

## **The Myth of the Civic State**

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**Taras Kuzio**

**Postdoctoral Fellow**

**Yale Center for International and Area Studies**

**Yale University**

***tkuzio@ssees.ac.uk***

This paper critically surveys Kohn's framework for studying and understanding nationalism. It argues that his division into 'civic Western' and 'ethnic Eastern' types are idealised and do not match up to historical, theoretical or comparative scrutiny.

The paper is divided into two sections that discuss Kohn's framework from a theoretical perspective and then it investigates the empirical evidence within four of the civic states he cites as his examples (Switzerland, the UK, France and the USA). The theoretical section discusses Kohn's framework and his idealisation of the civic West, how political communities and civic nations are created, the changing nature of who is included within the membership of the civic nation over time and the role of, and impact upon, Western civic states of their creation of colonial empires.

## A Theoretical Reflections

### *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 amongst academics, policy makers and journalists. Hans Kohn is perhaps best remembered for developing this dichotomy between two types of nationalism, although other scholars' such as Ignatieff, Smith and Greenfeld have followed in his footsteps. The depiction of a 'good' Western and a 'bad' Eastern nationalism has largely been accepted as a reality and unquestioned by scholars.

In Kohn's view Western nationalism had a social base in civic institutions and a bourgeoisie. In contrast, in the East the absence of these institutions and social classes meant that the nationalism was more organic and reliant upon intellectuals to articulate a national idea. 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. This political reality was based on individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism:

- in the West nationalism was a political phenomenon and it 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 while 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.<sup>1</sup>

Kohn includes within his definition of the West the UK, France, Netherlands, Switzerland<sup>2</sup> and the USA. In all of these countries, apart from the USA, a national state emerged before the rise of nationalism; in the USA this occurred simultaneously. We can immediately see how these five countries of Kohn's West are not equivalent to what was commonly defined as the 'West' during the Cold War (i.e. NATO and the EU). 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 primordial ties were stressed. German nationalism, for example, rejected Western concepts of individualism, rationalism and parliamentary democracy and instead focused upon folk culture, language and ethnicity.<sup>3</sup>

Kohn believes that the rise of nationalism in the West in the eighteenth century took place at the same time as the growth of political, civic and individualistic rights. This was particularly developed in England, where nationalism had been evolving from the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> 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 the US and French eighteenth century revolutions. These democratic values became part of their respective national ideas. The French revolution synthesised 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

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), pp.329-330.

<sup>2</sup> H.Kohn, *Nationalism and Liberty. The Swiss Example* (New York: Macmillan, 1956).

<sup>3</sup> Hans Kohn, 'Western and Eastern Nationalism' in John Hutchinson and Anthony D.Smith (eds.), *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.162-165.

<sup>4</sup> See H.Kohn, 'The Genesis and Character of English Nationalism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.1, no.1 (January 1940), pp.69-94.

at a time when the European continent, with the exception of Switzerland, followed the opposite pattern'.<sup>5</sup>

When nationalism spread to Spain, Ireland, central and eastern Europe, often as a reaction against 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 pronounced in Germany where romanticism and cultural nationalism was especially 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'.<sup>6</sup>

Other scholars have built on Kohn's divisions. John Plamenatz contrasted the strong cultural identity of the West with the 'primitive' identity and culture of the East and the need to shape a new one. Smith divides nationalism into Western 'civic-territorial' and Eastern 'genealogical-ethnic' types. In Kohn's, Plamenatz's and Smith's definitions the West is liberal and the East tends towards an inevitable authoritarianism and cultural repression.<sup>7</sup> Tamir places her liberal nationalism within the confines of Kohn's civic, Western nationalism that allegedly respects tolerance and diversity.<sup>8</sup> Ignatieff also 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'.<sup>9</sup> 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'.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> H.Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishers, 1982), p.64.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.51.

<sup>7</sup> David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p.8-9. For Smith see *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp.76-83 and *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp.177-178.

<sup>8</sup> Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1993).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp.7-8.

As a modernist Gellner may dispute the claim of Kohn and his supporters that nations began to emerge before the onset of industrialisation and the rise of nationalism in the late eighteenth century. Nevertheless, he accepts Kohn's basic division as correct. In the West, Gellner argues, nations were unified on the basis of a high culture, 'which only needs an improved bit of political roofing'.<sup>11</sup> 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 that 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'.<sup>12</sup>

In some cases the high culture had been lost due to the assimilation of the ruling classes and they therefore constituted, in Hroch's term, an 'incomplete society'. Some ethnic groups had at one stage a high culture and a complete society but these had, in the course of an occupation by a foreign power, been, 'brutally transformed into a folk culture and an incomplete society'.<sup>13</sup> 'Incomplete societies' spoke the language of the peasant, not that of the aristocrat. This clearly happened in the case of Ukrainians, first under Poland between the fifteenth-eighteenth centuries and from the late eighteenth century to 1917 within the Tsarist Russian empire, and of the Irish.<sup>14</sup> In the eyes of Russian and English 'complete society' such 'incomplete (unhistorical) nations as Ukrainians or Irish could not hope to become independent states.

### *Idealisation of the Civic West*

Kohn's views of 'good' and 'bad' nationalism's can be subjected to wide ranging criticism. Kohn's and subsequent criticism of nationalism and ethno-nationalist movements in the East are sometimes due to 'cosmopolitan prejudice' that looks down on a 'backward' part of Europe.<sup>15</sup> In a similar vein Said is critical of Elie Kedourie's condemnation of non-Western nationalism as merely a negative reaction to colonial attempts at demonising them as socially and culturally 'inferior'. Such condemnation means they are therefore not entitled to the same

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<sup>11</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), p.99

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.100.

<sup>13</sup> Miroslaw Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.13.

<sup>14</sup> Bohdan Krawchenko, *Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth Century Ukraine* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

<sup>15</sup> George Sanford, 'Democratization and European Standards of National Minority Protection: Polish Issues', *Democratization*, vol.4, no.3 (Autumn 1997), p.53.

nationalism as the more developed West with the only 'good' nationalism found in the West.<sup>16</sup> Brown writes, 'There is clearly the danger that we characterise a nationalism as cultural or civic in form, depending upon whether we wish to support or oppose it'.<sup>17</sup>

The division of nationalism and states according to Kohn's framework fails to stand up objective historical scrutiny and reflects more, 'a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking'.<sup>18</sup> Political communities in the civic West share cultural horizons, values, identities and historical myths in a common identity that is the 'nation'. Yack 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.<sup>19</sup>

Liberalism has been traditionally realised within national communities that are committed to shared principles. Without a cultural legacy there will be no shared consent to live together, Yack argues, 'since there would be no reason for people to seek agreement with any one group of individuals rather than another'.<sup>20</sup> This is as much true of Western as it is of Eastern communities.

Kohn 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 also lumps into one category all those nationalisms that he defines as 'Eastern' (many of whom are not geographically in the East).<sup>21</sup> During the inter-war years Czechoslovakia was a democracy. Three Eastern countries – Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia – gave the franchise to women at the same time, or before, four of Kohn's five states in the civic West.

The artificial of division of nationalism by geography also ignores a number of other factors. First, it side steps the issues of violence and ethnic nationalism that existed and dominated many of Kohn's Western states prior to the twentieth century. Kohn also negatively assesses nationalism in the 'East' by

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<sup>16</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p.261.

<sup>17</sup> David Brown, 'Are there good and bad nationalisms', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol.5, part 2 (April 1999), pp.287-288.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Yack, 'The Myth of the Civic Nation', *Critical Review*, vol.10, no.2 (Spring 1996), p.196.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.201.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.208.

<sup>21</sup> K.Symonolewicz-Symmons, 'Nationalist Movements: An Attempt at a Comparative Typology', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 7, no.2 (January 1965), p.224.

reflecting on their territorial disputes with neighbours prior to 1914. At the same time, he ignores how the 'West' created large scale overseas empires during this period (see Section B) and does not discuss the numerous territorial disputes that the civic West was involved in itself through manifestations of imperialism by the US in the Philippines during the same period. The UK had imperial problems throughout the period prior to the twentieth century both in Ireland and further afield. France under Napoleon had territorial problems with most of Europe and local territorial conflicts with Germany and Belgium. The USA went to war with the UK/Canada in 1812 and the expansion of American territory westwards and southwards brought it into territorial and ethnic conflict with Native Indians, Spaniards and Mexicans.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) only attempts to resolve ethnic conflicts in post-communist Europe. This ignores ethnic conflicts in the West (Northern Ireland, Puerto Rico, Corsica, Basque, Quebec) and provides a lopsided view of ethnic conflict throughout North Americas and Europe.

Second, Kohn's division of nationalism into two groups idealises nationalism in the 'West' as a community that was always fully inclusive of all social and ethnic groups. He laments that Native Indians were only finally integrated into Latin American civic nations in the twentieth century which led to a synthesis of American and Spanish cultures. But, he ignores a similar exclusion of Native Indians (and Blacks) from the US civic nation throughout most of the nineteenth century. Indeed, 11 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 (see Section B). In Australia, Aborigine peoples were only given the vote in 1967 and until the 1950s there was a government policy of forced assimilation with children forcibly taken from mixed families. The Australian government still finds it difficult to apologise and pay compensation for these actions which Aborigines define as their 'holocaust'.

Third, it ignores the fact that, as in the West, nationalism in the East can also evolve towards a civic variety over time.<sup>22</sup> This is 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 still be unconsolidated). Both the West and the East only became civic, in the sense of being inclusive of the entire political community, in the twentieth century.

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<sup>22</sup> David B.Knight, 'Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol.72, no.4 ((1982), p.519.

In John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, first published in 1859, he defined liberty as an ideology only applicable to 'human beings in the maturity of their faculties'. This excluded young people, certain races, women and 'uncivilised peoples' (such as the Bretons in France or the Highland Scots) who were only fit for assimilation.<sup>23</sup>

Greenfeld, in the manner of Kohn, couples the rise of English nationalism with demands for 'the insistence on the people's right of participation in the political process and government'.<sup>24</sup> The proportion of those granted these civic rights reflected only a small part of what we today would regard as the electorate, excluding the majority of the population on grounds of income, property, religion, colour or gender. The English/British political community of the post World War II era is significantly different to that of the Elizabethan age when Catholics, women and the lower social classes were excluded from it. The British monarchy remains 'defenders of the faith' (i.e. the protestant Church of England) and members of the British royal family are still forbidden to marry Catholics. Until 1999 the un-elected House of Lords guaranteed seats to the Bishops of the Church of England, a right denied to other religious faiths in England.

If we accept (see later) that all civic states are composed of both civic and ethno-cultural criteria then at different periods of history the proportional mix of the two will be different.<sup>25</sup> In the early period of Western civic states its nationalism was more ethnic and exclusive than civic and inclusive. Smith argues that:

Given that those identities are composed of a fund or heritage of myths, memories, symbols, values and traditions which are constantly undergoing change through reinterpretation and reconstruction, we would expect that over a long period, a given instance of the nation and its members would display a variety of characteristics and understandings...<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (London and New York: W.W.Norton, 1998), p.71.

<sup>24</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p.30.

<sup>25</sup> On the symbiosis of civic and ethno-cultural actors in civic states see Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp.88, 115, op cit., A.D.Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, pp.126-127 and op cit., A.D.Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, pp.100-101.

<sup>26</sup> A.D.Smith, 'Civic and ethnic nations revisited: analysis and ideology', *The ASEN Bulletin*, no.12 (Autumn-Winter 1996/1997), p.11. Elsewhere he writes, 'Of course, given nations will exhibit ethnic and territorial components in varying proportions at particular moments of their history'. A.D.Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p.149.



Contemporary Eastern nationalism looks and feels peculiar to those in the West because of a time gap between the ethnic nationalism that permeated the West in the early stages of its national state formation and the ethnic nationalism found in some parts of the East today. As Canovan says, 'It is unfortunately the case that a nation that is peaceful, secure and a favourite site for liberal democratic politics now usually has a past that no liberal democracy can comfortably look into'.<sup>27</sup>

Kohn's division of nationalism is ultimately based on ideal types, a form in which they are rarely found.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, ideal types take little account of differences within civic nations, both in the contemporary era and in the past. Every type of nationalism features elements of both civic and ethnic factors and often nationalism has a more ethnic flavour in its early permutations.<sup>29</sup> Smith's division of 'territorial' and 'ethnic' states also only corresponds to ideal types. Territorial states also promote a common societal culture, shared myths, symbols and values and have a common culture. That this is an ideal type is seen in Smith's definition of territorial states as consisting of equality for all those within the community. Political communities only became inclusive in a broad understanding of that term in the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup>

Kohn's observation that in the East nations seek to create states (the opposite of what took place in the West) is not the case in the former USSR where the majority of the fifteen former republics inherited states but not nations. The process of state and nation building in the former Soviet Union, which is taking place at the same time as democratisation and marketisation, is therefore following a similar path to the gradual expansion of the political community on territorial (not ethnic) grounds that earlier occurred in the West. The major difference is that in the West membership of the political community was initially small and this gradually expanded over time. In the former USSR, with the exception of Estonia and Latvia, the political

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<sup>27</sup> Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1996), p.104. See also Mattei Dogan, 'Nationalism in Europe: Decline in the West, Revival in the East', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol.3, no.3 (Autumn 1997), pp.66-85.

<sup>28</sup> Tim Nieguth, 'Beyond dichotomy: concepts of the nation and the distribution of membership', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol.5, part 2 (April 1999), p.158.

<sup>29</sup> Ghia Nodia, 'Nationalism and the Crisis of Liberalism' in Richard Caplan and John Fefler (eds), *Europe's New Nationalism. States and Minorities in Conflict* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.106. See also Nodia's 'Nationalism and Democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, vo.3, no.4 (October 1992), pp.3-22.

<sup>30</sup> Op cit., A.D.Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, pp.134-138.

community automatically included everybody on the territory of the republic in January 1992. In central-Eastern Europe, with the exception of Yugoslavia, most states inherited nations and constructed all-embracing, inclusive political communities for all those resident within the state.

A more fundamental question has been developed by Kymlicka who criticises 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 nationalism in the Tudor and Elizabethan era's, to which Kohn gives much credit for later developments, was built on cultural nationalism and propagated by intellectuals, poets and writers. There is nothing intrinsically anti-liberal, Kymlicka argues, if an ethnic group wishes to defend its cultural identity within a civic state. An example here could be the non-Russian nationalities of the former USSR who were subjected to russification and their culture vilified as 'uncouth'. If the defence of a cultural identity is undertaken within a civic, inclusive state it is not illiberal, Kymlicka argues.

Kymlicka also criticises Western scholars, such as Ignatieff, for wrongly assuming that civic nationalism has no cultural component. Those who are citizens of civic nations participate in a common societal culture. Turner believes that, 'Citizenship identities and citizenship cultures are national identities and national cultures':

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.<sup>31</sup>

The symbiosis of civic and ethnic actors found within civic states determines the vitality and mobilisation capacity of the demos and civil society.<sup>32</sup> Although particularism and universalism are different 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.<sup>33</sup> The body that holds together a

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<sup>31</sup> Bryan S. Turner, 'Citizenship Studies: A General Theory', *Citizenship Studies*, vol.1, no.1 (February 1997), p.9.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of how this affects Ukraine see my 'Civil Society in Ukraine: The Legacies of Totalitarianism and Empire', paper prepared for the conference 'Ukrainian Politics in the Twentieth Century', Yale-Ukraine Initiative, Yale University, 8-9 April 2000.

<sup>33</sup> Pierre Manent, 'Democracy Without Nations?', *Journal of Democracy*, vol.8, no.2 (April 1997), p.95.

democracy is the civic nation. Greenfeld argues that, 'Democracy was born with the sense of nationality. The two are inherently linked, and neither can be fully understood apart from this connection'.<sup>34</sup> Citizenship in modern states includes both a legal status and membership of a cultural community composed of language, culture and history. 'The cultural identity provides the socially integrative substate for the political identity of the republic', Habermas wrote.<sup>35</sup>

Kymlicka 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 homogenisation to the dominant culture and language. Whether states should be therefore 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'.<sup>36</sup> To what degree can we historically define Western states as 'civic' if they disbarred people from integration into their communities on grounds of gender, race or ethnicity, all of which occurred prior to the twentieth century. Using Kymlicka's definition Kohn's five states could not be defined as 'civic'.

Kymlicka stresses that both Western and Eastern nationalism have cultural components and identity in both is therefore grounded in culture. Where civic nations have been forged, as in Latin America, they have not always led to liberal democracies. In addition, ethnic violence is not only the prerogative of Eastern nationalism; civic nationalism has also been involved in ethnic violence against national minorities (Indonesia), separatism (USA), political opponents (Jacobin France) and foreign countries.<sup>37</sup> The US civil war had a million casualties, a huge number for the time. Cultural nationalism, on the other hand, can be benign and defensive (Ukrainian, Welsh and Slovene). Tamir and Kymlicka therefore defend cultural nationalism as not inherently hostile to individual liberty because it defends the ethnic group against assimilation and acts as a 'moral innovator'. Hutchinson goes further and believes that, 'The recovery of national pride is a prerequisite for successful participation in the wider world'.<sup>38</sup>

In reality the dividing line between Western and Eastern nationalism is hazy and unclear. Both ideal types are defined in different ways, with cultural and political nationalism looking

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<sup>34</sup> Op cit., op cit., L.Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p.14.

<sup>35</sup> Jurgen Habermas, 'The European Nation-State – Its Achievements and its Limits. On the Past and future of Sovereignty and Citizenship' in Gopal Balakrishan and Benedict Andersen (eds.), *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), p.286.

<sup>36</sup> Op cit., W.Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, p.24.

<sup>37</sup> Will Kymlicka, 'Misunderstanding Nationalism', *Dissent*, Winter 1995, pp.130-135.

<sup>38</sup> J.Hutchinson, 'Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration' in op cit., J.Hutchinson and A.D.Smith (eds.), *Nationalism*, p.129.

backwards and forwards respectively. Cultural nationalism seeks to provide a vision for a common future destiny while civic nationalism appeals to a common past and also utilises myths. Both civic and ethnic states have traditionally used myths and history.<sup>39</sup> 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'.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup> The myths of modern Switzerland are founded on the traditions and memories of an older ethnic nation and are themselves based on a German cultural core.<sup>42</sup>

What was often called 'nation building' in the West was defined as forced assimilation in the East. Yet, 'Both achieved very similar results'<sup>43</sup> and both civic and ethnic states traditionally homogenised their inhabitants.<sup>44</sup> 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<sup>45</sup> 'nationalisation' of the state on behalf of the core, titular nation is little different to the assimilation, by both peaceful and violent means, of national minorities in the West.

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<sup>39</sup> B. Andersen, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), pp.11-12 and Dominique Schnapper, 'The European Debate on Citizenship', *Daedalus*, vol.126, no.3 (Summer 1997), pp.214, 219.

<sup>40</sup> Recommendation 1283 (22 January 1996). Document 7446, Committee on Culture and Education, Council of Europe. Copy in the possession of the editor.

<sup>41</sup> See David M. Potter, 'The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa', *American Historical Review*, vol.67, no.4 (April 1962), pp.924-950. Norman Davies writes that, 'Distortion is a necessary characteristic of all sources of information. Absolute objectivity is absolutely unattainable'. Cited from his *Europe. A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.5.

<sup>42</sup> A.D. Smith, 'Culture, community and territory: the politics of ethnicity and nationalism', *International Affairs*, vo.72, no.3 (July 1996), p.456.

<sup>43</sup> Op cit., G. Sanford, 'Democratization and European Standards of National Minority Protection', p.53.

<sup>44</sup> David Little, 'Belief, Ethnicity and Nationalism', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol.1, no.2 (Summer 1995), pp.287, 290.

<sup>45</sup> Rogers Brubaker, 'National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External Homelands in the New Europe', *Daedalus*, vol.124, no.2 (Spring 1995), pp.107-132.

Nevertheless, scholars usually only define that which took place in the East in a negative manner as 'nationalising'.<sup>46</sup>

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 usually defined as lying in the West but are nevertheless not included within Kohn's definition because they would call into question his framework. In their study of European nation states Krejci and Velimsky concluded that of the 73 ethnic groups in Europe, 42 were both ethnic and political nations. Of the remainder 23 were purely ethnic and only 8 political. Those they classified as both ethnic-political included the English, French, Irish, Portuguese, Scots, Spanish, Danes, Finns, Icelanders, Norwegian, Swedes, Flemings, Walloons, Dutch, Maltese, Frisians, Germans, Greeks, Italians and Swiss from the West. Four countries of Kohn's West (England, France, Netherlands and Switzerland) are included within the ethnic-political group (the USA was not surveyed).<sup>47</sup>

### *Political Communities and Civic Nations*

How do political communities and civic nations hold together? Few scholars would dispute that modern societies require a fraternity (Nisbet), a community of values (Parekh), a 'single psychological focus shared by all segments' (Connor), a 'nationality' (Miller), 'cultural unity' (Smith), a 'high degree of communal solidarity' (Canovan) and a 'We' where the nation and the people are one (Finlayson).<sup>48</sup>

Advocates of individual rights usually argue that civic states by definition are indifferent to ethno-cultural questions. Despite the close inter-connection between liberal democracy and

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<sup>46</sup> See T.Kuzio, 'Nationalising States or Nation Building? A Critical Survey of the Theoretical Literature and Empirical Evidence', paper given to the annual convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities, Columbia University, New York, 14 April 1999.

<sup>47</sup> Jaroslav Krejci and Vitezslav Velimsky, 'Ethnic and Political Nations in Europe' in J.Hutchinson and A.D.Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.212-217.

<sup>48</sup> Robert A.Nisbet, *The Quest for Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp.153-188, Bhikhu Parekh, 'Cultural Pluralism and the Limits of Diversity', *Alternatives*, vol.20, no.4 (October-December 1995), p.436, Walker Connor, 'Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?', *World Politics*, vol.XXIV, no.3 (April 1972), p.353, op cit., D.Miller, *On Nationality*, p.140, op cit., A.D.Smith, 'Culture, community and territory...', p.458, op cit., M.Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, p.28-29 and Alan Finlayson, 'Ideological discourse and nationalism', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol.3, no.1 (1998), p.113.

nationhood since the late eighteenth century political theory tends to ignore nations. 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. Whether polities are defined as either 'civic' or 'ethnic', approximating Kohn's division of nationalism, is dependent upon what qualifications for membership are in place.<sup>49</sup> Are these criteria for citizenship, for example, based on a knowledge of language and history, as in Estonia, Latvia and the USA? 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'.<sup>50</sup>

Advocates of cultural pluralism, on the other hand, such as Kymlicka, 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.<sup>51</sup> 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 composed of but that of the titular nation(s). Kymlicka 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'.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, if states pursue radical homogenising (or in Brubakers term 'nationalising') policies this will alienate national minorities and may lead to ethnic and social unrest, as in Yugoslavia, Russia, Moldova, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Civic states therefore have to balance between forging an overarching unity in the public domain while allowing polyethnic rights and identities to be privatised.<sup>53</sup>

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 homogenisation, the imagined civic community will not include large numbers of people who do not belong to the titular nation. Kymlicka (and Connor)

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<sup>49</sup> Op cit., M.Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, p.19.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.22.

<sup>51</sup> Mark R.Beissinger, 'How nationalism spread. Eastern Europe adrift the tides and cycles of national contention', *Social Research*, vol.63, no.1 (Spring 1996), p.101.

<sup>52</sup> Op cit., W.Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, p.13.

<sup>53</sup> Ana M.Alonso, 'The politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity', *Annual Review of Anthropology*. vol.23 (1994), p.394.

counter the view of Kohn that civic states assimilated non-titulars 'voluntarily'. Few national groups voluntarily assimilated during the last one hundred years and the majority of civic states pursued homogenising policies until the 1960s. France and the USA, two of Kohn's civic West, still do not legally recognise the concept of national minorities. Only Canada and Australia adopted multicultural policies in the 1970s (none of Kohn's five civic states adopted similar policies).

During the 1990s scholars defined as 'nationalising' those policies in the East which they had earlier defined as 'nation building' in the civic West. Linz and Stepan define these nationalising policies as attempting to homogenise multi-ethnic societies.<sup>54</sup> Yet, the majority of civic states have always been multi-ethnic. The newly independent states of the East, if they are indeed adopting homogenising policies, are merely mirroring the examples set by the civic West from the eighteenth century onwards. These homogenising policies pursued for centuries 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'.<sup>55</sup>

Nation building in the civic West was, as Connor commented, both 'nation creating' and 'nation destroying'. All European governments, including in the civic West, 'eventually took steps which homogenized their populations'.<sup>56</sup> Gellner sees this as an inevitable by-product of modernisation and a functioning national economy.<sup>57</sup> Nation building, as defined by Smith, welded together different peoples into a single community, 'based on the cultural heritage of the dominant ethnic core'.<sup>58</sup> Thus, civic states were not neutral in their nation building projects and these inevitably marginalised national minorities and destroyed local identities.<sup>59</sup> In the early twentieth century, for example, one million people spoke Breton in France. Today that figure has

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<sup>54</sup> Juan J.Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America and post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p.35-37.

<sup>55</sup> Op cit., W.Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, p.100.

<sup>56</sup> Charles Tilly, 'Reflections on the History of European Stat-Making' in C.Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p.43.

<sup>57</sup> Op cit., E.Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp.142-143.

<sup>58</sup> Op cit., A.Smith, *National Identity*, p.68. See also op cit., A.D.Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, p.61.

<sup>59</sup> Margaret Moore, 'On National Self Determination', *Political Studies*, vol.XLV, no.5 (December 1997), p.904 and L.L.Farrar, Kiernan McGuire and John E.Thompson, 'Dog in the night: the limits of European nationalism, 1789-1895', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol.4, part 4 (October 1998), p.555.

dropped to only a quarter of this number.<sup>60</sup> This process of civic nation-building led to the loss of Breton identity for a large number of people who then became French and could participate equally in the civic community; nevertheless, this was undertaken at the price of a loss of dignity and suffering.<sup>61</sup> Such factors were ignored by Kohn in his positive treatment of civic nationalism in the West.

*The Expansion of the Political Community*

Kohn's division of nationalism traces its positive, inclusive qualities retrospectively back to the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. Civic states have never though been identical and unanimous in how they were constituted. The growth of the nation state and its provision of civil, political, cultural and social rights was 'slow and uneven'.<sup>62</sup>

At the time of the American revolution only 5 per cent of males could vote in England. American colonists and revolutionaries did not therefore see as unusual their narrow definition of who constituted the political community. 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'.<sup>63</sup> Besides slaves, those classified as not free included indentured servants, apprentices, domestic labourers, transported convicts and slaves. Women were deemed to be deficient in the characteristics that would allow them to participate in politics or vote.

Although the American national idea, as elaborated upon and idealised by Kohn, was based on a mythical devotion to freedom the definition of who could experience it was initially narrow but grew over time. The centennial of the US revolution ignored blacks, new non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants, Native Americans and Blacks as not being part of the political community. The nineteenth century US republic had no room for Native Indians, Blacks, Spanish or French culture. The conquering of New Mexico and annexation of Texas was proclaimed as a triumph of Anglo-Saxon civilisation 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 felt to be 'too Indian'.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *The Guardian*, 25 October 1999.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p.123.

<sup>62</sup> Nicos Mouzelis, 'Modernity, Late Development and Civil Society' in John A.Hall (ed.), *Civil Society. Theory, History, Comparison* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), p.226.

<sup>63</sup> Op cit., E. Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, p.28.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79.



On the bicentennial in 1976 the US political community had expanded to include those previously excluded, reflecting the fact that at different times in US history 'freedom' had different meanings. Who was to be included within the American political community is, 'a highly uneven and bitterly contested part of the story of American freedom'.<sup>65</sup> Freedom in American history has been therefore both a 'mythic ideal' and a 'living truth'.<sup>66</sup> While using the language of 'slavery' to denote their status vis-à-vis the British empire American revolutionaries did not recognise the contradiction in themselves maintaining slaves. Thomas Jefferson himself possessed 1000 slaves and believed them to be permanently deficient in the faculties required to enjoy freedom. Indeed only Switzerland of Kohn's five civic Western examples did not profit from slavery.

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.<sup>67</sup> These three basic civic rights were not always included within civic Western states. Slavery existed until the 1860s in the USA and the slave trade helped to build up the wealth of Western states. The English city of Bristol, with its beautiful Georgian architecture, opened a museum only in 1999 that acknowledged how the slave trade had contributed to the early development and prosperity of the city. Blacks were denied the suffrage until the 1960s in the American south and aborigine peoples until 1967 in Australia. In contemporary definitions of civic states the USA and Australia could not be defined as 'civic' and inclusive political communities prior to the 1960s because they excluded people on the basis of colour and race. The breakthrough in widening the American political community 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.

During the nineteenth century when the franchise and the political community was widened in the West women continued to be excluded. In a number of countries, such as the UK, women were at first granted suffrage only in local elections. It was only after World War I that the process speeded up when European and Trans-Atlantic states gave women the vote. The record of the civic West in granting suffrage to women is not any better, and is worse in many cases, than the record of the ethnic East (see Table One). Many post-colonial states (India, 1949, Pakistan, 1956) granted suffrage to women before Switzerland. In 1952 a United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women was adopted that provides that 'women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination'.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.XVII.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.XXI.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

**Table 1. When Women Received the Vote**

<b>Kohn's Civic West</b>		<b>Kohn's Ethnic East</b>	
<b>Country</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Year</b>
USA	1920	Czechoslovakia	1919
UK	1928	Poland	1919
France	1944	Germany	1919
Switzerland	1971	Soviet Russia	1919
		Hungary	1920

*Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Our understanding of what constitutes a civic, inclusive community today is very different from even the pre-World War II era when Kohn first put forward his definition of nationalism. Only in the post-World War II era has our 'imagined community', to use Andersen's term, come to be free of colonial rule over large areas of the world, expanded to include all racial groups and the working classes brought in through the creation of the welfare state. It is only from the 1960s that Western civic states have become more tolerant of diversity in general, both within the cultural and social domains. During the 1960s and 1970s furious debates over the immigration of non-whites rocked the UK<sup>68</sup> and have continued to influence Austrian, German and French domestic politics. Previously, social groups, such as homosexuals and the handicapped, may have been given the vote but were discriminated against in various ways in the fields of employment, housing and social amenities. Only in 1999-2000 did the UK parliament change the law lowering the age of consent to that of heterosexuals.

#### *The Civic West and Colonialism*

Perhaps the most glaring omission in Kohn's division of nationalism into good and bad varieties is his lack of discussion of Western imperialism. Kohn

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<sup>68</sup> In 1963 the British historian Sir Arthur Byrant wrote that 'an influx of men and women of alien race, accentuated by strongly marked differences of pigmentation and mould of feature, as well as habits and beliefs, would be very undesirable'. Cited from Jeremy Paxman, *The English – Portrait of a People* (London: Penguin, 1999), pp.70-71.

could discuss the East in a negative light by ignoring the fact that ethnic conflict and nationalist passions were inevitable when the region was occupied by three empires (Austro-Hungarian, Prussian and Russian). Paxman makes the observation that English nationalism has not been forced to confront and deal with foreign occupation and attempts to extinguish its culture and language.<sup>69</sup>

After World War II most of Central-Eastern Europe was again forcibly incorporated within the Soviet empire. After the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989-1991 all of the post-communist European states, with some notable exceptions (Serbia, Belarus), are undergoing democratisation, marketisation and inclusive civic state building. These processes are no different to those undertaken at earlier periods of history in the West, which had never itself been the subject of empire and foreign rule (again, there are exceptions such as Ireland).

Mill and Tocqueville, both admirers, like Kohn, of the civic West glossed over or ignored Western imperialism. Mill divided nations into 'civilised' and 'uncivilised', with the latter not eligible for self determination. Such views were used to justify the West's subjugation of Ireland, North America, Africa and Asia. Tocqueville was critical of US policies towards blacks and Native Americans but approved of Western imperialism against Muslim nations in the Middle East and Northern Africa.<sup>70</sup>

With a culture of racism and ethnic superiority entrenched at home Western imperialism could justify its colonisation of 85 per cent of the world by 1914 through the stereotyping of peoples as 'primitive', 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised'. They were not like 'us' and therefore deserved to be ruled by 'us' who would provide 'la mission civilisatrice' over 'inferior', subject and subordinated peoples. There was little dissent amongst intellectuals and the educated classes to theories of black inferiority and races divided by hierarchies.

In 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. England was the 'New Israel' that was set to deliver its values to mankind. Paxman writes that, 'The English were in the grip of a delusion that they belonged to a higher order of things. It followed that those who rejected the embrace of the Empire were part of a lower order'.<sup>71</sup> Initiative, greed, courage, mass production, powerful armed forces, political scheming and self

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>70</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), pp.96-97, 250.

<sup>71</sup> Op cit., J.Paxman, *The English*, p.49.

confidence made the subjugation of 'primitives' easier. The English idea, that Kohn lauded and idealised, had become 'closely tied up with the need to empire-build'<sup>72</sup>:

What gave the British empire its belief in itself was the delusion that it was driven by a moral purpose, that there was a God-ordained duty to go out and colonise...the assumption of superiority became an article of faith.<sup>73</sup>

After 1872 when France was in the throes of nation building the empire, 'was uniquely connected to the French national identity, its brilliance, civilisation, energy, special geography, social and historical development'.<sup>74</sup> In the post-colonial era France no longer possessed an empire but nevertheless sought to compensate by propagating itself as a 'great power' through the creation of a Francophone community of former colonies. Francophonía though, merely, 'referred to an idea which went back to colonialist days, that part of French identity as a great nation rested on the continuation of a Francophone area'.<sup>75</sup>

The very 'uncivilised' and 'backward' level of development of the overseas colonies ruled out self government and independence. 'Almost all colonial schemes began with an assumption of native backwardness and general inadequacy to be independent, 'equal', and fit'.<sup>76</sup> Colonies had no life of their own, history, culture or integrity outside of Western rule. As the natives were 'backward' their rebellions were 'childish' and could be justifiably suppressed in their own interest.

Towards the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries the USA adopted similar imperial policies of occupation and intervention. It defended these actions in a different manner as that of the world's leading democracy bringing these benefits to other peoples and preventing their descent into communism. As Said points out, 'apologists for overseas American intervention have insisted on American innocence, doing good, fighting for freedom'.<sup>77</sup>

What is perhaps surprising is that no sections of Western society, including the working classes and the women's movement, opposed the growth of empire. School teachers,

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.70.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.64.

<sup>74</sup> Op cit., E.Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p.206.

<sup>75</sup> Julius W.Friend, 'Nationalism, The Guiding Thread in French Policy, 1981-1996', paper prepared for the American Political Science Association, Washington DC, 28-31 August 1997.

<sup>76</sup> Op cit., E.Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p.96.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.7.

administrators, travellers, parliamentarians, merchants, novelists, speculators, poets, and adventurers were all involved in the cultural life of the empire. By the end of the nineteenth century imperialist ideology dominated Western culture. The development of Western national-states, national identities and cultures were closely tied to the expansion of empire. While intellectuals glorified in the modernisation of their national states, their growing power and liberal democratic states there was little dissent against imperial policies until after World War II, when nationalist movements had already spread within the colonies. Said writes that:

there was virtual unanimity that subject races should be ruled, that they are subject races, that one race deserves and has consistently earned the right to be considered the race whose main mission is to expand beyond its own domain.<sup>78</sup>

Although the 'Age of Empire' is usually associated with the 'scramble for Africa' in 1878 Said believes the ideological and intellectual ideas that sustained imperialism began a century earlier with the start of the industrial and nationalist eras. The slave trade played an important role in generating capital for this early modernisation of the West. By the early twentieth century imperialism and culture had become closely inter-twin in the UK and France, particularly in the writings of novels.

Said is certainly justified in asking how the Western humanities and cultural establishment could comfortably co-exist and justify the expansion of civic rights within their own national states while denying a whole range of rights to their colonies. After all, had not the USA rebelled under the banner 'No Taxation Without Representation!' in 1776.

### **B. The Civic West**

Kohn located the origins of English nationalism in the sixteenth century with the rise of statism, a middle class and gentry, power, wealth and trade. A burgeoning literature developed a national idea that portrayed England as the new Israel of the Old Testament. England's growing nationalism, self confidence and wealth was tied to colonial expansion both overseas and closer to home in Ireland. Indeed, one could not be divorced from the other. In addition to the role of intellectuals, protestant religion and colonialism the new English nationalism

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.62.

appealed to the historical past and its myths of pre-Norman, Saxon liberties. Being English has always therefore been both a political and cultural project.

The forging of an English national identity did not follow the peaceful path that Kohn believes. From the late Middle Ages the English came into violent conflict with other peoples in the British Isles. From the twelfth-thirteenth centuries Wales was conquered and it is from this time that attempts were made to also subdue Ireland. It was through these violent confrontations in the British Isles and later as protestant Britain in opposition to Catholic France that were the 'forcing-house of nationhood' and the growth of a 'self-conscious Englishness'.<sup>79</sup>

Wales had been ruled as a conquered dependency from the sixteenth century, its language discriminated against and the Church of England forced upon it until 1914. During the period that Kohn describes in glowing terms of the rise of liberal English nationalism, 'Ireland was reduced to a colony'.<sup>80</sup> Ireland, as the only colony incorporated into the UK between 1801-1922, was difficult for England to perceive as 'foreign' (in a manner to Algeria in France). Until the seventeenth century Ireland was monolingual in Gaelic; by the 1981 Irish census there were only 5,000 speakers remaining in Eire. The assimilation of the gentry, English-language education, the potato famine and mass emigration all played a role in destroying Irish culture and language.<sup>81</sup> Irish became the badge of poverty and inferiority, a peasant language with no future.<sup>82</sup> The Irish have sustained a sense of historical grievance that stretches back in time to the slaughter of Oliver Cromwell's campaigns, the famine and 'Bloody Sunday' in 1972. Indeed, it is perhaps ironic, but not all together unusual in competing historical myths, to find Cromwell perceived as quite different in England and Ireland.<sup>83</sup>

The Irish have been stereotyped as 'barbarians' and 'degenerate' within English culture ever since being ceded by the Pope to Henry II in the 1150s.<sup>84</sup> Both the colonial racism stemming

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<sup>79</sup> Kenneth Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.253.

<sup>80</sup> Victor Kiernan, 'The British Isles: Celt and Saxon' in Mikulas Teich and Roy Porter (eds.), *The National Question in Historical Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.9.

<sup>81</sup> William W.Bostock, 'Language Grief: A 'Raw Material' of Ethnic Conflict', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol.3, no.4 (Winter 1997), pp.94-112.

<sup>82</sup> F.S.L.Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.9.

<sup>83</sup> Op cit. , J.Paxman, *The English*, p.49.

<sup>84</sup> Op cit., E.Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p.266.

from Anglo-Irish relations and the construction of the Irish (Catholic) as a historically significant Other of the English/British (Protestant) have framed the experience of the Irish in Britain'.<sup>85</sup> Stereotypes of the Irish included views earlier discussed in this paper towards overseas colonies. The Irish were peasants and less 'civilised', a drain on public finances, of the same race as the rest of Britons (and therefore slated for assimilation), blamed for social problems (dirt, alcoholism and violence) and a security threat.

Scotland, unlike Wales and Ireland, was never occupied by the English or other foreign powers. Although Scotland voluntarily entered the union with England in 1707 and maintained its institutions and traditions intact within the British empire this was again not a peaceful process. The highland clearances after the failed battle of Culloden in 1745 if they were undertaken today would be defined as ethnic cleansing of a people that Mill believed to be 'inferior'.

Is Switzerland an archetypal civic nation? Between 1515-1803 the county was politically, culturally and economically backward. The modern Swiss state was established only in 1848 with its origins in the 1798 Helvetic Republic. Switzerland was founded on shared myths and memories of the Innenschweiz, German-speaking cantons in its central regions. These myths and memories, 'furnished the abiding foundation and battle myths of the Confederation'.<sup>86</sup> Switzerland retains strong ties to ethnoscapes and its genealogy and vernacular is characteristically ethnic.

The national idea has always been linked to the idea of emancipation and liberty in France. The French revolution was a national movement with as many calls to 'la patrie' and nation as to a universalist ideology of liberty. Rousseau's influential writings in the mid eighteenth century formulated the idea of the 'la patrie' where the individual will is absorbed into the general will. Rousseau's ideal state was highly national and exclusive.<sup>87</sup>

Throughout France's period of nation building from 1789-1914 the anthem, flag, oaths, hymns, monuments, calendars, ceremonies, heroes and martyrs, appeal to one Gaullist ancestry.<sup>88</sup> The historical past played a prominent role in the inculcation of values and loyalty to

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<sup>85</sup> Mary J.Hickman, 'Reconstructing, deconstructing 'race': British political discourses about the Irish', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.21, no.2 (March 1998), p.291.

<sup>86</sup> Op cit., A.D.Smith, 'Civic and ethnic nationalism revisited', p.10.

<sup>87</sup> Robert R.Palmer, 'The National Idea in France Before the Revolution', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol.1, no.1 (January 1940), pp.95-111.

<sup>88</sup> Op cit., A.D.Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, p.126.

the French republic through monuments, nationalist pedagogy in history teaching, museums and memorials built in every commune.<sup>89</sup>

Nation building in France was accompanied by a conscious policy of destroying the local cultures and languages of Bretons, Normans, Provencaux, Alsations, Catalans, Burgundians and Flemings and the imposition of an hegemonic Ile de France culture. Weber describes the slow and uneven process of national integration in France in the nineteenth century of a 'colonial empire shaped over the centuries'. These territories had been 'conquered, annexed and integrated' by the Ile de France. The replacement of local by Parisian cultures was a process similar to colonialism with 'la mission civilisatrice' by the centre of the forcible assimilation of the periphery. Parisian officials sent to regions such as Brittany felt and behaved as if they were going to a colony.<sup>90</sup> Although the 1983 law on decentralisation opened up new possibilities for regional cultures national minorities continue to remain ignored, concealed or an 'uncomfortable reality'.<sup>91</sup>

Andersen points out that the American revolution was led by merchants and landowners who were not in favour of black emancipation. Indeed, some of the leaders of the revolution were themselves slave holders.<sup>92</sup> Blacks (until 1870), women (until 1920), Native Indians and Asians (until the 1940s) were also excluded from the civic nation. 'Slavery rendered blacks all but invisible to those imagining the American community'.<sup>93</sup> The 1790 Naturalisation Act defined the US civic nation as 'free white people'.

Does then the US conform to Kohn's civic model? Foner thinks it did not because, 'From the outset, however, American nationality combined both civic and ethnic definitions...For most of our history, American citizenship has been defined by blood as well as by political allegiances'.<sup>94</sup> This racial and ethnic discourse made it, 'inevitable that nationhood and freedom

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<sup>89</sup> Douglas Johnson, 'The making of the French nation' in op cit., M. Teich and R. Porter (eds.), *The National Question in Historical Context*, pp.35-62.

<sup>90</sup> Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernisation of Rural France, 1870-1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1979).

<sup>91</sup> Christian Giordano, 'Affiliation, Exclusion and the National State: 'Ethnic Discourses' and Minorities in East Central Europe' in Hans-Rudolf Wicker (ed.), *Rethinking Nationalism and Ethnicity. The Struggle for Meaning and Order in Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p.178.

<sup>92</sup> Op cit., B.Andersen, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>93</sup> Op cit., E. Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, p.38.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



would acquire powerful racial dimensions'.<sup>95</sup> The independence of Haiti in 1803 led many American leaders to hope that freed Slaves would move to that country.

American citizenship has, 'always been an intellectually puzzling, legally confused, and politically charged and contested status'.<sup>96</sup> For over 80 per cent of American history US laws declared most people in the world ineligible to become full US citizens because of their race, nationality or gender. Smith adds that for two thirds of US history the majority of American adults were also ineligible for the same reasons. Southern Blacks gained the franchise in 1870, only to lose it by the turn of the century and then re-gain it after 1965. The US imposed racial and ethnic restrictions on immigration as late as 1882 and adopted a system of permanent of quotas for ethnic groups in 1924.

American identity has never conformed to Kohn's idealistic depiction of it as an archetypal civic state. During the first eight decades of its existence only white immigrants could be naturalised. Blacks and Asians were only added in 1870 and the 1940s respectively. The addition of Blacks in 1870 to those eligible for naturalisation and citizenship merely re-drew the boundaries of the political community but did not eliminate them. This was progress in widening the American political community but it was again halted in the 1890s when a large number of Southern states took back the franchise from Blacks and introduced apartheid in cemeteries, hospitals, toilets, schools and washrooms.

Throughout most of US history its citizenship was structured according to illiberal racial, ethnic and gender hierarchies. Views of civic identity that did not meet requirements of individual, equal rights rested in, 'passionate beliefs that America was by rights a white nation, a Protestant nation, a nation in which true Americans were native-born men with Anglo-Saxon ancestors'. Intellectual and political traditions that imagined the American community in unequal, racial, gender and religious terms have a long pedigree in the USA.<sup>97</sup> Immigration restrictions and assimilative education played an important role in attempting to maintain America white, Anglo-Saxon and protestant.

The ideology of the American national idea was Anglo-Saxon supremacy, imported from England, a racial definition of nationhood and manifest destiny used to conquer North America regardless of who stood in its path (Native Indians, Spaniards, Mexicans). This heroic, disguised,

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.77.

<sup>96</sup> Rogers M.Smith, *Civic Ideals. Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p.14.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.3.

romantic, elimination of the truth hid the conquering, genocide and ethnic cleansing of Native Indians.<sup>98</sup> As in Australia, Americans still find it difficult to discuss painful episodes in their history because these clash with the romanticised image of the 'American dream'.

The colonists who came to North America after 1513 were highly ethnocentric, imbued with the nationalism of their mother country, believing they were superior, had God on their side and the carriers of 'civilisation'. The possession and exploitation of colonies was important to national esteem and power. The revolutionaries of 1776 were nationalist and xenophobic, seeing other peoples in the world as enslaved to property, tyranny or barbarism.

Policies, 'worked tirelessly to obliterate all customs that did not meet their view of civilized actions' among Native Indians.<sup>99</sup> The Dutch acted as 'invaders', taking the land and resources, attempting to subjugate the Native Indians and excluding them from their society. The English depicted them 'backward savages' and as, 'dangerous people who failed to recognize that the European intruders had a superior culture, technology, organization, and religion'.<sup>100</sup> The Dutch and English therefore sought to exclude them from their political community because as 'backward', 'uncivilised', 'brutish', 'irreconcilable enemies' they could not be assimilated into their 'superior' cultures.<sup>101</sup> The French, on the other hand, attempted to assimilate them into French colonial society.

The Puritans defined Indians as 'Satan' which excused numerous instances of savagery. As Nichols states, 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.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Op cit., E.Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p.380.

<sup>99</sup> Rogers L.Nichols, *Indians in the United States and Canada. A Comparative History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1998), pp.28-29.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p.41.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp.59-60.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp.59-60 and 76.

As North America experienced a rapid growth in colonists the number of Native Indians rapidly declined because of 'genocide' and enslavement. Intolerance grew, the Indians became subject, 'defeated' peoples, entire tribes (nations) were destroyed and others forcibly removed and their lands taken.<sup>103</sup> English laws, language and culture were forcefully and unequally imposed upon Native Indians. The ethnic cleansing of Indians, accompanied by 'fraud, intimidation, and violence' became, 'indispensable to the triumph of manifest destiny and the American mission of spreading freedom'.<sup>104</sup>

The independence of the USA made matters worse for Native Indians and the tribes, 'found themselves living within a nation that acted as if they were its mortal enemies'.<sup>105</sup> The racism meted out to Blacks and Asians became part of a hierarchy of races where Anglo-Saxons sat on top and Indians were excluded from citizenship.<sup>106</sup>

By the nineteenth century similar ideas on black inferiority to those espoused by Western European imperialist powers in their colonies, 'would mature into a full-fledged ideology, central to many definitions of American nationality itself'.<sup>107</sup> Between 1890-1908 blacks were again disenfranchised in the US South, a widespread fear existed of the US being swamped by 'inferior' immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe, and citizenship became again defined by colour, US patriotic discourse became xenophobically ethno-cultural and white, Anglo-Saxon supremacist. Cultural pluralism was frowned upon in favour of a homogenised, nation-state and even liberals demanded the 'Americanisation' of immigrants and the creation of an homogenous nation-state. It was deemed 'unAmerican' to want to maintain one's former identity, language and culture and the majority of states restricted the teaching of foreign languages.

Film producer D.W.Griffith's 1915 film 'The Birth of a Nation' glorified the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) as heroic and depicted blacks as 'savages'. This film helped to swell the ranks of the KKK and in the 1920s the KKK had three million members, including a large following in the North as well as the traditional South. Griffith's name was only removed from the Director's Guild of America Award in 2000. As Foner states, 'the Klan reflected a sentiment widely accepted in 1920s America'.<sup>108</sup>

Many of these ideas were popular even within America's ruling, liberal elites, suffragists and trade union reformists who all displayed an indifference to the condition of Blacks (as they

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p.108.

<sup>104</sup> Op cit., E.Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, p.51.

<sup>105</sup> Op cit., R.K.Nichols, *Indians in the United States and Canada*, .., p.137.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., pp.171 and 199.

<sup>107</sup> Op cit., E.Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*, pp.40-41.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.188.

were in the UK). President Theodore Roosevelt supported the ideology of Anglo-Saxon destiny, saw Indians as 'savages', believed blacks were unfit to vote and accepted segregation. In World War II US armed forces remained segregated and the Japanese were demonised, 'as rats, dogs, gorillas and snakes – bestial and subhuman' (such a demonisation was not undertaken against the Germans because of their ethnic affiliation with Anglo-Saxons).<sup>109</sup> Only Japanese Americans, not Germans, were forcibly removed to the West Coast and interned during the war.

Between the 1920s-1970s, 35 US states attempted to create 'better citizens' and eliminate social problems through eugenics. Huge numbers of people from the lower social classes, poor and the poorer educated sections of society were uprooted from their families and sent to special homes. Here they were stigmatised as 'feeble morons' and sterilised so that they could not have children in later life.<sup>110</sup>

Have cultural identity and historical myths played any role in the American state. In a survey of American nation building from 1776 to the present Spilman stresses the centrality of symbols, rituals, patriotic organisations 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. Flags were placed in all schools from 1890, Thanksgiving and Memorial Day were celebrated annually, pledges of allegiance were made and large historical pageants were held.<sup>111</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Kohn's division of nationalism into 'good Western civic' and 'bad Eastern ethnic' reflects both an intellectual arrogance and an idealisation of pure civic and ethnic states that do not exist in practice. It ignores the numerous negative examples of what he ascribes to Eastern ethnic nationalism that have taken place in the West. Kohn's framework also ignores the political-cultural composition of all civic states, regardless of their geographic location. When political conditions are similar nationalism and states do not markedly differ in the West and the East.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p.240.

<sup>110</sup> 'Breeding Better Citizens', 20-20 Programme, ABC Television, 22 March 2000.

<sup>111</sup> Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration. Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

