Ethno-Nationalism and International Relations Textbook Literature

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Once again we have reached a critical juncture point in the political relationships of the world’s states and peoples. Analogous to the breakup of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and German Empires after World War One, the British, French and Japanese Empires after World War Two, today we face the prospect of the two remaining empires—the Soviet (Russian) and Chinese—dissolving as well. Unfortunately, the agenda from the earlier dismantlings remains incomplete (or inconclusive) in numerous regions of the world—the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, the Western and Southwest Pacific, and most of SubSaharan Africa. Taken together with other dissent or aspirational political movements in the West as represented by the likes of the United Kingdom (North Ireland, Scotland, Wales), France (Corsica, Bretons, Basques, etc.), Spain (Basques, Catalanians, etc.), next door Canada (Quebecois), and others, only reinforces the need to correctly refocus on an overlooked factor in international politics. To be effective in the description, analysis, evaluation and general understanding of international political behavior requires attention to as basic and all-powerful a factor as “political nationalism.”

However, the original (Western version) nationalism, systematically studied, emerges as a generic phenomenon with a multitude of variations that need to be perceived, understood and applied selectively in differing situations. The most popular conceptualization centers on a homogeneous group sharing a similar historical background, values, beliefs, and identity-con-
sciousness that ultimately translates into their own territorial (self determined) state. As an ideal, this “liberal version” held out hope that each nation (people) should and could attain an independent status (a nation-state) in a geography all their own. Unfortunately, though constructively nationalism unifies and facilitates a cohesive loyalty among a people, it also emphasizes and stresses the differences between the world’s various peoples. By the end of the 19th Century, a perverted form of territorial nationalism appeared to besmirch the positive overtones of the prior ideology. “Integral nationalism,” a chauvinistic and assertive version, negated tolerance and respect among national groups, including the supportive activities and shared revolutionary casuistry that held out such high hopes for nationalism. Two additional variations evolved out of this self idolization: the next door neighbor concept of “irredentism” and the regionalized or universalized concept of “pan-nationalism.” A joint feature of both versions was the legitimacy accorded expansionistic efforts beyond the original territorial state. “Irredentism” focussed on contiguous geography to one’s own territorial state because it was viewed as “unredeemed people and unredeemed land” that belonged to your own people. “Pan nationalism” made claims in behalf of joining together contiguous and widely dispersed populations sharing a common ethnicity with the mother country and people.

As state multiplication grew, despite efforts to fulfill national self-determination goals for everyone, the territorial mix of populations due to long term migrations, plus the perversion of nationalism alluded to already, brought forth another variation - “ethnonationalism.” Assertive majoritarian, dominant plurality or minority national groups reached the status of rulers over other minority nationality (ethnonational) groups who continued to seek their own separate status. The ability to avoid this situation world-wide became increasingly more difficult, if not impossible. For policy-makers, politicians and academic theoreticians, the solutions lay in either creating a multinational state (a la United States’ supposed model) or by assimilating each ethnic group into a newly honed national identity or state-nation (a la American model). In the older tradition of “liberal nationalism” various ethnic minorities sought to resurrect either a past independent status, real or imagined, or strove to achieve a distinct status somehow consistent with multiple years of identity consciousness and partially or totally unfulfilled aspirations. In the varying discussions and descriptions of the phenomenon of ethnonationalism some people have referred to it by a variety of other names—subnationalism, provincialism, minority dynamics, tribalism, parochialism or simply ethnocentrism. Though the definition and
boundaries of ethnonationalism will always be subject to dispute, its existence and prevalency remain today beyond debate.

Contrary to the overwhelming expectations in American (and Eurocentric) circles in the post-World War Two era that the 300 year old “Age of Nationalism” has been eclipsed by regional and universal “integration tendencies,” we have witnessed a continuous surge and renewal of various forms of nationalistic identity conscious activities. The trend in recent years, especially over the last several decades, to overlook or downgrade this phenomenon, is the basis for the trauma evident among today’s political analysts as they face nationalism’s current intensity and geographic prevalency. As indicated earlier, the phenomenon did not begin as of today or just yesterday—it has been present all along. Too often it has been submerged under authoritarian and/or totalitarian governmental force of arms. But it is also attributable to wishful thinking producing oversights by those purveyors of transcending movements or expectations. In minimalist terms, the paradoxical dynamics, integration and fragmentation, have been understated or underanalyzed. In maximalist terms, the revenue paradoxical dynamics has been overlooked, fragmentation missing altogether or treated lightly. This will become evident as we proceed in this essay.

One of the main concerns herein will be to identify and correct the distortions that have taken place in international political description and analysis. The individual case studies will directly or indirectly provide documentation. Of course, the effort would be remiss unless it simultaneously zeroed in on the ramifications and impact of the dynamic of ethnonationalism on international relationships, especially beyond the realm of the territorial state. It is the latter tendency that has received the least attention since the revived dynamics of nationalism has been acknowledged. My partial contribution here is to be accomplished by a perusal of international relations textbooks over the approximate course of the last 50 years. It affords an opportunity to review the literature beginning with the “interwar period,” the transition beyond the post-World War Two period down to the current academic scene. The author circumstantially reflects most of this academic tenure which facilitates examining the time frame of such a venture.

The World-War Two Era—Before and After

Books on international relations written in this era encompassed several categories all revolving around this major cataclysmic event—causes, events and ramifications in world politics.
The most common textbooks used an historical approach rather than a political science analytical focus, but were nonetheless unusual because of their preeminently "isolationist stress" reflecting American society. Pre-war textbooks served equally in the wartime classroom of the 1940's because of the distracting preoccupation with that event. Most of these books made the transition to the immediate post-war period (Simonds and Emeny, Sharp/Kirk, Carr, Schuman). Not until the late 1940's and the early and late 1950's was there a major surge in new writings and new authors (Morgenthau, Palmer/Perkins, Hill, Gyorgy/Gibbs, Lerche, Hartmann, Brookings Institution, Kalijarvi, Organski, Haas/Whiting, Mills/McLaughlin, Ball/Killough, Atwater, Butz et al, Goldwin, Lerner et al) supplemented by updated editions of earlier works like Schuman. Despite the newer group's coterminous take off point and common impact on the scholarly scene, their writings and analyses tended to reflect the pre and immediate post-war writers' orientations and methodology towards most of the international relations' subject matter. This usually meant "factor analysis" as was represented by the subject of nationalism.

Pertinent to the immediate discussion, everyone focussed heavily on the nationalism factor in world politics, stressing its ethnic and homogenous basis. A disproportionate emphasis was on the historical evolution of the concept of nationalism. Subissues that came in for considerable development entailed the motive of "self-determination," the liberal and democratic tradition from earlier times and the identification of the phenomenon with the emerging new nations and remaining colonialism in the world. Political nationalism was automatically equated with ethnonationalism as we understand it both in its causative stage and in its state-fulfilled stage. The term itself, ethnonationalism, was never employed although frequent mention was made of ethnicity or ethnocentrism or even tribalism, but invariably in a pejorative sense. Confusion was ever present over what factors either comprised or sustained nationalism—race, religion, linguistics, psycho-cultural factors or other social variables, or a combination of many of them. Most of these factors were viewed, even when discussing Third World nationalism, in extremely negative terms, even while supporting their need and desire for independence. This clearly represented a carry-over from the Western experience of the interwar period with its perversion of liberal nationalism into integral nationalism (Fascisms). Fascism had distinctively given nationalism of any sort a bad name. When exceptions were made or argued, they were because of sympathy for the former or continuing colonial-imperial areas of the world, failing in too many instances to connect them to the overall nationalism.
issue. But the cautious approach was all too apparent either because of a lack of knowledge about these newer regions or because of the ease by which nationalism had been perverted in the western experience. A final factor undercutting a favorable view towards nationalism was the appearance by the 1950’s of an anticipation of its decline and hoped for replacement by transcending transnational movements and loyalties.

Categorization of our particular concern, ethnonationalism, was also subsumed in almost all the textbooks of the 1930’s through the 1950’s under a second heading labelled “minority rights.” The interwar period and the political and territorial results of World War Two generated anew a preoccupation with these special situations involving ethnic minority groups. On other occasions the concept of minority rights was transferred and applied to the newer Third World states, only to be overwhelmed by the full blown concept of homogenous national integration as the perceived problem and solution. In the latter case, again ethnicity and nationality were automatically viewed as equivalents, guaranteeing that other minority groups disappeared from concern or were expected to give up their distinctiveness some how and at some time.

At best what can be said summarily about the literature of that time was that divisions and differences among peoples were at least recognized and appreciated for their fragmentation effects or possibilities in regional and world politics, no less for the individual old and new states. But beyond this, since the desired focus was on a newly pacified world order, equated with integration, assimilation and/or homogenization was expected of ethnic and national groups. Little or no attention was paid to those refusing or seeking to reject such formulas or impositions. Regardless of actual outcomes, many already characterized as unsuccessful, the post-World War One era did assign a high priority to efforts to deal with ethnonationalism and minority rights problems. Post-World War Two’s American orientation attempted to transcend this with transforming intergovernmentalist approaches to international political behavior though simultaneously, supporting national self-determination for Asia-Africa-Latin American colonial peoples. The possible or probable inherent contradictions were never fully appreciated.

The Decades of the 1960’s and 1970’s

The proliferation of international relations textbooks in the 1960’s and carry-over of earlier works largely accounts for the minimalist effort of the 1970’s (see bibliography). However, the
1960’s and 1970’s can be viewed largely as uniform periods because of the shared outlooks and responses. Schizoid tendencies were clearly reflected in the literature. On one side substantial authors were added to the group that saw nationalism in the previous terms of the integrative nation-state or imposed state nation. This meant either a singular national group sustaining an already existing territorial state or those seeking for the first time its implementation in the Third World arena (Rienow, Olson, Olson/Sondermann, Kothari, Padelford/Lincoln, Reynolds, Lijphart, Finlay/Hovet, Rosecrance, Clemens, Kelman, Holsti, Spanier). On the other hand, some of the above authors and an array of some new authors either dismissed or downgraded nationalism in behalf of integration tendencies as the primary intellectual and political concern (Edwards, Cox, Wolfers, Hekhuis/McClintock/Burns, Frankel, Spiro, Robertson, Sanders/Durbin, Kaplan, Rosenbaum, Quester). Integration varied between a regional version (blocs, alliances, pan-movements) to universal versions (United Nations, specialized or functional intergovernmental organizations, globalism, non aligned movements, etc.).* The usual justifications for such emphases were the negative impacts of nationalism, the accepted decline of the territorial state, or the positive results to be achieved by functional integration. John Herz’s view on “the end of the territorial state” appeared frequently in international relations reader textbooks. He was to recant his views much later (1980’s). In a limited set of circumstances some authors depicted both tendencies of nationalist fragmentation and superseding integration in the same book (Hekhuis/McClintock/Burns, Olson/Sondermann, Padelford/Lincoln, Stoessinger, Robertson, Greene), with the on balance bias favoring the integration dynamic.

In several circumstances either ethnonationalism, minority movements and rights, or simply ethnicity received considerable treatment (Kulski, Lanyi/McWilliams, Klineberg, Duchacek, Stoessinger, Spiegel, Spiegel/Waltz, Greene, Spanier, Pfatalgrapp, Wolfers, Olson, Puchala). A common denominator influence for many of these authors was membership in the “political realist” school of international relations or a strong European background (origin or training) which sensitized them or made them aware of this type of issue.

But ethnonationalism as a specific term or concept rarely appeared as such although much of the discussion, particularly as *The concept of "regime" is a 1980's and 1990's addition that represents nuanced subtlety of distinctiveness, but also an escape mechanism from the realities of nationalism.
to the Third World, certainly met much of the criteria of substantiative depiction. This is not to say that it necessarily was looked upon as a favorable or desirable development as indicated in Kaplan, Padelford/Lincoln, Stoessinger, Robertson, Kelman, Green, Spanier, Puchala. Recognition and approval usually did not go hand in hand. Only authors such as Kulski, Spiegel, Spiegel/Waltz, Duchacek, and Lanyi/McWilliams were content to be descriptive as opposed to judgmental in their approach to ethnic and tribal developments, especially when it pertained to the Third World.

In two instances, Greene and Stoessinger offered solutions that concretely opposed or negated enthnonationalist aspirations. Greene fell back on the multinational state solution and Stoessinger defended the centralization of state authority to overcome this problem. The other authors, especially those that diminished or attacked nationalism (and by indirection enthnonationalism), inferred an overarching regional or universalist integration solution by virtue of their overall thrust.

Since the literature herein examined was strictly in the category of international relations textbooks, it has deliberately omitted works exclusively studying intergovernmental efforts (160's) regional and universal, in and of themselves. The 160 books also proliferated in the post-World War Two period, reflecting a preferential, if not obvious priority choice among academicians. The 160 books could not be viewed as favorable to ethnnonationalism in any way, no less the broader dynamic of nationalism, because of the oriented contradictions with sought after integration goals.

The Last Decade—The 1980's into the 1990's

Sampling the more recent crop of international relations textbooks (Rourke, Russett/Starr, Hughes, Plano/Olton, Ray, Coloumbus/Wolfe, Kegley/Wittkopf, Toma/Gorman, Levine) that supplement revised editions of previously mentioned works provides a mixed review but a distinct pattern so far. Much like the authors of the 1960's and 1970’s, the new writers are compelled to acknowledge the reality of ethnic and subnational tendencies as being operative within particular societies. However, they uniformly reject the implications and ramifications, especially destabilizing, equal or paramountcy effects on regional and world politics. In some cases (Rourke, Coloumbus/Wolfe) there is candid acknowledgment of John Herz’s reversal of view on the demise of the territorial state (equated with the decline of nationalism as a dynamic variable). This permits the various authors to
pay due attention to the phenomenon and characterize it as a nuisance or annoyance factor, particularly for international (integration) tendencies. It certainly has not led them to an admission of nationalism’s continuing persistency and preva­lency from the past to the present and as an ongoing factor into the future for descriptive, analytical or evaluative purposes of international political behavior. Either ethnic and broader nationalism dynam­ics are viewed as a strictly internal state factor (Rourke, Ray), as a challenge to the prevailing internationalism (Hughes, Coloumbus/Wolfe), or no challenge at all (Ray). Toma/Gorman come closest to admitting that ethnicity and pluralist struggles have international implications, but what they are is never spelled out. The latter fall back on the pluralist (multinational) solution to escape the problem altogether.

Others like Kegley/Wittkopf, Russett/Starr, Plano/Olton, and Levine retreat directly or indirectly into the previous two decades pattern of downgrading or disregarding nationalism (and its variants) as a critical factor in regional and world politics. Usually this is accomplished in behalf of a commitment to the integration bias concretely depicted or anticipated. Generational values of the 1960’s and 1970’s seem to have been a key influence so far on the orientation of the 1980’s and 1990’s authors. Perhaps the late 1990’s and beyond will see the eventual recognition of the continuity of nationalism and its variations as deserving of equal recognition with the integrative factors (and wishes) of upcoming authors or revised editions of previous authors. Or we might see new rationalizations (actually old ones) insisting this is but a temporary surge or last gasp of a 300-year old phenomenon, preliminary to its ultimate disappearance.

The Missing Ingredient

The failure to continue a very early level or type of concern with nationalism (particularly its variations) has had a deleterious effect on the scholarship of international relations. Everyone aspires to a better world, but this clearly should not intrude on efforts at objective scholarship in the field.

The writers and researchers of the pre-and immediate post World War Two period had little choice but to cover (or focus) on fragmenting factors (ethnicity, minority rights, etc.) both within and between states. So pronounced and evident were these factors. Still, the tendency to deny or critique was predominant as an aspiration to overcome often took over. What made this strange was the deliberate choice of treating ethnonationalism as a desta­bilizing force after a positive era in the past (liberal nationalism).
In those days it had been consistently viewed as a positive solution for multiple nationality competitive and overlapping situations. Contrary to the belief that the ideological tendency was destabilizing was the alternative belief that it was conflict resolving by meeting basic and deep human aspirations. The perversion of nationalism during parts of the first half of the 20th Century should have been viewed strictly in those limited negative terms and not as an excuse to depart from the realities of persistent demands and expectations by ethnonationalists as yet unfulfilled. The degree and level of bias for circumventing the nationalist issue in the 1960’s and 1970’s (marching largely unimpeded onward into the 1980’s and 1990’s) has only distorted balanced or correct insights and sequential conclusions as to its significance in international relations.

It is fairly obvious that ethnonationalist movements have critical ramifications for individual territorial states. Impacts include organization of oppositionist parties where an electoral process exists. Where democratic or similar vehicles are not available, then dissent has mushroomed into various modes of political violence—civil war, guerrilla war, liberation movements, insurrection and rebellion, and terrorism. Objectives have varied from mere seeking of identity-conscious recognitions by central government authorities (language, publication or school independence; degrees of self-rule or autonomous area of behavior) to “separatism” via federalist arrangements or a truly new and independent territorial state of one’s own. Unfortunately, with the possible exception of some narrow internal political accommodations made by a central government, all objectives sought by ethnonationalist groups have ramifications beyond the borders of the territorial state. Internal dynamics that enhance internal ethnonational groups can weaken or make vulnerable the territorial state vis-a-vis other local actors, affecting the distribution of power in the region. These types of changes can serve as a constraint or opportunity in foreign policy for differing states. For outside superpowers, middle or regional powers, or even intergovernmental organizations the rights and status of ethnonationalist groups afford a chance to intervene or penetrate the host territorial state. Such intrusions may reflect a pan nationalist (or irredentist) motivation or simply an expansionistic power play (influence-extending or actual aggrandizement). Pan movements have been known to operate from a so-called “mother country” or via a “government-in-exile” representing the entire (or claimed) unity of the ethnonational movement. Of course, the reference here is to where outside actors are invited in. There are times when they invite themselves into such a conflict. In both cases, what
initially appears to be an internal jurisdictional question, has increasingly been internationalized since the post World War One period (see the case studies).

Another international ramification that flows from ethnonationalism pertains to the older generic category of humanitarian concerns. Such concerns have transformed themselves in recent times into a variety of “human rights” issues. Private and public inter-governmental organizations have zeroed in on the treatment of minorities by all manner of political systems and governments. This has included political, economic, social, religious and other forms of discrimination or abuse. Not only have such agencies become criteria for judging aberrational behavior, but they have inserted themselves into the domestic politics of host governments. Sometimes this has reached the level of reciprocal “minority rights protection treaties” permitting intrusive inspections by each state’s representatives or third parties. Or some states have translated this concern into punitive or rewarding behavior, such as “most favored nation clauses” in economic relations.

The idea of ethnonationalism may translate into self determination and a whole set of attendant problematic international relationships. The question of viability in the first place often leads to a discussion of the category called “micro-states.” In many instances ethnonationalism may result in the type of mini-state lacking an economic basis and producing “dependency” on other states. Mere independent existence will not preclude larger regional states from perceiving the smaller state as representing a (tempting?) power vacuum that needs filling.

Aside from the obvious narrow concern with economic development, modernization in some instances and growth prospects in others, there is the broader issue of (in)stability and its significance to the regional power distribution. Does such a new ethnonationalist-based state try to go it alone politically or does survival and continuity hinge on strategic affiliations with a larger state or bloc of states? In one fell swoop a newly formed ethnonationalist state may inherit an array of allies and possible enemies—a full plate of foreign policy agendas. These associations may have to be played out not only in regional politics, but as well in intergovernmental organizations where important votes need to be cast on controversial issues.

Smaller ethnonationalist states are often perceived as being far removed from the main centers of world or regional power relationships. Thus they may be called upon as presumably more objective actors to perform neutral roles, such as part of peacekeeping forces or diplomatic missions. The trend towards
smaller and smaller ethnonationalist states in international politics, while negatively described already, may actually have a positive or salutary effect on the conduct of relations the further one moves away from superpower or middle power issues. This makes them valuable creations in the broader context of international politics. The prospective list of impacts ethnonationalism may have on international relations, both positive and negative, has grown. Not all the projective aspects are known. At best, the summation has tried to depict the past, the present and the immediate future ramifications of ethnonationalism. Regardless of all else said, ethnonationalism as part of nationalism represents as basic an urge as can be found in human relationships and is not likely to disappear as a critical factor in international relations.

FOOTNOTES

1930's and 1940's


1950's

Haas, Ernest and Whiting, Alan. Dynamics of International Rela-

1950’s (Cont.)

1960’s and 1970’s

Kulski, W. W. *International Politics in a Revolutionary Age*. J.B.
Lippincott Co., 1964.

1980’s and 1990’s