

*Dynamics of Disintegration:  
Diaspora, Secession, and the  
Paradox of Nation-States*

DIASPORAS AND Secession: An Anomaly in the  
World of Nation-States?

At the center of the national ideal is the belief that people with a distinct character should possess their own territory. Thus, over time, a world consisting of independent nation-states should, by definition, obviate such phenomena as separatist movements and diasporas. In this sense both diasporic existence and secessionist claims are what might be termed *countertheoretical* concepts, inconsistent with the structural rationale of the global system.

The ensuing chapter proposes a broad analytical framework for the study of the complex relationships between diaspora formation, secessionist (and irredentist) drives, and the existing nation-state system, tracing the genesis and subsequent effects of these processes to the interplay between two distinct independent variables: nation type and regime type. Nation type deals with the nature of the intranational bonds that forge the unifying sentiment of national identity, defining its limits and the span of the heterogeneity of its membership. Regime type deals with the manner in which the nation is governed, particularly in terms of the pluralism and accountability that prevail in its polity.

The mutual interaction between respective nation types and regime types not only determines which variant of secession motivation and diaspora formation will be dominant, but it also generates a perennial source for the rejuvenation of old identities and the awakening of new ones. This process of identity creation and re-creation is a persistent challenge to the prevailing state system.

The ethnopolitical dynamic described here seems to lead to a paradox whereby the ceaseless quest for self-determination begins to threaten the feasibility of the very idea of self-determination. The accelerated proliferation of new nation-states will almost certainly promote continual disintegration, or at least erosion, of existing states. Clearly, if unarrested, this process may imperil no less than the very concept of the nation-state as a viable political entity. Rather than fading away as anomalies, anachronisms of the past, diasporas and separatist sentiments appear to be not only an endemic feature of the international system but a pivotal element in comprehending the direction of present and future trends in it.<sup>1</sup>

The ensuing attempt to impose theoretical order on the elaborate interplay between the dispersion, fragmentation, and amalgamation of political communities may ultimately help in illuminating broader issues of identities and membership in our time.

### A Genealogy of Nationalism, Diaspora Formation, and Secession Incentives

In general, one may identify a twin mechanism in the formation of diasporas and secessionist movements. On the one hand, incomplete implementation of the principle of self-determination—in which “the political borders of states have been superimposed upon the ethnic map with cavalier disregard for ethnic homelands”—may leave ethnocultural groups with unfulfilled aspirations for political independence.<sup>2</sup> These groups may remain either stateless diasporas, and/or secessionist claimants, sometimes with ties of allegiance to an already independent political unit.<sup>3</sup> An example of the former is the Kurds, of the latter, the relations between Nagorno-Karabakh and independent Armenia. On the other hand, the successful implementation of the national idea may not preclude, and may even foster, the resurgence or reawakening of national aspirations within ethnic groups, thereby engendering secessionist or irredentist drives. Thus, neither the *birth* nor the *maturation* of the nation-state seems able to stem the apparent self-generating potential of secession sentiments and diaspora formation.

In the ensuing genealogy, I adopt a distinction between two different forms of nationalism: the ethnofocal and the ideofocal. The *ethnofocal* variant sees the nation as an organic division of humanity, decreed by some divine or natural edict; in contrast, the *ideofocal* variant perceives the nation as “a community formed by the [exercise of subjective] will [of its

individual members] to be a nation” not dependent upon “race or descent, but upon a common thought and a common goal.”<sup>4</sup> This distinction parallels in many respects the familiar concepts of ethnic versus civic nations, but it deviates in two substantive ways: First, while this ethnic/civic paradigm focuses more on the *end results* of political process (the kind of states and/or nations that reflect the *culmination* of a process of nation building), our terminology places greater emphasis on the *causal origins* of political process (the nature of the nuclei around which national collectivities coalesce and that seed the nation-building process). Moreover, *ideofocal* is more inclusive than *civic*. While the latter is almost universally associated with multiethnic-libertarian connotations, the former is intended to incorporate multiethnic-authoritarian contexts as well, in which the use of the term *civic* would be at best misleading if not entirely misplaced.<sup>5</sup> The ideofocal notion of nationalism includes both libertarian multiethnic societies as well as those that focus on the allegedly unifying ideal, rather than the rights exercised by those alleged to be unified by it (such as Soviet communism).

Our analysis of diasporas and their formation is intimately linked to these alternative concepts of the nation. I define *diaspora* as a people with a common origin who reside outside their perceived homeland, whether independent or not. They regard themselves, or are regarded by others, as members or potential members of the national community of their homeland, a standing retained regardless of the actual status of their citizenship inside or outside their homeland.<sup>6</sup>

The dichotomous distinction between the two archetypal paradigms of “nation”—ethnofocal and ideofocal—constitutes the conceptual foundation for the ensuing analytical framework. This framework illustrates how different processes of diaspora formation and secessionist desires are linked to various paths of nation building and maintenance. As noted before, there is a duality in the processes of diaspora formation and secession motivation that corresponds to differing flaws in either the generation of a new principle of nation identity or the maintenance of an existing one. These deficiencies (or “aberrations” from theoretical ideals) may be rooted in sociocultural divisions, ideopolitical rifts, and/or geoeconomic inequities.<sup>7</sup>

Table 1 traces the major failures that produce processes of diaspora formation and secession motivation. It shows how in an ethnofocal setting, diaspora formation and/or secessionist drives may be the result either of the failure to create (or impose) a monoethnic national identity (Class A) or the failure to maintain one (Class B). By contrast, in an ideo-

**TABLE 1. The Influence of Nation Type on Diaspora and Secession Processes**

Generic Principle of National Building	Failure to Create/Maintain Generic National Principle	Resultant Diaspora and Secessionist Processes	Empirical Examples
Ethnofocal			
Class A	Failure to create a monoethnic national identity; significant disparity between geopolitical borders and ethnopolitical allegiances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Migration—voluntary or forced. Formation of “stateless” ethnic diasporas</li> <li>(b) Rebellion and secessionist efforts by indigenous minorities</li> <li>(c) Irredentist minorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Tibetan refugees in India</li> <li>(b) Kurdish rebellion in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran</li> <li>(c) Sudeten Germans</li> </ul>
Class B	Failure to maintain a monoethnic national identity after largely mono-ethnic state established without separatist pressure along ethnic lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disputes over ideological issues regarding the manner in which monoethnic state should be governed</li> <li>(a) Diasporic communities result of political not ethnic persecution. Political refugees not stateless people</li> <li>(b) Separatist pressures for division of state result in two states for one monoethnic group</li> <li>(c) Strong propensity to reunification after resolution of ideological rifts</li> <li>2. Large-scale inflows of alien populations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (a) Iranian exiles, Vietnamese refugees</li> <li>(b) China/Taiwan (endogenous ideological generated rift); East/West Germany (exogenously imposed ideological rift)</li> <li>(c) German and Vietnamese reunification</li> <li>2. North Africans in France; population dumping (Filipinos in Indonesia)</li> </ul>
Ideofocal			
Class C	Failure to create a supraethnic national identity; rejection of attempts to impose a supraethnic national identity on multi-ethnic community resident with geopolitical frontiers of a political unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Secessionist pressure almost inevitable, especially if accompanied by weakening of central regime that initiated imposition of supraethnic doctrine</li> <li>(b) Postsecession diaspora result due to internal migration (forced or voluntary) during period of attempted imposition of supraethnic doctrine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Baltic States, Sikhs in India</li> <li>(b) Russian communities in post-Soviet Baltic states</li> </ul>
Class D	Failure to maintain a supraethnic national identity—disintegration of a previously unifying panethnic ideofocal principle that may be democratically generated or authoritarian imposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Secession pressure only if disparate ethnic groups territorially concentrated</li> <li>(b) (i) Postsecession diaspora result only if internal migration occurred during period of validity of supraethnic doctrine; (ii) Otherwise multiethnic society uniformly diffuse and only ideological separatism likely</li> <li>(c) Diaspora in ideofocal host state may foment secession in distant homeland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Quebec, former Yugoslavia (Milošević)</li> <li>(b) (i) Balkans; (ii) Multiculturalism</li> <li>(c) Slovak diaspora</li> </ul>

focal setting, diaspora formation and/or secessionist drives may be the result of either the failure to impose a supraethnic national identity (Class C) or the failure to maintain one (Class D).

In light of the definition of *nation*, the failure to create or to maintain a national identity will occur whenever there arises an effective challenge that disputes the legitimacy of the prevailing source of sovereign authority. If this challenge arises with the inception of a sovereign political unit, the failure will be one of creation (or imposition). If it arises after such a unit has effectively stabilized, the failure will be one of maintenance. Challenges that dispute the unitary nature of a single source of sovereignty and call for its division into two or more sources will express themselves as secessionist claims. Challenges that call for the adoption of an alternative *existing* source will express themselves as irredentist claims. Coercive rejections of such challenges are liable to generate migratory flows and exilic and/or diasporic communities.

The development of a theoretical model to account for the occurrence of such failures, with sufficient generality, elegance, and parsimony to elevate it above a mere description of the actual historical events that brought them about, is an ambitious task beyond this study's more modest scope. Rather, I confine myself to laying the foundations for a conceptual frame of reference for the causal analysis of the formation of secessionist claims and diasporic communities. From the underlying rationale of such a framework, I then propose a functional typology for a classification of these phenomena and processes—which is a fundamental prerequisite for almost any scientific endeavor. A taxonomical endeavor is a less glamorous but indispensable preliminary for a more sophisticated venture in model building.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Class A: Failure to Impose a Monoethnic National Identity*

The major causal stimulus in this category is the attempt by certain nation-states to implement an ethnofocal principle by imposing the identity of a dominant ethnic group as the national identity of the state, even though the boundaries of geopolitical sovereignty do not coincide with boundaries of ethnopolitical allegiance. Resistance to this imposition and subjugation may in principle result in one of two diametrically opposed processes, or a combination of both.

1. Migration (forced or voluntary) of the ethnic minority, and the creation of diasporas outside its indigenous homeland. Some of

these diasporas may be granted citizenship in host states, potentially facilitating their assimilation to a new national identity, while others may remain stateless refugees, deprived of such opportunity.

2. Rebellion and endeavors by an ethnic minority to extricate itself from foreign domination by secession or irredentism—that is, either to establish a separate ethnofocal sovereignty or to unite with a contiguous neighboring state of compatible ethnic makeup. Here again, these secessionist and irredentist tendencies need not necessarily be mutually exclusive, and both may occur simultaneously, as the Moldovan case exhibits.<sup>9</sup>

Claims for self-determination of indigenous populations may involve diasporas abroad or kindred states with strong ethnonational ties to the minority claimants. For example, the support of Armenia and diasporic Armenians around the globe in the secessionist struggle of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh has been critical in the efforts of the latter to resist Azerbaijani hegemony.<sup>10</sup>

Extreme attempts to impose ethnofocal identity have taken the extreme forms of genocide and population transfer. The struggle between Turks and Armenians over the possession of a single homeland led to the Armenian holocaust of 1915, when a million and a half Armenians perished. Population transfer—which was once considered an acceptable norm in the creation of new nation-states—was another method in the implementation of the monoethnic Turkish ideal. The Greco-Turkish exchange of populations after the Treaty of Lausanne set a precedent for compulsory transfer of populations in our time.<sup>11</sup> More than a million Greeks were sent from Turkey to Greece, and a smaller number of Turks from Greece to Turkey, thereby drastically reducing diasporic presence on both sides of the border.

In addition, the failure to impose a monoethnic Turkish nationality and erase the quest for a separate Kurdish entity has generated a formidable stateless community, thereby setting the stage for chronic secession drives. Kurdish pursuit of self-determination came close to realization after World War I, when the principle of self-determination was sanctioned at the Versailles Peace Conference. Thereafter, in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, the Kurds were promised an independent state to be carved out in “areas lying east of the Euphrates.”<sup>12</sup> Yet Kurdish hopes were quickly shattered when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

founded the modern Turkish state, which flaunted the international convention by refusing to recognize ethnically based minorities. Since then Kurds remain scattered in many states, suffering from their host governments' efforts to deny and crush their identity. Undoubtedly, "if there is one thing that united all [Kurdish contiguous host] countries—Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria—it is their hostility to the Kurds and their unwillingness to see the emergence of a Kurdish state in their midst."<sup>13</sup>

*Class B: Failure to Maintain an Ethnofocal Identity*

Even states in which the implementation of the ethnofocal principle has largely been successful (with or without the use of force) are not immune to divisions that may lead to exiled diaspora and political separatism. Unlike cases of impaired implementation of the ethnofocal idea, in this case the division and dispersion are the result of ideological, not ethnological, rifts that override the sense of unity engendered by common ethnic affiliation. Several such disputes, particularly in the latter part of the twentieth century, have resulted in the splitting of nation-states into two or more sovereign entities. The divisions of East and West Germany, North and South Vietnam, and North and South Korea are all instances of largely uniform ethnic states breaking up into independent political units, not because of the rivalry over ethnocultural dominance, but over paradigms of politico-socio-economic organization. Whether endogenously generated or exogenously imposed, such rifts have also produced large flows of exiles and refugees turned diasporas.

Political exiles who contested the government in their monoethnic home nation without challenging the boundaries of the state or its ethno-based identity are a common feature of modern world politics. Such exilic groups, however, should be distinguished from stateless diasporic communities that aspire to create a new (additional) state, rather than displace an incumbent regime in an existing state.<sup>14</sup> While in the former case, centrifugal stimuli for secessionists' division and dispersion are rooted in ethnic disparities, in the latter instance they are rooted in polemics of political predilections. Empirical evidence in recent years suggests that once these ideological disputes are settled and one socioeconomic doctrine triumphs over another, the centripetal stimuli rooted in ethnic uniformity and the widely accepted concept that one nation should have no more than one nation-state will militate toward eventual reunification.

Reunification, in turn, may also promote the repatriation of diasporas and exiles from other countries.<sup>15</sup>

Another variant of failure to maintain ethnofocal national unity may arise from incoming migratory pressures, resulting in expatriate ethnic communities that may develop into incipient diasporas. Such phenomena are often the consequence of economic exigencies that compel ethnofocal states to open their gates to foreign workers whose remittances may frequently be crucial to the well-being of their compatriots in their country of origin, as in the case of the Turks in Germany, or the large influx of Asians, Africans, and Eastern Europeans into Israel.<sup>16</sup> This variant of identity-maintenance failure is differentiated from that previously discussed because it rarely gives rise to secessionist pressures and because the diaspora is usually (although not exclusively) the result of voluntary inflows into an ethnofocal state, rather than coercively induced outflows from it, as in the previous ideological induced variant.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps one of the most distinct instances of such a process of immigrant-generated erosion of an ethnofocal identity is the case of the American nation. This is described most succinctly by Lind in the following excerpt.

The First American Republic, then, was a nation-state, based upon an Anglo-American Protestant nationalism that was as much racial and religious as it was political. Most Americans before the Civil War did not think of theirs as a melting pot nation. The plot of the national story was the expansion across North America of a nation of virtuous, republican, Protestant Anglo-Saxons, a master race possessed of the true principles of government and religion. The Anglo-American nation had a great future ahead of it; but that future did not include cultural hybridization or genetic transformation through amalgamation with other, lesser stocks. This conception of the American identity and destiny would be changed, by massive European immigration.<sup>18</sup>

In this regard, Myron Weiner has pointed out that “countries in which societal membership is based on notions of ‘indigenoussness’ or consanguinity are likely to have a greater sense of threat from migration than societies that have a political definition of membership.”<sup>19</sup> Although secessionist claims are rarely associated with this process, the deliberate dumping of diasporas in a neighboring country may be used as a pretext for ensuing irredentist claims by the dispatching state. For example, the influx of Filipinos into the Sabah state of Malaysia encourages the Philippines’ claim to the region.

*Class C: Failure to Create (Impose) a Supraethnic National Identity*

When historic events such as the breakdown of empires, termination of colonial rule, or war produce states whose boundaries include diverse indigenous ethnic groups, efforts may be made by ruling elites to override these disparities by attempting to impose a supraethnic state identity.<sup>20</sup> Such identity may be based on some universal ideal that transcends ethnonational solidarity altogether (e.g., USSR),<sup>21</sup> or on the insistence that loyalty to an imagined nationality should override all ethnocultural or religious affiliation (e.g., India's "secular nationalism" or Syrian and Iraqi Ba'athism).

Note that Class C must be differentiated from Class A where a dominant *existing monoethnic* identity (as opposed to a *new supraethnic* one) is imposed as the national identity on other ethnic communities, such as the one Ethiopia imposed on Eritrea during the dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam. The failure to force a hybrid multiethnic national identity onto an ethnically diverse distinct society, either by administrative/legalistic means in libertarian regimes (i.e., civic nationalism) or by authoritarian coercion, is liable to incite secessionist demands and produce a refugee-based diaspora.<sup>22</sup> An exception to this dynamic may be when ethnic groups are well dispersed throughout the confines of the state without significant geographic concentration in defined regions.<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, one of the tactics of ideofocal imposition has been to encourage or to coerce population blending via resettlement in order to achieve ethnonational heterogeneity (as opposed to Class A where population transfer is intended to achieve ethnonational homogeneity).

*Class D: Failure to Maintain a Supraethnic Identity*

In this category the principal causal impetus is likely to be the obsolescence or loss of relevance of a former unifying ideal. A supraethnic ideal may be accepted and even internalized in authoritarian settings as well as libertarian ones. Thus, for analytical purposes, one must distinguish between the *failure to achieve* a widespread internalized acceptance of the supraethnic national identity and the *failure to maintain* such internalization (after it has been achieved). Susanne Hoerber Rudolph and Lloyd Rudolph have made a similar distinction in their analysis of conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and in India, where Hindu nationalism has been

on the rise.<sup>24</sup> Rather than focus on the question of why old conflicts are flaring up anew (Class C), they asked why traditionally harmonious mosaics have been shattered (Class D).<sup>25</sup>

In Class D processes, the disintegration of a unifying ideofocal principle may be closely linked to a process of regime transformation and state dissolution. Declining authoritarian regimes that initiated and sustained an ideofocal imposition over ethnically distinct minorities (residing in defined areas) are particularly susceptible to secessionist drives.

### The Influence of Regime Types

In the following section I elaborate on the basic nation type (ethnofocal/ideofocal) categorization by demonstrating how the influence of differing regime types (libertarian/authoritarian) affects the various classes of diaspora- and secession-related processes, generating several subvariants of these classes.

Autocratic regimes' limited plurality and accountability affords them greater freedom of action in dealing coercively with challenges to their sovereign authority relative to libertarian regimes.<sup>26</sup> Clearly this difference in "coercive latitude" in the different regimes is likely to express itself in the treatment meted out to ethnic dissidents or separatist claimants, tending to make certain diaspora-formation- and secession-related processes more prevalent in one type of regime rather than in another. I thus expect that the interaction between the various categories in the foregoing nation-type-based genealogy, on the one hand, and differing regime types, on the other, will produce additional sources of variation in the basic categories developed here. (It should of course be emphasized that these postulated regime-induced variations should be interpreted in terms of differences in *probable propensities* rather than *deterministic dichotomies*.)

In addition to the influences of nation type and regime type, those influences that are rooted in the composition of the population (i.e., immigrant communities versus indigenous peoples) have important effects on the diasporas and secession-related processes, which cut across, and are superimposed on, the divisions discussed hitherto.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, it is a factor that impinges significantly upon the nature of the nation-state and the concept of national allegiance. As such it is incorporated in the ensuing analysis, receiving extensive attention in the discussion of the various categories in the elaborated genealogy.

*Libertarian and Authoritarian Influences on  
Ethnofocal Processes*

Very few libertarian states with ethnofocal aspirations have been able to maintain a monoethnically homogeneous community. More frequently, ethnofocal libertarian states were established by a dominant group that incorporated indigenous minorities who were reluctant to forgo the perception of congruence between their ethnic affiliation and their own national identity. Some of these indigenous groups may have been previously self-governing societies, while others were diasporas of existing nation-states. The birth of Israel as a Jewish state is to a large degree an exceptional case, in which the genesis of a ethnofocal libertarian state involved the simultaneous repatriation of a stateless diaspora (Jews) and the partially coercive dispersion of a partially indigenous ethnic minority (Palestinians). Palestinians have consequently perceived themselves as a stateless diaspora with ethnonational aspirations, similar to those previously harbored by the Jews.<sup>28</sup>

In ethnofocal libertarian states, especially those uncomplicated by ethnically disparate minorities, a high value is placed on preserving the uniformity of the community. State authorities strive to avoid “tainting” the ethnic composition of the population by restricting immigration of nonnationals and/or preventing ethnically “incompatible” residents from acquiring citizenship rights. Some ethnofocal countries, like Germany and Israel, may also encourage the repatriation of their kindred diasporic communities.

Broadly speaking, therefore, libertarian states without disparate indigenous ethnic populations are less susceptible to diasporic or exile politics, let alone to secessionist challenges by disgruntled ethnic minorities. They may, however, face secessionist threats on ideopolitical grounds. During the American Civil War, for instance, the Southern Confederacy made no claim to a separate ethnicity but rather to a separate ideology that supported slavery, thus casting doubt on some of its “libertarian” propensities.<sup>29</sup> The move toward political secession—as opposed to ethnonational secession—may take place under different types of political regimes. However, it is more likely to occur during civil strife or regime transition when forces in the periphery are in a position to defy the center.

Despite their basic reluctance to admit nonnational immigrants and refugees, many homogenous libertarian states have opened their gates to

aliens for economic or humane reasons—as they are liberal democracies after all. Though such immigrant communities are not likely to become secessionists (as they have no generic ties to a defined region in their new country), they tend to cultivate minority consciousness in their host societies and often develop diasporic identities.<sup>30</sup> In reality, many immigrant groups have asserted their identification with their native lands in large measure, as a result of their communal experience abroad. Even in relatively free settings, immigrants face exclusion and hardships in their new countries of domicile, and they may feel alienated because of religious differences with their host community.

In the United States, especially at the turn of the twentieth century, many diasporas whose group identity had been dormant became ardent nationalists, much more than they ever had been in their native lands. With the outbreak of World War I, ethnic Americans became increasingly preoccupied with the independence of their countries of origin. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson's proclamation of the principle of self-determination, Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Armenians, Albanians, and Croats mobilized their diasporic energies into a powerful force in promoting the cause of national independence of their homelands, carefully blending Wilson's postwar vision into their home country's agenda. To a large extent, the Eastern European immigrants were permitted (and even encouraged) to display their attachment to their homelands because they were ruled by German-speaking nations. President Wilson's sympathy for the independence of Eastern Europeans was however also linked to his personal political ambition to build supportive constituencies among ethnic Americans for electoral purposes.<sup>31</sup>

By juxtaposing the liberal ethos of their host state against the ethnofocal definition of the community, immigrant groups may pose a challenge to the ethnofocal identity of their host countries. Recent examples of this phenomenon are the identity and citizenship debates in Germany and France. Both countries were founded on the equivalence of nationality and citizenship, and have refused, in principle, to think of themselves as countries of immigrants. These countries have markedly dissimilar approaches to national identity and citizenship. France has adopted the principle of *jus soli* (place of birth constituting the determining factor) and has naturalized nonnational newcomers with a universalist and assimilationist vision of turning foreigners into Frenchmen. In Germany, by contrast, citizenship is ethnically based and blood-transmitted (*jus sanguinis*). However, both countries have witnessed an anti-immigrant xenophobic backlash and a growing resentment at the prospect of a pluralistic soci-

ety.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, libertarian ethnofocal countries that open their gates to nonnationals—even without granting them citizenship—may in time evolve into “poly-ethnic democracies,” to use Will Kymlicka’s term, or even reconsider their own ethnofocal distinctiveness.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Germany is the classic example of a country that has moved away from the status of a “reluctant land of immigration” to a more multiethnic state. Due to its openness to guest workers and its liberal asylum policies, Germany is now one of Europe’s leading recipients of foreign nationals (about 9 percent of its total population). Despite the Kohl government’s efforts to reduce the numbers of foreign residents in Germany and to curtail the access of asylum seekers, Germany could not stem the tide, especially given declining demographic trends in the German indigenous population. The growing reality of a multiethnic society has pushed Germany to adjust its national identity by adopting a more legal-liberal approach to citizenship that undermines the ethnicity principle as the sole criterion for access.<sup>34</sup>

Though many ethnofocal Western democracies have moved to halt migration, they are still loath to deport “rejected asylum seekers or individuals given temporary asylum.” Western democracies have also granted foreign workers many social rights and benefits usually provided to citizens. Nonlibertarian ethnofocal states, by contrast, have imposed many civil restrictions on migrant workers. Since migrant workers “are unencumbered by protests from human rights organizations in their own country and unrestrained by liberal ideology,” the nations may quickly deport their foreign populations once they consider the populations politically dangerous or economically ineffective.<sup>35</sup> The massive expulsions of foreign laborers by Saudi Arabia and Arab principalities during the Persian Gulf crisis are examples of this phenomenon.

Moreover, when ethnofocal libertarian states are founded or coalesce in the process of incorporating indigenous populations (as opposed to ethnofocal states that opened their doors to ethnically disparate immigrants), the potential for cleavages and political tensions between the dominant group and the incorporated minorities is immanent. Even if “common citizenship” is offered to the minorities, the claim that “there is more than one people, each with the right to rule themselves” is likely to endure.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the increasing autonomy and struggles for self-determination of aboriginal nations in Western countries in recent decades have challenged “the way political rights are to be understood within liberal democracies.”<sup>37</sup>

Controversy over kindred populations may arise when neighboring states take a strong interest in the fate of their respective diasporas across

the border. The Hungarian minority in postindependent Slovakia (Hungarians make up 11 percent of Slovakia's population) has been targeted by Slovak nationalists, which has raised tensions between the two countries.<sup>38</sup> When democracies confront each other on this score they are more likely to collaborate to defuse tensions; they may mutually agree to grant cultural autonomy to their respective diasporas or may even promote peaceful population exchanges. Yet when such confrontation develops between more autocratic countries, a conflagration of violence and even ethnic cleansing is more likely to ensue.<sup>39</sup>

Concern, real or otherwise, for indigenous minorities in neighboring states (perceived to be kindred diasporas) may be exploited by extremists to foment nationalist fervor and/or to fuel irredentism. The Nazis' support of the Sudeten German demand for self-determination from Czechoslovakia was a pretext to undermine the existence of the Czechoslovak state itself. More recently, the fate of Russian minorities in post-Soviet states has been exploited by Russian nationalists, in an attempt to challenge Russia's fragile polyarchy.<sup>40</sup>

Coercive attempts to assimilate indigenous populations into the majority have taken place under all types of regimes, although authoritarian governments are far less scrupulous than democracies in imposing cultural hegemony or in ignoring minority cultural demands. The example of the Kurds in Turkey illustrates clearly the impact of regime type on the fate of diasporas and the accompanying complex of political processes such as separatism, perceptions of national identity, territorial boundaries, and definitions of homeland. Turkey's harsh treatment of its large Kurdish minority has repeatedly undermined its attempts to present itself as a Western-style libertarian state. Its refusal to recognize a separate Kurdish identity and its uncompromising efforts to impose a monoethnic Turkish nationality are widely perceived to be inconsistent with the norms of modern liberal regimes and have often strained Turkey's relations with the United States and its European partners in NATO.<sup>41</sup>

As Arend Lijphart points out, the imposition of a dominant national identity tends to spur claims for autonomy or self-government and to breed tensions of dual loyalties. Ethnofocal liberal states may choose to abandon the option of assimilation in favor of "consociational solutions which accept the plural divisions as the basic building blocks for a stable democratic regime." If such arrangements are implausible or were tried and failed, "the remaining logical alternative is to reduce pluralism by dividing the state into two or more separate and more homogeneous

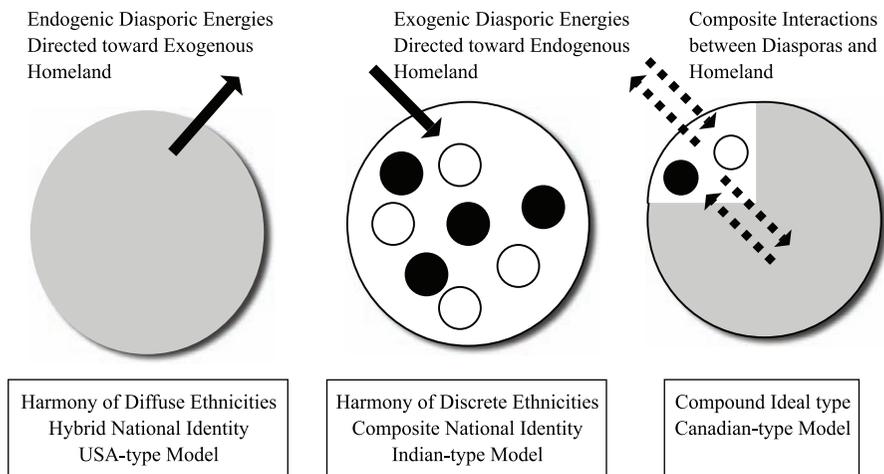
states . . . [Indeed] secession into sovereign statehood goes a significant step beyond the segmental autonomy, of course, but it is not incompatible with the basic assumption underlying the consociational model.”<sup>42</sup> While libertarian regimes have been generally amenable to peaceful consociational arrangements, the nature of authoritarian regimes militates against their implementing similar measures. Such nonlibertarian regimes in ethnofocal states will have a higher propensity to resort to extreme coercive measures to eradicate the ethnic identity of dissenting minorities and suppress any expression of aspirations for self-determination. These may include forcible expulsion of ethnic elites, mass transfer of indigenous minorities, and even genocide.

### *Libertarian and Authoritarian Influences on the Ideofocal Process*

Unlike the ethnofocal libertarian states where in principle the indigenous population rejects ethnically discriminatory domination, in ideofocal libertarian states the rejection focuses on inclusion into a larger ethnically heterogeneous entity under the banner of alleged civil “homogenization.”<sup>43</sup> In other words, while in an ethnofocal setting the rejection is of perceived ethnic subjugation, in an ideofocal setting the rejection is of perceived ethnic egalitarianism, according to which sociocultural diversity must be subordinated to civic-legal equality in the dispensation of governmental authority. In this regard, it is perhaps appropriate to recall Lord Acton’s distinction between the demands of allegiance that ethnofocal and ideofocal nationalism can legitimately place on the individual. In the former case, these demands are unlimited, embracing all walks of life, but in the latter case they are limited only to the political sphere, with a “firm barrier” emplaced against the “intrusion . . . into the social department.”<sup>44</sup>

In principle, two major variants of this latter class, which I have designated as a “harmony of diversity,” may be identified—either a harmony of *discrete* ethnicities or one of *diffuse* ethnicities (see fig. 1). In practice, it is likely that the former variant will pertain to a population composed of geographically distinct indigenous ethnicities (as in India), while the latter is more likely to pertain to a largely immigrant society comprising a diffuse cosmopolitan *mélange* (as in the United States). The Canadian example reflects a combination of both.

The nature of a harmoniously diffuse ideofocal variant has been well articulated by Michael Walzer. He wrote that in the U.S. model,



**Fig. 1. Diasporic conditions in ideofocal libertarian states—ideal-type variants**

the singular [political] union claims to distinguish itself from all the [ethnic] plural unions, refusing to endorse or support their ways of life or to take an active interest in their social reproduction or to allow any one of them to seize state power, even locally . . . there is no privileged majority and there are no exceptional minorities.<sup>45</sup>

By contrast, Nehru characterized the harmonious discrete variant in his description of India's secular nationalism as follows.

Unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardization of beliefs. It was something deeper, and within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practiced and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.<sup>46</sup>

These structural differences tend to generate divergent influences on the nature of diasporas, their political objectives, and their modes of operation (see fig. 1). With respect to the ethnically discrete model, the diasporic condition involves *indigenous* ethnicities residing *outside* the borders of the ideofocal nation-state (such as Punjabi Sikhs and Kashmiris outside India). In the ethnically diffuse variant, the diasporic condition involves *foreign* ethnicities residing *inside* the borders of the ideofocal nation state (like many hyphenated Americans). In the former case, diasporic energies

are directed *inward* from outside the ideofocal state in which the homeland lies. In the latter case energies are directed *outward* from within the ideofocal state toward the homeland abroad.

Thus in the latter case secession claims of ethnicities are highly unlikely prospects. Concerns over diasporic identities and actions are mostly associated with the “threat” of multiculturalism and/or dual loyalty. In the United States, for example, critics of the growing “cult of ethnicity” in American civic culture articulate an old American anxiety that the devotion to ancestral homelands undermines national cohesiveness by encouraging subnational loyalties.<sup>47</sup> My own analysis, however, has shown that diasporic involvement of ethnic Americans in homeland issues generally tends to enhance the integration of immigrants, reinforce the value of democracy and pluralism abroad, and temper rather than exacerbate domestic ethnic conflicts.<sup>48</sup>

By contrast, territorially based minorities like the Sikhs and Kashmiris in India or the Quebecois in Canada will be a fertile breeding ground for secessionist ambitions frequently encouraged by outside diasporas. In this respect, kindred ethnic groups (sovereign states or diasporas) may play multiple roles. On the one hand, they may be actively sought after as potential sources of support for secessionist claims. On the other hand, they may themselves be a powerful stimulus in encouraging separatism. Sikhs in North America have played this role for Punjabi aspiration inside India, while France has fulfilled both these functions for Quebec separatists.

In his controversial visit to the province, President de Gaulle energized the nascent secessionist movement in Quebec when he publicly pronounced the call “*Vive le Quebec libre!*” Since then, leaders of the Quebec separatist movement have traveled repeatedly to Paris seeking (and often receiving) the endorsement and encouragement of their French cousins. Indeed, in spite of France’s official policy of noninterference, such leaders have been granted treatment and ceremony usually reserved for heads of sovereign states.

In ideofocal authoritarian states, a pan-ethnic vision is invoked to erase previous ethnonational/tribal loyalties of indigenous peoples included in the geopolitical boundaries of the state. Soviet socialism, Titoism, and to some extent Arab Ba’athism fit this model. Attempts to blur the ethnodistinctiveness of regions may lead to a large-scale relocation of population. As regions secede, often because of radical ethnonationalists gaining the upper hand against the sentiment of the general public, attempts to rebuild lost national identities may result in transformation of settler communities into ethnic diasporas. This has been the

case in Transnistria, where ethnic Russians united with Russian-speaking Ukrainians against Moldovan radical ethnonationalists.<sup>49</sup>

The forcible annexation of sovereign nation-states and attempts to impose new identity naturally generate resistance and/or mass departure of indigenous populations that create organized diasporas abroad. Such diasporas are motivated to preserve the original national identity, while their leaders often play a major role in keeping the flame of nationhood alive for their kinfolk in the annexed homeland. Led by the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan diaspora has nurtured an alternative democratic polity in India and, in the words of Franz Michael, has “provided a beam of light and hope . . . for the six million Tibetans remaining in the Chinese-dominated Tibet.”<sup>50</sup> Indeed, diasporic leadership may remain, even after generations of displacement, the driving force in the international struggle for reinstating independence and may ultimately assume a central role once sovereignty is regained. The crucial role played by the diasporic Dashnak Party in Armenian modern history is a case in point.<sup>51</sup>

### Diasporas as Cause and Effect in Ideofocal Disintegration

The overriding goal of ideofocal imposition is to erase and deny the existence of indigenous group identities, as noted earlier. History has shown this to be an immensely difficult task. In the former Soviet Union, while some observers consider the policy of pluralist integration to have been quite successful before being frustrated by the collapse of the state, others have argued that the inadequacy of Soviet nationalism was immanent in its very nature, “made manifest by the collapse [of the old state] but not caused by it.”<sup>52</sup>

However, at times, the ideofocal goal of fusing diverse identities into genuinely internalized supraethnic national sentiment seems attainable in both in a libertarian and an authoritarian context.

Thus as a libertarian example, the American people, according to some observers who have rejected the multicultural vision, “constitute a genuine nation, with its own nation-state, the USA, with its own genuine, if largely inarticulate, nationalism.” According to this view, “most Americans of all races are born and acculturated into the American nation; most immigrants and their descendants will be assimilated into it. The American nation is different in detail from [other] . . . nations. It is not, however, different in kind.”<sup>53</sup> Among authoritarian states, Yugoslavia under Tito was perceived by some as a country that success-

fully attained a supranational goal of constructing a multinational state in the Balkans.

Clearly, there may be justified debates over the empirical accuracy of these assessments.<sup>54</sup> However, for analytical purposes one should distinguish between the rejection of the imposition of a supraethnic identity prior to its genuine internalization and the disintegration of a genuinely internalized supraethnic identity that allows the resurgence of previously “suspended” ethnonational sentiments. The fact that the unequivocal classification of any particular empirical case into one or another of these categories may be open to controversy should not diminish the fundamental conceptual validity (or utility) of this analytical distinction. Nor should it obscure the fact that they point to two substantially different political conditions under which diasporas may form and secession sentiments arise. If the identity is rejected, the failure to attain the goal of a stable nation may be cited as the cause for diaspora formations and secessionist claims. If the identity disintegrates, this indicates that the successful achievement of this goal guarantees no termination of these processes.

The Balkan reality is illustrative of this point. Tito’s relatively successful imposition of the supraethnic Yugoslav identity diminished the political profile and intensity of diasporic aspirants for ethnic-based self-determination. However, Slobodan Milošević’s subsequent seizure of power in 1987, wherein he played the Serbian nationalist card, turned out to be a watershed in the course of Balkan nationalism. It ignited interethnic conflict by thrusting the issue of diaspora and secession to the forefront of the national agenda. Likewise, his suppression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo mobilized Albanians around the world to a common cause.

For diasporic Croats in particular, it was difficult to espouse the cause of independence during Tito’s period because of Croatia’s fascist legacy and collaboration with the Nazis during World War II. Moreover, Croat diasporic proponents of self-determination were widely regarded in Europe and North America as extremists advocating terrorism to obtain their goal. These exiles did not enjoy wide support among overseas Croats and were hunted by Tito’s secret police. The disintegration of Yugoslavia’s nationalism and the pursuant intercommunal war galvanized the diaspora at large into action in the service of the seceding state. The emergence of Croatian independence in 1990 was a turning point in the awakening of the Croatian diaspora. The lobbying of Croat nationalists in Germany was instrumental in Germany’s early recognition of the new state. Diasporic Croats were also critical in raising money for the 1990 election campaign of Franjo Tudjman.<sup>55</sup> Croats in North America began

to assert their ethnic pride primarily by identifying with the political cause of their kin in the former Yugoslavia. Regardless of their specific relationship to the mother country, they now speak of their transformation as a people from . . . a historically repressed minority group in former Yugoslavia to a proud, new nation that has successfully shrugged off the yoke of communist rule and asserted a new sense of purpose and pride.<sup>56</sup>

### Tentative Conclusions

Our analysis shows that the idea of the nation-state, even when successfully realized, is patently unable to generate durable stability either internationally or intranationally. A world order of nation-states is seemingly incapable of preventing either the dispersion of stateless minorities or the continuing rebellion of ever-emerging ethnicities. These ethnicities perpetually demand new vehicles to express their own distinct national aspiration as independent political entities, separate from the existing array of nation-states.

According to the nationalist ideal, an international system of nation-states should, by the very definition of *state* and *nation*, eliminate ethnically motivated transnational loyalties and do away with intranational strife. In theory, any disgruntled diasporic ethnic group, whether resident in an alien monoethnic state or an unsatisfying ideofocal one, could then immigrate to its own nation-state, while contented diasporas that have forsaken aspirations of self-determination could be absorbed into the sociopolitical fabric of host nations either on an ideofocal basis or as willingly incorporated minorities in an ethnofocal one. This view, however, is based on an underlying assumption of a static equilibrium of political loyalties. If this were indeed true, then one could well expect that an appropriate division of humanity into nation-states would generate a tendency by which transnational bonds and intranational insurrection would eventually die out.

Yet this static perspective fails to capture the dynamics of a reality in which political loyalties and national identities are constantly changing, even after stable nation-states have coalesced. These dynamics, which may include processes such as ideofocal disintegration and ethnofocal rupture (to name but a few of the possibilities), suggest that diaspora formations and secession claims are in fact endemic to a world order of nation-states, rather than anomalous anachronisms doomed to extinction. Indeed, the scope for the revival and reconstruction of political alle-

giances and ethnonational identities can be gauged from the fact that the number of homelands and potential nations “is many times larger than the present number of nations with or without a state and infinitely larger than the number of states.”<sup>57</sup> This perpetual challenge to the validity of existing political entities may eventually undermine the very conceptual well from which states draw their own legitimacy. The unrestrained invocation of the principle of self-determination challenges the feasibility of its continued implementation in practice. It creates a constant menace of instability and fragmentation of already established states, thus imperiling the viability of a global system based on the dominance of nation-states as the overriding principle of world order. Rather than becoming an anomalous anachronism, diasporas and separatist sentiments appear to be not only an endemic feature of the international system, but a pivotal element in comprehending the direction of present and future trends in it.