorities and destroyed local identities (Moore 1997, p. 904). These factors were ignored by Kohn (1944, 1982) in his positive treatment of nationalism in the West.

Historic myths in civic states

Both civic and ethnic states have traditionally used myths and history (Andersen 1991, pp. 11–12, Schnapper 1997, pp. 214, 219). As the Council of Europe has complained, 'Virtually all political systems have used history for their own ends and have imposed both their version of historical facts and their defence of the good and bad figures of history' (Council of Europe). An objective history may be what historians should strive to write but, in reality, objective history is as much a myth as states

being wholly civic. There has often been little to distinguish myth from history as myths have been a 'poetic form of history' (A. D. Smith 1984, p. 103).

Smith (1984) points out that *all* nations since the late-eighteenth century have appealed to ancestry and history in the struggle to establish their state and nationhood. This process had engulfed the whole of western Europe by 1800 and spread only half a century *afterwards* to eastern Europe. The nation's ancestry had to be demonstrated as vital, 'both for self-esteem and security, and for external recognition' (A. D. Smith 1984, p. 101). Historical myths have been traditionally promoted as part of the inculcation of national solidarity within states. Myths were useful for a variety of policies within the state and nation-building project – proving ancient ancestry, securing exclusive title to territory and location, the transmission of spiritual values through history, promotion of heroic ages, regeneration of 'golden eras', as part of a 'special identity' and a claim to special status (A. D. Smith 1984).

The myths of modern Switzerland, one of Kohn's five civic states, are founded on the traditions and memories of an older ethnic nation and are themselves based on a German cultural core. The modern Swiss state's historical myths and ethno-cultural core are Germanic. Throughout France's period of nation-building from 1789–1914 the anthem, flag, oaths, hymns, monuments, calendars, ceremonies, heroes and martyrs, appealed to one Gaullist ancestry (A. D. Smith 1998, p. 126). The historical past played a prominent role in the inculcation of values and loyalty to the French republic through the construction of monuments, nationalist pedagogy in history teaching, museums and memorials in every commune (Johnson 1993). Just as the English and Americans sought to locate their nation in ancient history, the French claimed descent from the Trojans and Romans. The Normans were portrayed as Frankish usurpers who had taken away their rights.

Paxman (1999, p. 153) believes that, 'We must accept, first, that a sense of history runs deep in the English people'. The union of Scotland and England in 1707 subsumed English within British nationalism that moderated English nationalism. Nevertheless, English myths remained alive and well in debates over Anglo-Saxon origins, archaeology, rural England, pageants (the opening of parliament, the trooping of the colour, the last night of the Proms) and in memories of noble sacrifice against all odds in World War II, such as at Dunkirk (A. D. Smith 1984, p. 109). In nineteenth-century England the education system defined English literature as 'superior' and its culture, ideas, tastes, morals, art, history and family life subscribed to these dominant views of 'inferior' and 'superior' races not only in the colonies, but in countries closer to home, such as Ireland (Hickman 1998). England was the 'New Israel' that was set to deliver its civilization to mankind. English history was treated separately to British and the former placed greater emphasis

upon Anglo-Saxon racial origins and an 'obsessive interest' in the past (Baucom 1999, pp. 15, 20, 48).

US historical myths linked an alleged pre-Norman Anglo-Saxon love of liberty with a myth of ethnogenesis which defined the Americans as a new nation that was escaping from the tyranny of the 'Norman' monarchs who ruled Britain. The US also had an 'infatuation' with Anglo-Saxon history that was included within its myths of ethnogenesis (Kaufmannn 2000b). American exceptionalism portrayed the US nation as the 'purest' English (Lipset 1997), a myth of exceptionalism similar to that of the Afrikaner in South Africa, the Scots in Ulster and the French Canadians in Quebec. These American historical myths helped forge 'WASP' cultural boundaries within which dominant Anglo conformity was promoted in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries (Kaufmann 1999, 2000b; R. M. Smith 1997, pp. 3, 460, 468).

In a survey of American nation-building from 1776 to the present Spilman (1997) stressed the centrality of symbols, rituals and patriotic organizations that served to forge a US national identity. George Washington was given a hero-like status after 1789 in portraits, birthday celebrations, shrines, books, the constitution, commemorations of battles and independence day celebrations. Thanksgiving and Memorial Day were annually celebrated, pledges of allegiance were made and large historical pageants were held. Historical myths have therefore played as important a role in the US as they have in the other four Western states cited as 'civic' examples by Kohn.

Ethnic to civic state: an alternative framework

Kohn's division of nationalism traces its positive, inclusive qualities retrospectively back to the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. However, civic states have never been identical and unanimous in how they were constituted. The growth of the national state and its provision of civil, political, cultural and social rights was 'slow and uneven' (Mouzelis 1996, p. 226).

At the time of the American revolution only a small percentage of wealthy, white, Protestant males could vote, something American colonists and revolutionaries did not see as unusual. Indeed, after 1776 slaves continued to be imported into the USA and slavery, 'emerged from the Revolution more firmly entrenched than ever in American life' (Foner 1998, p. 28). 'Slavery rendered blacks all but invisible to those imagining the American community' (Foner 1998, p. 38). US President Thomas Jefferson himself possessed 1000 slaves and believed them to be permanently deficient in the faculties required to enjoy freedom, requiring tutelage by 'superior' races, such as Anglo-Saxons, to improve their possibility of full civic equality at an unspecified later date (R. M. Smith 1997, p. 105). Slavery existed until the 1860s in the USA and the slave trade

helped to build up the wealth of Western states. Indeed, it was only Switzerland of Kohn's five Western examples that did not profit from slavery.

Although the American national idea, as elaborated upon and idealized by Kohn (1944), was based on a mythical devotion to freedom the definition of who could experience it was initially ethnically narrow and only gradually evolved into a civic variant after the 1960s. The centennial of the US revolution in 1876 ignored blacks, new non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants, Native Americans and women as not being part of the nation. The nineteenth-century US republic had no room for Native Indian, black, Spanish or French culture. The conquering of New Mexico and the annexation of Texas was proclaimed as a triumph of Protestant Anglo-Saxon civilization against the Catholic world and lower races. New Mexico was not admitted into the union until 1912, even though it possessed the required population level, because it was held to be 'too Indian' (Foner 1998, p. 79).

By the bicentennial of the US revolution in 1976 the American nation had evolved from ethnic to civic and included those previously excluded; in other words, at different times in US history 'freedom' had different meanings. Who was to be included within the American nation is, 'a highly uneven and bitterly contested part of the story of American freedom' (Foner 1998, p. XVII). Freedom in American history has therefore been both a 'mythic ideal' and a 'living truth' (Foner 1998, p. XXI).

Dahl's definition of a civic state rests on three factors: free and fair elections, an inclusive suffrage and the right to run for office. These three basic civic rights were *not* always included within Western states. In contemporary definitions of civic states the US and Australia could therefore not be defined as 'civic' states prior to the 1960s because they excluded people on the basis of colour and race. The breakthrough in widening the American nation occurred nearly two hundred years after the USA was founded when the Civil Rights (1964), Voting Rights (1965) and Fair Housing (1968) Acts were passed.

The evolution of states from ethnic to civic statehood occurred throughout the West, and not only in the small number of states discussed in this article. This evolution was the norm, not the exception. Only from the 1960s can we define Western states as civic, while the majority of the East became civic only three decades later in the 1990s. Although democratic consolidation and civic state building is far from consolidated in the East, in contrast to the West, the East is encouraged by international organizations to continue to evolve along civic lines (something that was not the case in the West). That Western civic states are still in a process of evolution and are not perfect civic states can be seen in the numerous problems that continue to bedevil them. The US still disenfranchises nearly four million of its citizens, a policy that would no doubt be condemned by the OSCE if introduced in the East.[2]

By looking at the evolution of Western states in such a manner we

shall fulfil two tasks. Firstly, we shall no longer be able to ignore ethno-cultural factors within civic states. Secondly, we shall be able to discuss in a more frank and open manner the way in which Western states evolved from ethnic to civic state and nationhood.

Conclusion

This article has contributed to the scholarly literature on nationalism by arguing that the Kohn framework of Western states has *always* been civic from the moment of their creation is historically wrong (R. S. Smith 1997, pp. 20, 31–32, 499). Western states have evolved from ethnic to civic states only in the last four decades of the twentieth century. Without an understanding of this evolution of Western ethnic into civic states we cannot understand the nature of the civic state as containing tension between its universal liberalist and national particularist components. All civic states will retain this internal contradiction as long as national-ity remains central to creating the solidarity that pure civic states would lack by themselves (Miller 1995, 2000).

Both the US and Canadian examples discussed in this article have shown that Western states typically began as ethnic and only gradually evolved into civic states from the 1960s. Evolution from ethnic to civic nationalism is only likely to take place after the core ethnic group is self-confident within its own bounded territory to open the community to 'outsiders' from other ethnic groups. Historical evidence shows that Western states did not become civic because they so desired, but because of a multitude of domestic and international pressures (Kaufmann 2000b). Belief in civic values can go together with ethnic nationalism and racism, and states can move away from their civic bases during times of perceived crisis.

In the US this occurred during the century between the emancipation of the black slaves in the 1860s to re-enfranchising southern blacks in the 1960s. In British Canada this evolution of nationalism took place in the early twentieth century. In French Canada Francophones only became dominant within Quebec after the 1960s; a period during which French Canadian nationalism also evolved from ethnic to civic national-ism. This process was not solely confined to the US and Canada but occurred throughout the West.

The continued use of the Kohn framework is doubly wrong after a decade of post-Communism in central and eastern Europe when all but two of these states became civic. Evolution from ethnic to civic states has therefore little to do with geography and far more to do with the positive influence of international institutions, domestic democratic con-solidation and civic institution building. Western states have a long his-torical record as ethnic states, a factor which makes their evolution more similar, not different, to states in the East.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1.   A European Union-wide survey in Spring 1997 found 33 per cent of those inter-viewed describing themselves as 'quite racist' or 'very racist'. Many of these supported the basic tenets of a civic, inclusive liberal democratic state (Eurobarometer Opinion Poll).

2.   46 states and the District of Columbia have criminal disenfranchisement laws that deny the vote to all convicted adults in prison, 32 states disenfranchise felons on parole and 29 those on probation. Laws that are unique to the US exist in 14 states that perma-nently disenfranchise former offenders (for life) who have fully served their sentences. This legislation, which runs contrary to established practice in both western and eastern Europe, is racially neutral; nevertheless, due to socio-economic factors it is not surprising that it affects national minorities, blacks and Hispanics more than whites. In Florida, for example, 400,000 former offenders are permanently excluded from voting of whom half are blacks (representing nearly a third of all blacks in Florida) (Human Rights Watch).

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