The Nation-State and Nationalist Conflict
New York University
Department of Politics
G53.1732.001
Fall 2006

Professor: Shinasi A. Rama
Email: sar6@nyu.edu
Office Hours: by appointment
726 Broadway 7th Fl. Room 745

Introduction:

Nationalism was a common cause of conflict in international politics of past two centuries. Yet, the intensification and the vengeful resurgence of nationalist conflicts in the post-Cold War era have been most unexpected and surprising for policy-makers and scholars alike. The increasing frequency and deadliness of nationalist conflict at the international and the intra-state level, from mass expulsions to state-sponsored genocide, has prompted international and humanitarian interventions that have challenged time-honored norms of state behavior and its integrity. However, despite widespread recognition amongst intellectuals and policymakers of the virulent resurgence of nationalism, there is a widespread lack of consensus on the meaning and origins of, as well as the management strategies for dealing with, nationalist conflict. To many, nationalism appears just an amorphous and protean form of organization that is difficult to be defined, described and controlled.

In this course we begin not by asking what the nation is, but by asking what the nationalists want to achieve. The invariable central goal of nationalists is to take over the state, or rather, the nation-state. So instead of delving in theories of nationalism we begin this course by examining the nation-state and its core paradox: that a state must be owned by a distinct nation. The question we ask is why the nation, as a distinct form of group organization, is so intertwined with the modern state? Here we examine the exigency of the state to obtain or create a nation and why then groups and people organize in nations to takeover a state. Then, we review the current literature on nation-state concentrating on the relationship that citizens have with their state as well as on the relevance of their self-perception as members of the group that owns or that seeks to own a given nation-state, their national identity. In the second section, we examine several contemporary influential theories and arguments about nation-formation. What is a nation? How are nations formed? We will spend several classes examining some of the most important
theories on the origins of the modern nation. In this section, we will have ample opportunity to examine key elements of nationalism and discuss a variety of case studies. Throughout this section we continue to examine how states and nations interact with one-another, and how they shape one-another. We will examine several key processes and expected outcomes of this interaction such as war, institutional accommodation, democratic transition and consolidation, minority politics, competition on resources, and the delicate relationship between economy, the state, and the nation. In the third section, we examine this complex relationship between the nation-state and the nation, the effects that this relationship has on the international system and the options of international community in dealing with nationalist conflicts. Here we will focus on nationalism as a major source of international conflict and a major security concern for other states. We will review the endemic crises which have engulfed failed and weak states and the enormous consequences that their breakdowns have for the stability of the international system and of the other states. We will pay particular attention to outcomes and solutions that are available such as secession, partition, nation-building and state-building as well as to long-term commitment third-party involvement and to other strategies of conflict management.

In the end, we will have acquired a good understanding of the nation-state, a healthy appreciation for the exceptional role that nations, as groups that strive to capture the state, play in the international system, as well as the ways how to handle this problem. Most of the literature for this course will be drawn from the contemporary debates on nation and international relations theory and practice, intentionally fusing together theory and case studies. However, while emphasis will be placed on achieving a better understanding of theoretical interpretations and frameworks for international action, we will take good care to examine a healthy number of case studies in a variety of contexts. This will familiarize us with the repertoire of strategies, justifications, and practices used by international community. We will do so through assigned readings, by following events and conflict that unfold during this semester, but also through your projects.

Requirements:

The major requirement is to write a seminar paper about 20-25 pages in length on a topic of your choice. However, you are required to participate actively in class discussions. Of course, you are expected to make all the reading of assigned materials before the class begins. The third requirement is to make a presentation of the readings for one class.

Grading:

Seminar Paper: 70 %
Participation: 15 %
Presentation: 15 %

Readings:

There are several books and a set of articles that for your convenience is placed in the reserve or you can choose to buy it in a course-pack. Most books are very slim and they make a wonderful read. As most articles are available through the Bobst library website, it would be smart to plan ahead and have all reading materials put together as soon as you can.

**PART I. The Nation-State**

**Week One: Introduction to Course and to the Breakdown of the Nation-State:**


**Week Two: What Is The Nation-State?**


**Recommended:**


**Week Three: Only One Nation May Own the State that Should Exclude All Others: Citizenship and National Identity**


Angus Stewart, “Two Conceptions of Citizenship” *The British Journal of Sociology* Volume 46, Number 1, March 1995:63-78

Walker Connor, "A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group is a...," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 1, Number 4, October 1978: 377-397.


**Recommended:**


**PART II: How Are Nations Formed?**

**Week Four: Primordial, Irrational, Perennial, Racial or Ethnic Origins?**


**Recommended:**


**Week Five: Held together by books, maps, museums, traditions and boundaries?**


**Recommended:**

Partha Chatterjee, “Anderson's Utopia” *Diacritics* Volume 29 Number 4, 1999: 128-134

**Week Six: An Inevitable Outcome of Modernization?**


Recommended:


Week Seven: Forged by The State?


Recommended:


**Week Eight:** *Created by Visionary Intellectual or Entrepreneurial Elites?*


**Recommended:**


**PART III: Nationalism as a Security Problem and Options for International Action**

**Week Nine:** *On the Path to Nationalist Conflict:*


**Recommended:**


David Laitin, “National Revivals And Violence.” *Archives Europeenes De Sociologie*, Volume 36, Number 1, 3-43.


**Week Ten: Institutional Responses**


**Recommended:**


**Week Eleven: When Every Other Solution Fails: Nationalism and War**


**Recommended:**


**Week Twelve: When the War Keeps Going On: Conflict Management Approaches**


Recommended:


Week Thirteen: Self-Determination, Irridentas, and Secession


**Recommended:**


**Week Fourteen: International Community’s Involvement: State-Building, Peacekeeping, and Nation-Building**


Gilligan, Michael and Stephen John Stedman. “Where do the Peacekeepers Go?” Available at: [http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/gilligan/peacekeepers.pdf](http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/politics/faculty/gilligan/peacekeepers.pdf)


**Recommended:**


Francis Fukuyama, “The Imperative of State-Building,” Journal of Democracy, Volume 15, Number 2, April 2004: 17-31,


