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# Cultural Identities and Ethnic Minorities in Europe



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and Ethnic Minorities  
in Europe



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## Introduction

David Turton and Julia González

The essays which make up this book were written for a conference on “Cultural Identities and Ethnic Minorities”, held at the University of Deusto, Bilbao, in March 1998. The conference, which was organised by Julia González, brought together representatives of member Universities of the European Thematic Network on Humanitarian and Development Studies, within the sub-theme on “Migration, Multiculturalism and Ethnic Conflict”.

In the different projects of this Thematic Network, there is an underlying note which is both intended and spontaneously recorded after its activities. We refer to the European dimension. The idea of sharing approaches and perspectives into the analysis on a number of working themes (minorities in European being one of them) was already agreed at the first group meeting. It is interesting to notice that it was at the end of this European conference that the group decided to incorporate into their project of European Ph. D. on Migration, Multiculturality and Ethnic Conflict, two ten days seminars where the doctoral students could be exposed to the enriching variety of the perspectives and traditions which make up Europe. The initial intention is, therefore, to create common language and shared points of reference where variety could be read and further understood.

In preparing the papers for publication we were faced with the familiar problem of how to provide a coherent overall structure for a set of papers that had been written to fairly broad terms of reference, from different disciplinary perspectives and on a highly complex and much debated issue. Of the fourteen papers that were presented at the conference, two could not be included for reasons beyond our control and we reluctantly decided not to include a further three papers in order to give the collection an exclusively European focus. These were the papers by Raymond Bucko (University of Le Moyne, USA and University

of Deusto, Bilbao) on the Latuka "sweat lodges"; by Ladislav Bizimana (University of Deusto) on the crisis in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa; and by David Turton (University of Oxford) on the role of oral history in the making of group identity among the Mursi of southwestern Ethiopia.

The remaining nine papers can be categorised most obviously according to their geographical coverage, which ranges from Europe as a whole (Arroyabe), to particular European states (Mahieu, Engebrigtsen, Bosswick and Dikaiou) and to localities or regions within states (Pace, Hudson, Ryan and Husband). Although we have used this categorisation to determine the sequence of chapters, it masks (or, at least, is not entirely congruent with) another distinction which is analytically more interesting because it focuses attention on the central role of the state in the accommodation of cultural and ethnic diversity. This is a distinction between two contrasting ways in which such diversity is manifested in European states.

First, there are the culturally and ethnically distinct communities, spatially dispersed and yet concentrated within specific inner-city areas, which have resulted from post-World War II movements of economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and which represent a challenge to traditional notions of "nation building" through the increasing homogenisation of a culturally diverse population. Such "immigrant minorities" take different forms depending on the historical, political and economic circumstances which led to their creation. Thus Mahieu and Bosswick describe the faltering steps being taken in Belgium and Germany respectively to "integrate" ethnic minorities which have resulted from the state sponsored immigration of supposedly temporary "guest workers" in the 1950s and 60s. The members of these minorities can no longer be seen, realistically, as "migrants", and yet they enjoy less than full citizenship rights. Immigration into Britain from its former colonies, on the other hand, has resulted in the formation of localised ethnic minorities, such as the Pakistani community in Bradford described by Husband, the members of which continue to occupy, *de facto*, a socially and economically marginalised position within British society, even though they are, *de jure*, full British citizens. A different, and more recent, source of cultural diversity and potential inter-group conflict in Europe has been the migration of "ethnic" Germans, Russians and Greeks from the Soviet Republics and Eastern Europe towards the areas of their "designated" origin. In the case of Greece, as described by Dikaiou, this has resulted in the "repatriation" of over 200,000 people of Greek origin from the former Soviet Union and Albania.

Second, there are the increasingly salient internal, localised and territorialised identities, based on long-standing and/or deliberately constructed ethnic and cultural distinctions, which threaten, at least potentially, the constitutional structure and external boundaries of existing nation states. Four of the chapters deal with cases which come within this category. Hudson and Ryan describe, respectively, the contrasting cases of Kosovo (where ethnic Albanians make up the large majority in a province which is considered the heartland of Serbia) and Northern Ireland (where each side in the conflict can see itself as a threatened minority, depending on whether the reference population is that of the province itself or of the island of Ireland). Pace describes the emergence of the Northern League as a secessionist force in Italian politics, filling the vacuum left by the demise of the Christian Democrat and Socialist parties and basing its call for an independent “Padania” on the “invention” of an ethnic identity, supposedly Celtic in origin, for all the people of the Po valley. Engebriksen's chapter on ethnic minorities in Norway provides us with an example of a nation state having to come to terms with its inability to impose cultural uniformity and homogeneity on a minority population, the Saami, whose territory it had taken over. The attempt to “Norwegianise” the Saami appears to have led to a growth of Saami ethnic consciousness and to their eventual designation as a “national indigenous minority” with, at least in principle, rights to their own territory and natural resources.

The distinction between what we might call, for want of better terminology, “immigrant” minorities and “indigenous” minorities is analytically interesting, therefore, because it directs attention to the central importance of the nation state in any consideration of cultural diversity in Europe—but the nation state in two contrasting guises: on the one hand as the “solution” and on the other hand as the “problem”. From the point of view of immigrant minorities, the nation state is the “solution”, in the sense that they look to it (and have nowhere else to look) to enable them both to preserve their distinctive cultural identity and to overcome the socially and economically marginal position they generally occupy in relation to the labour market, access to health, education and other public services and to local and national political institutions. From the point of view of indigenous minorities, the state is the “problem”, in the sense that they see it, or at least they see its present organisation and structure, as an obstacle rather than as a means to their economic and political advancement and cultural survival. They therefore seek some degree of decentralisation of state power, so as to gain greater control over what they regard as their own affairs, or to set up their own state, or to join a neighbouring state

with the population of which they share an ethnic or cultural identity. This dual relationship of the state to the accommodation of cultural diversity is another version of the central paradox of the contemporary nation state: it has become too small to control the economic forces that determine the livelihoods and well-being of its citizens and yet too large to give satisfactory expression to their increasingly localised identities.

The implications of this paradox for the future of a united and yet culturally plural European political system is the underlying theme of Arroyabe's chapter. His fundamentally optimistic account rests on two main propositions: first, that the process of "integration" upon which Europe has been embarked since the setting up of the Common Coal and Steel Authority originated not in "some lofty European spirit" but in the realisation that "economic and technological changes had rendered the traditional European nation states obsolete as a basis for progress"; and second, that no single European state will in future be able to dominate the rest. In other words, we might say that present efforts to forge a united Europe are likely to succeed where others have failed because they are based not on the rhetoric of visionaries (though there has, of course, been a certain amount of this) but on a cool-headed grasp of economic realities that have rendered the nation state too small for its own good. This weakening of the nation state's ability to influence the international market forces that affect the economic well-being of its own citizens has, in turn, given what Arroyabe calls "elbow room" to ethnic and cultural minorities. He has in mind here the fact that no single European country has a significant advantage over the others in terms of territorial extent or population size. But it may be more important to note that all states, and not just European ones, have lost out to the globalising forces of market exchange and international investment. The history of European integration thus gives us a perfect example of what has been neatly labelled "glocalisation": the creation of a "space" larger than that of the traditional nation-state for economic activity and exchange and the parallel emergence of "places", smaller than the state, as foci of group identity and belonging. (It is an interesting paradox that Britain, the European state which led the way in embracing the consequences of economic liberalisation and the globalisation of capital, and in reducing its citizens dependence on state institutions, should have been the one to show the greatest degree of anxiety about the loss of sovereignty that European unity inevitably entails.)

As Mahieu points out for Belgium, educational policy has been the chief means by which European states have attempted to improve the

disadvantaged status of immigrant minorities, especially in relation to access to the labour market. During the 1960s, over a period of four years, the Belgian Ministry of Labour and Employment issued 125,000 work permits to migrants from Turkey and Morocco but these were, of course, the first victims of the economic down-turn that began in the mid-1970s. The average unemployment rate for "migrants" in Belgium is now almost twice (and in some areas four times) that of the majority population. It was only in the 1980s that the first attempts were made to introduce changes into the school system that would improve the educational opportunities of minority groups. The success of these attempts has, at best, been mixed. Mahieu stresses the reactive and ad hoc nature of educational policy-making for migrants in Belgium. It has been based on piecemeal attempts to respond to economic circumstances and to the influence of action groups, social movements and public demonstrations rather than on a rational and comprehensive assessment of needs and opportunities. Although this reads like a familiar story of "too little too late", there are at least two grounds for optimism in Mahieu's chapter. First, and as he himself points out, educational policy reflects prevailing "scientific" theories about the reasons for the disadvantaged status of immigrant minorities. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the findings he reports from his own research on the workings of the 1993 "non-discrimination charter" will have some impact on future policy. The second cause for optimism lies in one of these findings, namely that the more open and widely reported the "ideological" debate about such issues as freedom of school choice and of religious expression, the more likely it is that policies designed to improve the educational opportunities of minority groups will be successfully implemented.

The flow of labour migrants into Belgium during the "boom years" of the 1950s and 1960s pales into insignificance when compared to Germany. Bosswick tell us that, "Between 1952 and 1995, about 28 million people immigrated into Germany and 19.5 emigrated, resulting in a net immigration of 8.3 million". Despite a programme launched in 1983 to encourage and support financially the repatriation of guest workers, the population of former guest workers has become more or less stable —although it is interesting to note that, according to Bosswick, "it is still open to question whether the migrant communities will persist as stable minorities". In 1996 the foreign population of Germany amounted to 7.3 million, around a half of whom had either been born in Germany or had been resident there for more than ten years. In 1994, a third of all births in the country took place in a family with at least one foreign parent. The influx of "ethnic" Germans from

the former Soviet Union and of asylum seekers, which peaked in the early 1990s at around 400,000 per year, coincided with increased levels of xenophobic violence, since when there has been a sharp decrease in the annual figures for both asylum seekers and ethnic Germans.

Apart from a policy of restriction on further immigration and encouragement to those “migrants” already resident to return to their countries of origin, it seems that there is a lack of political will in Germany to tackle what Bosswick sees as the key issue: the need for “A sound policy targeted at the integration of former migrants and their children into German society”. In the absence of such a policy, there are all the makings here of a permanent “underclass”. Apart from the familiar story of economic marginalisation (the average unemployment rate for the foreign population of Germany, as of Belgium, is approximately twice that of the majority population) there is the additional twist that German citizenship has traditionally been based on the ethnic concept of *jus sanguinis*. For this reason, while “ethnic” Germans from Eastern and Central Europe find it relatively easy to obtain German citizenship, first and second generation immigrants from other countries can remain excluded, indefinitely, from voting in local as well as national elections.

Although change in the German nationality law is now a subject of national debate, Bosswick was not, at the time of writing, optimistic that early progress would be made in this direction because of the approaching general election (September 1998). Here we see illustrated one of the key reasons for ambivalence, ambiguity and “short-termism” in public policy towards immigrant minorities in Europe. On the one hand there is a growing consciousness, as Bosswick reports for Germany, of the need to integrate these minorities (in the sense of providing for their equal access to employment, housing and other state services, and to national and local political institutions) in order to avoid potential ethnic and racial violence. On the other hand, it is all too easy and tempting for democratically elected governments to divert the growing anxiety of the majority population about its own collective identity and individual security from the real causes of this anxiety towards immigrant minorities and “bogus” asylum seekers. These “real causes” —especially the increasingly de-regulated market forces and “globalised” movement of capital— are both “invisible” to the electorate and beyond the control of individual governments. While they cannot, therefore, promise security from the free play of these forces, governments can turn the consequent anxiety of their citizens to electoral advantage by demonstrating their willingness and determination to “get tough” with the all too visible “stranger next door”. Since the

main preoccupation of any government must be to maintain itself in power, the depressing truth is that we cannot rely on democratically elected governments to adopt the kind of policies towards immigrant minorities that, in the long term, common sense demands, unless they can see these policies as working towards their short term electoral advantage.

In contrast to Belgium and Germany, Greece (like Italy) has only recently begun to see itself as a country of significant immigration. Dikaiou tells us that, since 1989, over 200,000 people of Greek origin have migrated to mainland Greece from the Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia and from Albania, and that altogether 13,000 foreign migrants are entering the country each year. These include an annual figure of around 3,500 “refugees”, that is, people with no claim to Greek origin who are therefore considered by the Government to be in transit to a third country and who have to survive without formal legal status or government assistance. They include Kurds, Tamils, Poles, Lebanese and people from various African countries. This relatively sudden influx of foreigners has led to what Dikaiou describes as a “dramatic change in intergroup relations”, with traditional values of hospitality towards the stranger being replaced by “suspicion, doubt, fear and hostility”. She is not optimistic that this situation will be managed any better in Greece than it has been in the countries of Northern Europe —indeed she sees Greece “imitating other European countries with a long tradition of immigration”. But she makes an important point that should serve to encourage those who are not ready to accept that the preservation of social harmony in Europe depends on an ever more effective policing of the common European frontier. She points out that the problem we face is not how to eradicate conflict, which is a necessary and positive characteristic of human social life, but how to manage it constructively. It is not, in other words, cultural diversity *per se* which leads to violent and destructive forms of conflict but the way people perceive it and the way their perceptions are manipulated by political leaders and party “spin doctors”.

This is an important point, not only because it makes the task ahead challenging rather than impossible, but also because it reminds us that cultural diversity has been an important —very likely a necessary— factor behind the amazing cultural, economic and political achievements of European civilisation, making Europe, as Arroyabe puts it, “The continent which revolutionised the world” and “created the first universal culture worth the name”. If this is so, then the successful accommodation and management of cultural and ethnic

diversity within European states is necessary, not just to avoid the destructive consequences of ethnic and racial violence in the short term, but also to hold out some hope that European civilisation will be as creative and “revolutionary” over the next millennium as it has been over the last. The policy of “fortress Europe”, in other words, could be the chief potential obstacle to the future economic, political and cultural strength of a united Europe.

Britain's experience of postwar immigration contrasts with that of other European states in at least two ways. First, since the majority of immigrants came from former colonial or Commonwealth countries they were, under the 1948 Nationality Act, already full British citizens and had the right to settle in Britain without being subject to immigration controls. Second, the subject of immigration in Britain has always been seen as an issue of race relations and, while all political parties have paid lip-service to the need to eliminate racial prejudice and discrimination, this has been translated into policy as a commitment to equal rights and equality of opportunity, rather than to positive programmes to benefit immigrant minorities and encourage cultural difference. Husband's chapter on the Pakistani community of Bradford gives us some insight into the gap this has created for many immigrant communities in Britain between, on the one hand, the reality of their everyday experience of racial discrimination and economic disadvantage and, on the other, their formal “enjoyment” of full British citizenship rights. His main concern, however, is to trace the ways in which the members of this community, especially its younger members, are engaged in a continual construction and reconstruction of their collective and individual identities, in response to pressures, constraints and opportunities coming from within their own community and from the wider British society.

It is particularly interesting, in this connection, to note what Husband has to say about the relationship between identity and religious affiliation. Firstly, the meaning of an Islamic religious affiliation differs significantly according to generation and gender. Young men are “tending to reproduce a Patriarchal Islamic ethos, with a strong melding of Northern male machismo”, while young women are using textual accounts of Islam to challenge as non-Islamic the oral and culturally specific interpretations which both older and younger men use in an attempt to limit their freedoms. Secondly, there is a generational difference between those who describe themselves as strongly and weakly religious, older members of the community being in general more religious than younger members, regardless of gender. This much is predictable, but what is interesting is that young people of

both sexes (but especially young men) were more likely than their elders to identify themselves as Muslims rather than as Pakistani's. In other words, religious affiliation is being used here to effect a transformation in ethnic identity, along generational lines, rather than to express strength of religious commitment. As Husband puts it, "the data indicate significant differences in the understanding of Islam and its incorporation into a "Muslim" identity along gender and generational lines'. This analysis is a valuable reminder of two important characteristics of minority identities which are easily, and therefore frequently, overlooked: they are not fixed and monolithic, but dynamic, situational and always in process of construction; and they are not homogeneous but internally differentiated according to such variables as age, gender and socio-economic position. Failure to bear these points in mind when designing policies to assist the "integration" of immigrant minorities is likely to mean that those policies will be, at best, ineffective and, at worst, counter-productive.

Still on the theme of the construction of ethnic identity, but turning now to minority populations which see the state as the "problem" rather than as the "solution", Pace's chapter gives us an extreme example of the deliberate manipulation by political leaders of historical and other symbolic materials, literally to invent a distinctive ethnic identity for a territorially based population. The story Pace tells of the rise of the Northern League as a new political force in Italy in the late 1980s and of its evolution, after the fall of communism, into a secessionist movement, contains most of the distinguishing features of the ethno-nationalist political project that materialised at approximately the same time in the former Yugoslavia. First, and most obviously, there is the same linkage of ethnicity with the demand for the separate territorial existence of the "ethnic nation"; second, there is the same reliance on a charismatic leader; third, there is the assertion (in this case particularly problematic) of a common linguistic and religious identity; fourth, there is the same use of visual symbols, especially associated with territory and land; fifth, there is the same deliberate and skilful reconstruction of a supposedly collective past to give substance to the assertion of a common cultural identity; and seventh, there is the same portrayal of this identity as threatened by the oppression of a long standing and equally constructed "ethnic" enemy—in this case the economically backward south, represented by the "corrupt" central government in Rome.

Two points are of particular interest for us in this account. The first of these is the "double-edged" relationship between the secessionist project of the League and Italy's membership of the European Union.

On the one hand, the political structure of the EU provided the would-be independent Padania with an attractive alternative "centre" to Rome. The kind of "independence" being envisaged, therefore, was not that of the "traditional" European state, jealously guarding its status as a totally sovereign entity, but one which was predicated on the existence of a politically united Europe which was seen as providing a political and economic "space" within which an independent Padania could flourish. In breaking away from the centralised Italian state, then, Padania would be putting itself under the umbrella of a decentralised, or federal European "state". On the other hand, its ability to make this transition was greatly undermined by the success of the Italian government in taking Italy into the European Monetary Union. Had Italy not been able to satisfy the Maastricht criteria, the League would have been able to "shout from the rooftops that the economically backward south had stopped the modern, industrialised, hard working north from soaring independently into Europe". There may be a lesson here for right-wing politicians in Britain, who see the creation of separate political assemblies for Scotland and Wales as leading to the ultimate break up of the United Kingdom and yet also worry about the loss of sovereignty entailed in Britain's membership of the EU and, in particular, in its adoption of a common European currency.

The second point of particular interest in Pace's chapter relates to the suggestion we made earlier that the policy of "fortress Europe" may be a hindrance rather than a help to the future economic growth and cultural vitality of Europe. At the end of his chapter, Pace notes the important contribution made by immigration (and therefore by cultural diversity) to the creation of the economic base upon which the political programme of the League was built. He is not thinking here of internal migration, from the south to the north of Italy, which must have been important to the economy of the north for many years, but of Italy's recent change from being a country of emigration to one of immigration, without which "the economic growth of many areas in the north would not have taken place".

The case of Padania is certainly an extreme example of the part played by what Ernesto Renan called "fabrication historique" in the creation of a national consciousness. It is clear, however, that the leaders of the Northern League were basing their "fabrication" on certain historical "facts", albeit highly selective ones. We should perhaps be thinking here of a continuum, lying between two "ideal types" which are the complete antithesis of each other and which are never realised in practice. One of these is a completely invented ethnic identity, which bears no relationship at all to objective historical

circumstances, and the other a completely objective one. All ethnic identities have *some* historical basis, in other words, but none are entirely historical. If the case of Padania lies towards the un-historical end of the continuum, then the case of the Saami, described by Engebriksen in her chapter on Norway, lies towards the historical end.

The Saami have their own language and are found not only in Norway, where they are estimated to number about 30,000, but also in Sweden, Finland and Russia. They come into the category of an "indigenous people", meaning that they inhabit, or claim rights to, territory that was taken over during the establishment of a nation state and that they are culturally and/or linguistically distinct from the majority population of the state. But just as Padania was not a pure figment of the imagination of a nationalist demagogue, so the Saami are not an aboriginal population which has survived intact from a time, before the Norwegian state, when they enjoyed greater isolation and autonomy. It is clear from Engebriksen's account that Saami identity—their current image of themselves as a distinct minority population—is a product, not a cause, of their changing relationship with the Norwegian state.

Three facts are particularly significant here. First, the Saami are not a homogeneous population but "comprise groups that differ according to dialect, culture and traditional occupation"; second, Saami ethnic consciousness rose steadily as the Norwegian state attempted, from the end of the First World War, to incorporate them by means of a harsh policy of "Norwegianisation"; and third, the "turning point" in the struggle of the Saami for recognition as a distinct minority people came with the construction of a hydro-electric dam in Saami traditional territory. This caused the Saami to link up with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples and to defend their rights and promote their cultural distinctiveness at a trans-national rather than simply at a national level. The basis of the Saami challenge to the central authority of the Norwegian state has been their successful claim to territory: they have fought the state, as it were, on its own "ground" and have succeeded in denting its territorial hegemony. But they probably could not have done this without taking their fight outside the borders of the state, and joining forces with a transnational social movement.

What this case illustrates yet again is that cultural diversity is generated by the very processes of state incorporation and globalised communication technologies that appear, on a superficial level, to threaten it. The key to understanding this is to recognise that the Saami of today are not the Saami of yesterday. Ethnic identities are never static and are never created and maintained by isolation. They are the

product of contact and of cultural interaction and are therefore in a constant process of "negotiation". The apparently very different, and certainly more violent, cases of Kosovo and Northern Ireland illustrate the same point.

Kosovo and Northern Ireland are at different stages in a cycle of violence that has similar roots and several common characteristics. Both contain a large population (in Kosovo a large majority and in Northern Ireland a large minority) which sees itself as marginalised and discriminated against in its own land by an "alien" state apparatus and which has closer cultural ties with the population of a neighbouring state—or, in the case of Kosovo, states—than it does with the majority population of its own. Both therefore illustrate the contradictions implicit in the doctrine of self-determination as the international norm of nation-building. In Northern Ireland, those seeking secession and union with the Irish Republic are in the minority, while in Kosovo, although the large majority are ethnic Albanians, the territory they occupy is seen as the "cradle" of the Serbian nation. Partition, one of the possible scenarios listed by Hudson as a solution for Kosovo, was tried in the 1920s in Ireland and solved nothing: indeed it was disagreement about the legitimacy of the partition that led to the violence of the last twenty years. While in Northern Ireland there appears to be a general recognition that violence has run its course, in Kosovo this stage seems very far away. In Northern Ireland the outline of a broadly acceptable political agreement is on the table and yet there has not been a rush to agreement. According to Ryan, the reason for the haltingly slow progress being made in the intercommunal talks is that they are only superficially about the negotiation of a constitutional settlement. More fundamentally, they are about the "re-negotiation" of communal identities.

Three interrelated conclusions may be drawn from the cases of cultural diversity and ethnic identity presented in this book. First, the goal of a politically, ethnically and culturally homogeneous nation state is a mirage, in Europe as much as in the "new nations" of the post-colonial world. This is not because "primordial" ethnic differences have proved too "stubborn" to be overcome and obliterated, even by the powerful centralising forces of modernity, but because these very forces generate and promote diversity, even as they do their work of centralisation. Second, conflict in general and identity conflict in particular, should be seen as a normal, not a pathological condition of human society. And third, the problem we face, in Europe as elsewhere, is not how to eliminate ethnic conflict but how to accommodate it so that it does not erupt into the vicious, dehumanising and "incom-

prehensible" forms of violence that we have witnessed in Northern Ireland and Kosovo. It is fitting that we should end this introduction with the salutary reminder that we do not have to look beyond the borders of Europe to find some of the worst excesses of intercommunal violence anywhere in the world.



# Europe as a mosaic of identities: some reflections

Estanislao Arroyabe

## 1. The challenge of the Other

A few years ago, one of my colleagues, a linguist, drew my attention to the following fact: biologically speaking, we all have the same mouth, and the differences existing between individual mouths are (except in anomalous or pathological cases) irrelevant. And yet, when people learn their mother tongue as infants, their mouths become accustomed to forming and emitting its sounds, so that they will have difficulty in reproducing the sounds of another language adequately in later life. People then speak of “foreign accents”. The human mouth may look the same in an English or French anatomy textbook, but the native French speaker will rarely do justice to the phonetic features of English, or, of course, the other way round. And so countless jokes will be made in France about “l’incroyable accent” of the English, while the latter will consider with almost traditional amusement the antics of the French when they attempt what they take to be English.

Physiologically then, the starting point is the same for all, and it could be termed “neutral”, insofar as it can assume very diverse phonetic characterisations. Now, once an individual is socialised—once the mother tongue and its sound profile have been acquired—it is impossible for that individual to approach a second language from phonetic scratch, as if the second were a first language or as if the first did not exist. Although there are no physical obstacles, we approach the second language from the first, with well known consequences: we thoroughly mispronounce and disfigure the former, although—let it be stressed again—our vocal organs are not phonetically prejudiced. Rudolf Steiner spoke French, German and English so genuinely well, that people thought his first language was the one he happened to be

speaking. But such cases are so infrequent as to be the exceptions confirming the rule.

Foreign accents enable us to appreciate —very graphically, one might say— the tremendous weight and paramount significance of socialisation, and the depth of the imprint of the group on each individual. This stamp, furthermore, is crucially important when meeting persons belonging to other groups, because, obviously, the more characteristic our own profile, the more difficult it will be to attune it to others. Pronunciation and accent are a plain yet stubborn instance of this fact. Generically speaking, values would be another, broader and much more important instance, because differences in values may translate into serious difficulties when attempting to communicate with people who do not share one's own. Let me refer to two of the most important of these difficulties.

The first contains in itself and goes beyond the phonetic one; it could be called the hermeneutic difficulty. A typical, mainstream Frenchman will react as such, when confronted with just as typical an Englishman; the former will receive the latter with good French manners, and will listen or try to respond from his personal co-ordinates, that is from a cast of mind which, if French, may be very different from an English one. After all, what else could our Frenchman do? It is unavoidable that when we approach the person and the world of the Other, we do it having as tools our own person and world. This is the reason why, when learning English, the French student pronounces it in the French way: that is, he or she forces English pronunciation into a mould into which English hardly fits. In order not to do so, in order to respect English phonetics, the French student will have to learn to formulate sounds which may be strange or plainly difficult. He will have to use his mouth in odd, unaccustomed ways, clumsily at first and, with time and practice, perhaps with increasing success. This whole process will succeed only if the mouth of the French student gains a flexibility it did not originally possess. But such an acquisition is achieved only through repetitive, persistent effort, and apart from being neither easy nor pleasant, the results are often enough only modest.

This approach to the Other (and to the Other's world) is even more complicated when the matter at hand consists in ways of thinking or living. Word-play and punning exist in both England and France, but south of the Channel they play a more important role than north of it. There exists a French as well as an English humour, but they are not mutually exportable. But then, if getting the point of a foreigner's humour is not exactly easy, the difficulties will increase formidably with

increasingly complex issues like a different religion or political opinion; the greater the difference between existing positions, the more hazardous communication becomes. The effort necessary to understand a very different frame of mind can be literally painful, as ideas, values and notions, have their roots in experiences which can be wildly different from person to person or from group to group. Understanding the Other, therefore, means reconstructing his world. But this requires a laborious revision, and perhaps extension, of one's own horizon. All this means a lot of hard and —unpleasant as it may be— indispensable work, if we really are to grasp the Other and his or her views. If learning to pronounce vowels and consonants which do not exist in one's own language is wearisome, what is to be said of the difficulties arising when the heterosexual faces the homosexual, the diehard conservative the rabid liberal, and the violent the nonviolent? Just to understand the world of the Other frequently requires a serious effort; judging its relative goodness, compared to our own, requires an even greater effort because, in order to attempt this, it is necessary to find a higher, more objective viewpoint. One often hears that communication demands the growth and development of the communicators. But it tends to be forgotten that this amounts to what the Germans aptly call "jumping beyond one's shadow".

Communication being so often costly and difficult, the meeting with the Other resembles a crossroads at which very different directions can be taken. Because of his or her sheer otherness, the Other can be a fascinating mystery, eloquently showing us what we are missing, and thus be a liberating influence. Few things in life are as refreshing as meeting people who, simply by being as they are, renew and restructure our own personality. Accordingly, we often seek well-intentioned people who can see our situation, but from their, not from our, perspective; we know well that the views of the Other could turn out to be decisively positive for us. In the same vein, getting away from it all —which means getting into something else— can be the best form of relaxation. Or of education: just as going abroad, or at least somewhere else, can be the best form of holiday, studying abroad can add much to an education; this is why professors so often advise students to avail themselves of the exchange programmes offered by the European Union. But of course there is another side of the coin: very many people may enjoy a holiday abroad, but how many leave home and migrate freely? Not so many. The reason is obvious: be it in an accent or a mentality, foreign things are an uphill struggle. Why? Because they are not one's own, and one does not move or act naturally towards them. In a word, they require effort.

This is why the hermeneutic difficulty carries with it another, perhaps more decisive, one, which I would call “ethical”, and which causes every relationship with the Other to be basically fragile. As long as a relationship is smooth and does not require effort, we will not have problems with it. But what will happen if understanding the Other requires a degree of sacrifice on our side? It may then be that we give up trying, or do not even attempt the task. In other words: the more rampant the selfishness, the more endangered all sorts of relationships. Coming back to our initial consideration, this could mean giving up learning a foreign language, not because one tried one's best and failed, but because one rules outright that enough is enough, that those people have a really impossible language, or a ridiculous accent, or an abstruse grammar; why bother about them? This is how in classical Greece the word barbarian was coined; as a demeaning and ethnocentric designation for all those obscure northern neighbours who did not speak as finely and precisely as, in their own estimation, the Greeks themselves did. Again, if we pass from accents to values or mentalities, this dangerous slope can easily lead to categorically harsh judgements, or to give them their proper name, prejudices (that is, judgements passed without considering the evidence). And then, the citizens of such and such country are seen as quintessentially dim-witted, or lazy, or perfidious, or any other of the many insulting epithets which we Europeans have tended to heap so generously on each other.

Because understanding the Other means doing justice to him or her and to ourselves, and because this, aside from being difficult, can run counter to our preferences or interests (let alone privileges), we tend to limit our efforts. We do what we are forced to do, but not more, and not even that if we can avoid it. Or to put it in other words: if we have the stronger hand, if we are the majority, we just let our weight make itself felt. Hence, for instance, the well known situation of so many ethnic minorities, forced to learn the dominant language but without institutional rights for their own. Or the parallel case of numerous religious minorities and their precarious, disdainfully permitted existence.

To put pressure on minorities seems to come naturally to majorities, and this underlines the central difficulty in our relationship to the Other: it does not lie in our ability to understand, but rather in our willingness to respect. Because access to the Other is often laborious, it is tempting to cut short the difficulties by simply imposing our views, by steamrolling them into acceptance. Such a temptation will be stronger when the difficulties increase, when the distance between us and the Other happens to be greater than it seemed. If, furthermore, that distance is maintained by solid but conflicting interests, communication,

mutual understanding, are pure utopias; what we get is a tug-of-war, if not a downright war.

The fragility of dialogue and the difficulty of getting close to the Other, lies then in the ethical opacity of human beings. Let me illustrate this by proposing a short mental experiment. Think of the number of people that we know. Let us then ask ourselves, how many we trust amongst those whom we know (to how many would we, for instance, entrust our home or our savings?). Finally, let us proceed to a third question: how many of those people do we love? And then, let us repeat the experiment in the opposite direction: How many people know me? How many trust me? How many love or, more modestly, like me? The numerical difference in the answers speaks for itself and explains why we are so cautious with each other (or, if the expression be allowed, with each Other). This cautiousness is necessary because we do not know from the outset about the good or bad will of those we are dealing with, and because everybody's life is littered with disappointments in this sense. For the same reason, others are cautious with us, and the others we are cautious about may well be those closest to ourselves. We might even be well advised to be especially careful with them.

One hears much nowadays about communication and dialogue. In my view, all the modern techniques of presentation, discussion and persuasion, fashionable as they are (and so reminiscent of classical Rhetoric) count for nothing if they are not animated by a sincerely good will (the Sophists were the first technicians in communication, but they did not achieve a better or more enduring polis). Without good will, all these techniques become cheap tricks, marketing at its most ephemeral. The question is, what gives human beings the good will that leads to disinterested effort? From where or what does this good will come? Can we recover it if we have cheated or others have cheated us? If so, how? I take this to be the central problem of Ethics, and therefore of communication with the Other. It may even be the central problem in human life but, going as it does well beyond the limits of this presentation, I can but allude to it and leave it at that. If we acted towards the Other according to our loyal best, we might, as Newman said, have ten thousand difficulties but no problem. The plodding slowness of our intelligence would indeed be a difficulty, but the real problem lies in our loyalty to the results of that intelligence, or rather in the uprightness of that intelligence, in its loyalty to itself. Possibly because such loyalty is not all that common, our history — which is also our history with the Other— remains the baffling, painful confusion that it is.

## 2. The European mosaic

Considered as a cultural phenomenon, Europe is frequently seen as the synthesis of two elements: Greek rationality and Christian values. Nonetheless, ferocious wars (not only of religion) have abounded on our continent, as well as irrational explosions as sinister as Nazism, coming after two centuries of Enlightenment; so much, then, for self satisfaction. The following are some personal remarks about the future of the European mosaic.

1. European integration seems irreversible to me. There is still a long way to go, but so much ground has already been covered that going back is out of the question. Well and good, but one should never forget that the European idea did not originate in a noble, farsighted reflection that conquered people's minds, but as the only reasonable way ahead after a series of catastrophes. Since the end of the Thirty Years War, the political system in Europe was nothing but an unstable balance between several powers. As soon as one of these powers tried to outdo the others (France under Louis XIV or Napoleon, Germany after Bismarck) the others fell upon it, and the same was the case when one power gave signs of weakness (Spanish and Austrian wars of succession, the partitions of Poland, the decadence of the Ottoman Empire). This led to two world wars in our century. The continent which revolutionised the world, which created the first universal culture worth the name, which imperially ruled the planet, lay prostrate at the end of the Second World War, and at the mercy of two non-European superpowers (the USA and the Soviet Union). The choice was increasingly clear: either some form of association or political insignificance, if not servitude. In order to overcome the contradictions which had plagued the past, something new had to be devised, achieving what the Greek city-states had failed to do after the Peloponnesian War.

Furthermore, economic and technological changes had rendered the traditional European nation states obsolete as a basis for progress. The investment needed to remain competitive in a contemporary environment required a level of sales (and therefore of production and finance) impossible to obtain in small national markets; the need for a larger market was therefore evident soon after the Second World War. The choice was, in this case too, unequivocal: either a more important economic space would have to be created, or the European states would become mere appendages of more vigorous and larger economic blocs. If things did not change, those proud states which during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries colonised practically the whole of the planet, risked becoming colonies themselves. This explains why the

first really fruitful European initiative was the Common Coal and Steel Authority. Since those days coal and steel have lost their role as mainstays of industry, but the way then begun has been pursued. The Common Market was launched, customs barriers were abolished, tax systems harmonised, national budgets brought into line, and a common currency and a Central European Bank are being launched under our very eyes. And just as economic and judicial power has been devolved to European institutions, political and military power will, I think, follow. The modalities to be adopted are far from clear, and there will be endless, tiresome negotiations involving a huge amount of horse-trading, but in my view, sooner or later yesterday's sovereign states are going to become something like administrative units, deprived of quite a few of their former attributes.

But let us not for a moment deceive ourselves: this integration process is not due to some lofty European spirit, and not even to humdrum common sense; it has been forced upon Europeans by circumstances. One has only to attend to the tone and manner of that integration to see this. It is not a marriage of love, but one of reason, in which every single detail of the future common life is agreed upon after detailed and exhausting negotiation. Behind European integration one finds increasing conviction, few gestures —and a staggering amount of administration!

2. In the future Europe there will be no dominant state, nation or group, because no country greatly surpasses the others in geographical extent or population. Germany is seen by some as the candidate for such a role, but taking into account only the four main West European countries, the 80 million Germans cannot impose their political or economic will on about 60 million French, and roughly as many Britons and Italians. Because there will be no single dominant country, this will exclude the all too human temptation to extend one's own ways, language or aspirations, to the whole group. The Soviet Union disintegrated a few years ago. On paper it was a fraternal association of very different nationalities whose very diversity was constitutionally enshrined, and was supposed to be enriching for the whole. But...over half of the population was Russian, just as Russian as were three quarters of the territory and natural resources. And the whole was managed by Russians sitting in the old, traditional capital of Russia. Given the ethical fragility of human beings, the result was foreseeable: the big fish ate the small fry. Latvians and Uzbeks learnt —had to learn— Russian, but Russians did not care to do the same with languages of other nationalities; not even in cases like Latvia or Kazakhstan, where Russian migration had been massive almost to the point of tipping the ethnic

balance. The Russians living in Latvia did not even think of learning Latvian, but expected "quite naturally" every Latvian to be bilingual; and it was of course self-evident, that when Latvians and Russians had any business to transact, the language used had to be Russian. And so, steadily, Latvian had to retreat, lose relevance and make place for the increasing russification in all walks of life. The very cultural identity of the Latvians was being both flooded and undermined.

I do not think anything like this will happen in a future Europe. It will be a culturally plural Europe, not because of a quantum leap in civilised behaviour, but rather because of the continent's very fragmentation. We will have to take each other more seriously, because there will be no other way. And we will have to organise our common life, which is not going to be simple or easy at all. Take for instance the languages: are all national languages to be considered as official languages in the future Europe? When the Common Market was launched, its members used four languages (French, German, Dutch and Italian) and had recourse to simultaneous translation for their meetings. Brussels still works the same way. But the official languages of the European Union have now grown to eleven. How many will there be when Central and Eastern European countries join, as they are already beginning to do? Some time ago English was suggested as the working language of the Union, but this proposal was adamantly opposed by the French, who understood very well that a language which is not official loses practical significance, and risks very real relegation. They kicked up such a rumpus that two working languages were agreed upon, English and French. But then the Germans stepped in angrily, arguing that their language was numerically the most important one in the Union, and their country the main contributor to the common budget. The result of these comings and goings has been that the Brussels budget for translation and interpretation has kept growing vigorously. Official documents, for instance, have validity for a country only when translated into that country's language, and not before. Some may see only national prickliness in this, but on the other hand, the Danes, the Greeks, the Portuguese or the Finns know that if they renounce the official status of their language, in the long run they may be endangering their own cultural identity. Yet for imperious practical reasons a solution has to be found, but which one? Which language or languages should be made official and for what reasons? How should the other ones be treated? What should be done in a democratic Europe if, say, someone insists on using Catalan in official communications and argues that more Europeans speak Catalan than Danish? Or if the same person simply takes the view that what is at stake is an inalienable right?

3. The fact that there will be no single dominant group in Europe gives, as I see it, more elbow-room to minorities, that is to those ethnic and linguistic groups who have often been victimised by dominant majorities within the national states. There are voices —coming usually from these majorities— who find it inexplicable that there should be “fits of tribalism” within the European integration process. This rather ill-mannered expression, and other similar ones, betray something like shortsightedness, or, even worse, selective historical blindness. What has happened is that today it is possible to air what yesterday was repressed; what then comes out is part and parcel of the European historical heritage, so full of injustices in need of reparation. And how keenly these wrongs can be felt, and how stubbornly their righting can be demanded, has to do, again, with human nature: we humans commit injustices quite easily, but can be tireless if we ourselves suffer one. In accordance with this fact, the dominant groups do not even think of all they have inflicted upon the smaller ones, and then are surprised, if not incensed, when the latter show unflinching determination in their attitudes. Large or small in size, all have become inhabitants of the same house, and strife within it will increasingly affect every one of us. So we will have to learn to get along with each other, and this means that the larger groups will have to respect the smaller ones, at least more than they did. The national state was like a boxing ring without a referee: the stronger contender could bully the weaker one, and there was no one to step in and stop him. In a Europe of many groups and languages, of very different sizes, this bullying is impossible, as we are all in the same ring now. This is good news, but it is sobering to consider that such an evolution, if it takes place, will be basically due to a modification in the “rapport des forces”, and not to any honest reappraisal of historical conduct.

4. Europe is like the teeth in an old mouth. Those teeth are large, with deep, intertwined roots and have grown so by jostling for space among themselves. Needless to say, putting order among such teeth, or bringing them into aesthetic and functional harmony, is going to be quite a job, and such is going to be the case too, with European integration. On the one hand, the economy, the shortening of distances and the revolution in telecommunications are bringing us closer and closer; on the other hand, the Europeans are not ready to lose their roots and become, like the United States, a melting pot. We want to go on being what we are, and yet our increasing closeness cannot but influence us mutually. How could this influence work? Perhaps neighbouring languages could provide a useful hint.

Two such languages rarely, if ever, fuse into a third. Mutual influences are more subtle, less crass. Words and constructions are imported or

exported, because, as Wittgenstein would say, ways of life are accepted or abandoned. In time, those formerly foreign products are absorbed and no substitute can be found for them. In present day German, for example, and since the days of Nietzsche, the acute dislike which is called "Ressentiment" cannot be expressed better than with this, originally French, word. All European languages present numerous similar cases, which betray the extent of mutual influences. Russian and German bear witness in their very vocabulary, to the cultural dominance of French at other times. In spite of stubborn, officially supported resistance, French is being infiltrated—some even say undermined—by anglicisms and americanisms. But English itself is a Germanic language very deeply coloured by Norman French and medieval Latin. A certain amount of cultural and linguistic mixing has always taken place, and I think the modern world will increase its pace. A few months back one could read in an important European weekly, that the Germans have become more British (pragmatic) in politics and more Mediterranean in their culture. If one compares the different generations in Austria, Germany or German-speaking Switzerland, one cannot but conclude that such indeed is the case. Spanish "tapas" can be found in some French or Belgian bars, and many Spaniards have for breakfast the very traditionally Swiss-German "muesli". The houses we inhabit, the companies and organisations we work for, the salaries we receive, the taxes we pay, the cars we drive... we are less and less different in more and more things. But then, my South Tirolean students come to mind.

South Tirol is a small region, which has belonged to Italy since 1918. Previously it was part of Austria and practically 100 % German-speaking. Mussolini tried to italianise it despotically through, among other means, population transfers. Nowadays, according to the latest census, close to 70 % of the South Tiroleans count themselves in the German-speaking group, the rest being Italian speakers, save (as in easternmost Switzerland) a very reduced group of Ladins, who speak Romansh, a language directly derived from Latin. After the Second World War, and amid tensions which provoked some terrorist outbreaks, an autonomous administration was granted to the region. All in all, one might say, a very European situation. Now, my German-speaking students who come from this region to study in Austria do not feel themselves to be Austrians, as often their parents, and even more staunchly their grandparents did. They appreciate very much certain aspects of the Italian life-style like clothes, the tone of personal contacts, the "human" —as they say—flexible way of solving intricate or difficult situations. And they say quite clearly what they think. The

“typically Austrian” or “German” way of doing things is for them legalistic, boorish and unpleasant. Does this all mean they feel Italian? Not at all, even if their Italian is often very fluent and natural. When asked, they say that they feel “German”, in the cultural but not political sense of the word.

Unlike their grandparents, they are not interested at all in a possible reincorporation into Austria, and the more so in this post-Schengen era, when the Brenner frontier, cleaving the very heart of a once single and united Tirol, is becoming, for all practical purposes, irrelevant. If asked about their language, they will unhesitatingly answer “German”, and consider Italian as no more than a beautiful, practical acquisition. They will say “we in Italy have a different law for this and that”, but two years ago one such student came to see me because he needed my authorisation for a student exchange programme. When I asked him where he wanted to go, he said “Florence”. I asked why, and his reply was: “in order to learn Italian”. Rather surprised, I remarked that he came from a city where the population is 50 % Italian, and whose mayor is alternately a German speaker and an Italian speaker; his simple answer was: “that’s true, but we don’t mix with the Italians”. And this was far from being the only case in which I have heard this “we don’t mix”.

5. These students of mine make me think how decisive language can be as a cultural factor. They also make me reflect on how fluid a cultural identity can be and on how the emerging European framework could affect the historical identities that it embraces. Many of the factors which defined a cultural identity are fading or losing grip; to be at once a Pole and a Buddhist was, not so long ago, as inconceivable as being a Catholic and a Korean. Geography and history conspired to shape types which seemed as unchangeable as the works of nature; one was Polish and Catholic as indisputably as grass is green and the sky blue. But technology has greatly diminished geographic distances, and the accelerated rhythm of change in our times makes us see as historically conditioned, as culturally contingent, many things which, to our forebears, were carved in stone. Like it or not, the Other as onlooker questions our very self, and on the other hand, our very existence is an inevitable reference for the Other. If the world is becoming a village, this is *a fortiori* the case in the European section of that village. We are so inextricably bound together, so thoroughly intertwined, that it is impossible to say how we may influence each other, and this is for me one of the most fascinating unknowns in the emerging European equation: how will the present linguistic, confessional, and institutional identities evolve? No one, of course, knows the correct answer. It is a

good bet to assume that some formerly absolute loyalties, some previously differential features, will simply wither away. Others, though, may acquire renewed importance. In any case, new constellations are bound to appear, new definitions based on the preferences manifested by the Europeans. As in the case of my South Tirolean students, such preferences may considerably modify traditional frameworks, some of their elements being appreciated while others are depreciated. But surviving identities, as well as new ones, will owe their success to a factor that I consider essential, and which I can only describe in commercial terms, although I would not like to be understood commercially: only what sells will last, and only what is attractive will sell. As we all know, the market is pitiless, and if we are of no interest to the Other, the Other will discard us. Such is life. Fortunately, we can be of interest for many reasons, and single parameter views of human realities and their future are dangerously simplistic. For this reason, the future of Europe and of its components is a fundamentally open one and will depend on the attractiveness of the options which emerge. This may be disquieting for some and hopeful for others. I think it will be interesting for all.

# **Minorities, policies and strategies in Europe: a Belgian (Flemish) view**

Paul Mahieu

## **1. Belgium: a multi-cultural country**

Belgium has a rich history of multi-culturalism, having been a multi-lingual entity since its birth in 1830. The state consists of three regions: Flanders (Dutch speaking); Wallonia (French speaking); and a small German-speaking area. The capital, Brussels, is a bilingual city. As the capital of the European Union and the headquarters of different international organisations (such as NATO) and companies, the city is very attractive to foreigners. In earlier times, Belgium always had widespread international trade relationships: think of the harbour cities of Antwerp and Bruges.

Between 1930 and 1980 there were three main waves of immigration into Belgium. The first one involved Polish and Italian immigrants who came from rural areas with poor economic prospects to work in the Belgian mining industry. The second wave of immigration started in 1947 and followed a similar pattern to the first. It was focused once again on the mining industry but for the first time the flow of immigrants was organised into quotas and called on the services of workers from different countries, such as Spain and Greece. The third wave of immigration took place in the sixties with workers from different countries (Turkey, Morocco) filling vacancies in new sectors of activity, such as the transport and construction industries. During this period, which was described as the golden sixties, the Ministry of Labour and Employment issued no less than 125,000 work permits over four years. The same Ministry arranged for a brochure called "Vivre et travailler en Belgique" to be distributed in countries in which a high proportion of the population were seeking to work overseas: "We in Belgium are happy that you are coming to our country to offer

us the services of your strength and intelligence... Belgium is a country in which work is well paid, and people enjoy a high standard of living, particularly those with families" (OECD, 1991: 271).

Now, at this moment, we are confronted with the negative effects of the immigration policy. Since 1974 economic growth has declined, and the migrants have been the first victims of that process. At present about 20 % of the migrants are unemployed, while the average unemployment rate for indigenous people is 11 %. In some regions (like the city of Malines) the unemployment rate for migrants is 42 %, four times the rate for indigenous people. Social unrest, disturbances by some groups of migrant youngsters, racism, and the relative electoral success of extreme right wing political parties have been the direct outcomes of this socio-economic situation.

The current debate on the policy for minorities must be understood in the context of the relative success by the extreme right-wing Vlaams Blok party in the last elections and recent disturbances by young migrant people on the one hand, and the present so-called "white movement",<sup>1</sup> a reaction to blunders made by the police and judiciary in investigating paedophilia cases, on the other. Just one year ago the funeral took place of the Moroccan girl, Loubna Ben Aissa, who was murdered by a paedophile. That was a unique moment when people became conscious of the dignity of the migrant community. Some individuals, such as the King of Belgium, Ben Aissa's sister, and the parents of other murdered and disappeared children gave a face to that movement. Their influence on policy is unquestionable, but at the same time invisible. The lesson from this is that multicultural coexistence is not only a question of policy. Policy has always followed trends in society.

Belgium's federal and democratic state organisation is not the result of a rational policy-making process. It is rather the result of economic conjuncture, power relations, influence of action groups and social movements, public demonstrations, and the actions of particular elites and individuals. The same is true of policy concerning ethnic minorities, and educational policy in particular.

## 2. Migrants and education

The short account given above shows that there are many different foreign groups in Belgium. First of all, the so-called indigenous people have a very international origin. My name, for example, has southern

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<sup>1</sup> "white" here is used to symbolise innocence, and not in a racial sense.

French roots. Secondly, Belgium is a very open Europe-oriented community. Thus, Flanders is home to more than 61,000 people with Dutch nationality (citizens of the Netherlands, who use the same language as Flemish people). It's significant that they are not seen as "migrants". On the other hand, the 46,000 Moroccans and 45,000 Turks, including those who have obtained Belgian nationality, are all seen as migrants. People identify them as such by their names, their outlook, their religion, their habits, and the fact that the older migrants on the whole don't speak Dutch, at least not at home.

By "migrants", we mean people of foreign origin who have settled in our country, and want to remain there. That implies that these people prefer a kind of integration. That's the reason most migrant families are reunited, and the young people become estranged from the country of their parents or grandparents.

Education is seen as the ultimate means for promoting integration: directly by the process of socialisation, and indirectly as a foundation for employment. But it seems that our schools don't succeed in this challenge. In the first year of primary education one third of migrants seem to be backward and 8 % are referred to special education for the mentally handicapped (cf. 5 % for indigenous Belgians). At secondary level we see about 60 % of non-European pupils in schools for vocational education and fewer than 20 % in general secondary education. For indigenous pupils the rates are respectively 22 % and 45 %. Only 1 % of the student population in higher education is of migrant origin.

### 3. Educational policy for migrants: three periods

As mentioned earlier, policy is always a result of changing cultural paradigms. Policy is also connected with scientific paradigms. In this respect, I would like to distinguish three periods of educational policy for migrants, and connect these periods with three theories concerning the explanation of the disadvantaged status of migrant people.

The first period covers the seventies and early eighties. In this period nothing was done for the migrants. They were seen only as a source of cheap unqualified manpower. Their marginal social status was explained as being a result of cultural deficiency and a lack of fluency in the majority language. Educational policy was restricted to some language compensation programmes.

In the eighties the emphasis changed from compensation programmes to differentiation programmes. The paradigm of those years

was that it was not the migrant but the school system that caused marginalisation, because that system was based on the modal white pupil and did not answer to the needs and preferences of the migrants. In this respect changes in curricula were implemented, with such courses as "Dutch as a second language", "mother tongue education", and Islamic religion. The broad principles centred around respect for the cultural groups' identities, collaboration in schools between indigenous and "guest" teachers, and preparing pupils for social life, and professional life in particular (FASE, 1994: 93-96). These conditions reinforced the schools' segregation mode through their identity policies and the tendency to differentiate the minority children from Flemish children by employing ethnic boundaries. In consequence, migrants chose those schools that made the greatest efforts to meet their interests, while at the same time the majority population moved away from them, because their perception was that the quality of those "black schools" declined.

I start the third period in 1991. In May of that year the Flemish Government decided to improve the educational facilities of schools with at least 10 % migrant pupils in order to reduce their educational handicap and to advance integration. Within this Educational Priority Policy, "black" schools can apply for additional teaching periods and support from a special educational advisor. In order to receive this support, they need to describe their specific actions oriented towards intercultural and language education, prevention and solution of learning difficulties in co-operation with an educational guidance centre, and school community work (the obligation for the school to collaborate with a social welfare centre together with the local migrant organisation). The result was a more appropriate and professional approach by schools and a shift from "black" schools to schools with more moderate percentages of minority children. However, the situation of "black" schools remained the same, as they were confronted with a loss of their best pupils.

#### **4. The 1993 non-discrimination charter**

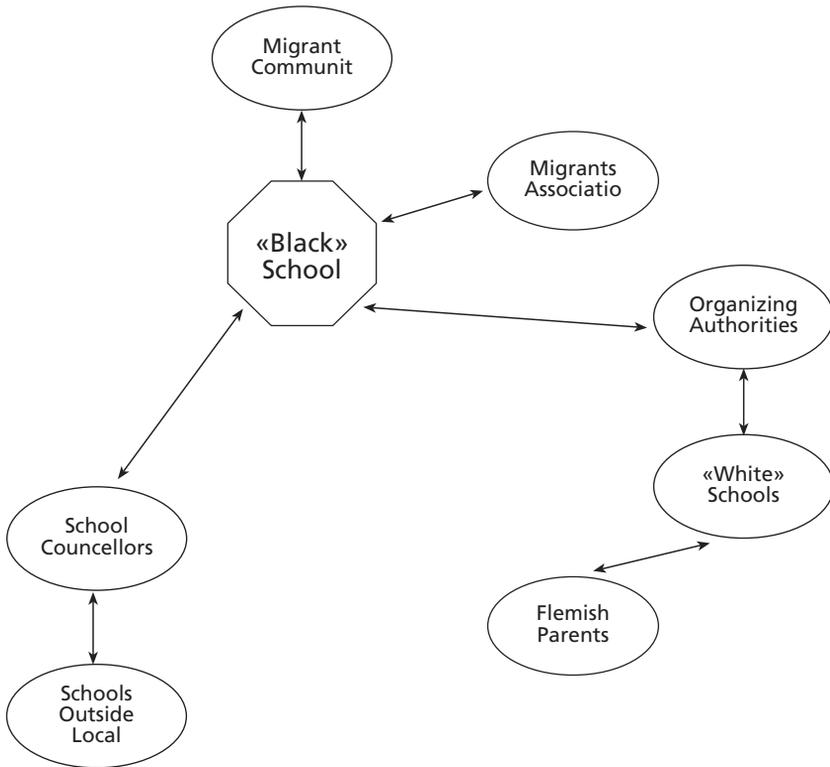
In 1993, the Flemish Minister of Education together with the educational associations declared a non-discrimination charter in order to further facilitate the integration of minority children into Flemish society. The two objectives of the policy are: a greater awareness with respect to discrimination in schools, and the realisation of an admission policy as a way to establish a proportional presence of migrant pupils in

all the schools of a community. The implementation of the non-discrimination charter is a matter for the local community. A local agreement is worked out through negotiation among the organising authorities of the schools to implement the admission policy. Furthermore, in order to stimulate this policy, the government offers additional resources to those black schools that are able to redefine their strategy according to the non-discrimination policy (EVELING, 1996; JANSSENS/SEYNAEVE, 1998).

This policy is an example of the more integrated approach of the government. Structural theory teaches us that education cannot be isolated from other social affairs. Schooling, housing, employment, cultural participation and exclusion, are all interrelated. Crucial to the whole process is the mutual tolerance between the different ethnic groups. The first aim of the policy is therefore to create tolerance and prevent racism. A research project I conducted in order to evaluate the implementation of the non-discrimination charter formulated three main conclusions (MAHIEU 1997).

First of all, the aim of a better spread of migrants over the schools (desegregation) has not been realised. On the contrary, the concentration (measured by the standard deviation as a statistical mean to objectivate spread) has been strengthened, especially in small schools. This does not mean that schools actively facilitate that process, but the large elitist white schools, especially, do not take any action against it. And by following such a passive policy, they strengthen the prevailing opinions about social stratification.

Secondly, not all schools have the necessary capacity for playing an active local policy role. Since most of the government's measures at present are voluntary, the schools need the capacity to analyse their market positions, to write an action plan in which they specify their concrete actions, and to negotiate with government, other schools and stakeholders. External assistance and support seems essential for a successful implementation of such a policy. It is clear that schools which see themselves as an element in a network of stakeholders (Figure 1) have more chance of success because they can use their "moral power" as an instrument to influence the different stakeholders. Low power stakeholders who are trying to achieve a voice in the domain may need to build their power base before they can gain legitimate status as a stakeholder. Everything depends on the way the school can influence the dominant values, and convince the stakeholders of the social attractiveness of its multicultural project (JANSSENS/SEYNAEVE, 1998: 5-7).



**Figure 1**

The “black” school within its network of stakeholder relationships

The model shown in Figure 2 is inspired by the so-called Boston Consultants matrix. It brings together the organisational values and the dominant values in the school's environment. The questions that must be answered are: is the value system of the school and the social project that makes that culture visible compatible with the dominant values in society, and how strong are both value-systems?

In Belgium, for example, the market position of white elitist schools is strong because their values are compatible with the dominant culture. They play the role of “success organisations”. Schools with a multicultural project play the role of an action group, a grassroots organisation, because those schools try to change the common opinions. For them it is a challenge to convince the environment of their social responsibility. The other types of organisation —the “sect” and the

External value system	Internal value-system	Strong	Weak
	Strong	Success Organisation	Missionary subculture
Weak		Grass-roots Organisation	«Sect»

**Figure 2**

Types of organisational (sub)cultures based on the dominance of the internal and external value-systems

missionary subculture— concern schools where the internal values are weak in contrast to the dominant values: for example, the white school where some teachers try to convince their colleagues about some socially attractive projects (missionary subculture), or schools where an extremist minority (e.g. fundamentalist religious teachers) try to convince their school and the whole world of their religious opinion (sect) (DIETVORST/MAHIEU/PEENE, forthcoming).

The third conclusion of my research concerns the role of the ideological debate on multiculturalism. In those cities where the implementation of the non-discrimination charter has been the object of incidents and of public discussion, the results are more positive than in those where the local deliberation fora have tried to keep their problems out of the newspapers. That these fora are working is not evident. Since the Belgian constitution has declared the freedom of (supply and choice of) education, competition between the so-called pillars (Catholic, provincial; communal, official education) and between individual schools is institutionalised and co-operation between them is unusual. Representatives of schools with different ideological and cultural features were obliged to analyse their mutual responsibilities *vis à vis* the migrant problem. Where the segregation process strengthened the traditional “cultural barriers” (i.e. where the migrant pupils were concentrated in some particular schools, especially in official schools) the debate was characterised by arguments concerning fundamental human rights (such as the freedom of school choice and religion). These discussions were sometimes very intense and emotional. But in all local fora the result was that the representatives of the different schools made each other's acquaintance, which generally resulted in a growing mutual appreciation. The most important effect was that the

school representatives became conscious of their common social responsibility with regard to the problem of segregation and the quality of education. In that respect, the non-discrimination charter caused a double culture shock: between ethnic communities and between Belgian (ideology-based) subcultures. On both sides, the implementation of the charter is a step towards a more tolerant society.

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# Relations between the State and ethnic minorities in Norway

Ada Engebrigtsen

In this paper I will give a general and descriptive outline of the past and present relationship between the state and its agents, and ethnic minorities living in Norway. Norway has traditionally been an ethnically homogeneous society. Since Norway was first established as a state in the late twelfth century, only two languages have been spoken in the country, Norwegian and Saami, apart from small groups speaking Kven (Finnish-Norwegian) and Romani (a Norwegian gypsy dialect). Relatively equal distribution of resources and a decentralised economy and state power has developed a culturally homogeneous population that today numbers 4.5 million people. But what follows is not altogether a nice story about a benevolent state and its happy subjects.

## 1. Historical outlines

The *Saami* (Lapp) population is the only minority that today has official status as a national indigenous minority. The Saami population in Norway is estimated at about 30,000, but as in most minority situations the numbers are of course dependent on definition and that is a complex issue. Saami people live as minority groups in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia with their own language, Saami, which belongs to the Finnish Ugrian language group. "Saami" refers equally to the people, the language and the territory they traditionally have utilised. The Saami are, however, not a homogeneous population, but comprise groups that differ according to dialect, culture and traditional occupation. Relations between the Norwegian state and the Saami people have not been static. The first documented agreement between the state and the "Lapps", in the eighteenth century, states the Saami's rights to use the

grasslands and natural resources on both sides of the Norwegian-Swedish border. This agreement acknowledges the Saami as a nation with its own rights and way of life. A century later, however, the state monopolised all territory in the northern areas and the Saami were without rights to land. Up to the second world war, Saami people were pursuing economic activities much like Norwegians in general with the exception of reindeer herding, an exclusively Saami activity. Few restrictions were set on their herding activities. However, from the end of the first world war, when Norway gained its independence from Sweden, until 1970 the state carried out a harsh policy of assimilation towards the Saami people involving compulsory schooling, prohibition of the Saami language in school and the Saami religion, and official contempt for everything Saami. This forceful process of Norwegianisation was in line with the construction of the Norwegian way of life and establishment of the welfare state based on a Norwegian ideology of equality.

At the same time Saami ethnic consciousness was steadily rising. This developed into an ethnopolitical struggle in the late seventies when a hydroelectric power plant was to be constructed on Saami traditional territory. The construction of the necessary dam on the Alta river would destroy traditional reindeer pastures. This, the "Alta case", was the turning point of Saami and state relations. One Saami strategy was to establish connections with the World Council of Indigenous People and work for Saami rights on a global level. As a consequence of the "Alta case" conflict and the international media coverage which it attracted, the state gave the Saami recognition as an indigenous ethnic minority with certain rights. A commission was set up to establish an agreement between the state and the Saami population. This commission stated that the Saami should be recognised as a distinct people in accordance with the international conventions on minorities. Further, the Saami should have exclusive rights as Saami in Norway. It was stated that the Norwegian state had established itself on Norwegian and Saami territory and that the Saami had the right to economic support to develop language, culture and religion. This acknowledgement was reinforced by the Saami legislation in 1987 and the establishment of the Saami Council in 1989. The Saami Council has not, however, been given any formal power so the struggle for rights over the natural resources in Saami territory is still not resolved.

Today Saami people are a modern people who live all over the country and are engaged in all sorts of occupations at all levels of society just like Norwegians. There are, however, also Saami who live in the so-called "core territories" in northern Norway and are occupied with modernised traditional occupations.

The other longstanding minority groups are the Kven, Jews, Tater and Rom. Recent immigrants and refugees will not be considered in the present context.

*The Kven* are descendants of Finnish immigrants to northern Norway in the nineteenth century and are estimated to number about 15,000 persons with the same limitations concerning definition as stated for the Saami. They have no legal status as Kven, only as Norwegian citizens. There are no exclusive ethnic communities of Kven today; identity is established by knowledge of descent and knowledge of the Finnish language. Some local communities in northern Norway are, however, dominated by descendants of Kven people.

*The Jews* are an old minority in Norway. Since 1851 they have had rights as Norwegian citizens and most Jews were socially, culturally and economically integrated into Norwegian society by the second world war. In spite of this, many were sent to Germany during the war. There were 1,800 Jews in Norway in 1940 and only 560 in 1946. Today Jews form a religious community of 1,200 members.

*The Tater* are the equivalents of Spain's Gitanos and England's Gypsies. The Tater are an old minority group in Norway and their origin is unclear. They might be descendants of some early Gypsy migration; they might also be descendants of the rural and urban poor that have mixed and intermarried with Gypsies and taken up a lifestyle as itinerant artisans. Up till the second world war the Tater were quite numerous and roamed the countryside with horses and wagons, doing all kinds of itinerant artisan work in the villages. They spoke their own language, Romani, which is classified as a dialect of Norwegian with a vocabulary derived from Romanes (the language of the Rom Gypsies). From about 1930 they were heavily persecuted by the state through the Christian organisation "Mission among the Homeless" ("Norsk misjon blant hjemløse"), which was entrusted with the assignment of "solving the Tater problem". Labour camps were erected for Tater families, where they were supposed to learn "proper" skills, be given basic education, stop drinking, and become devoted Christians. Families were forcibly deported to these camps with the penalty of losing their children to the state if they refused. Most families moved into the camps and adopted a Norwegian lifestyle. The state agents, however, took many children away and turned them over to children's homes, farmers and Norwegian families for correction. Even forced sterilisation and lobotomy were used to some degree, to wipe out the Tater as a "race". This policy was started in the 1930s and was explained as necessary race hygiene; in the political rhetoric of those days, the Tater were considered a "primitive and degenerate race". This led to an almost complete assimilation of

Tater both as a group and as individuals; Tater identity was so stigmatised that it was socially impossible to admit to it among Norwegians.

The last ten years, however, have shown that not even that forced assimilation process has been a total success from the point of view of the government of those days. Currently most Tater live as Norwegians, but many are trying to revive Tater traditions and identity now that altered ideologies about ethnicity and nationality have made this possible. Today three or four organisations are pursuing the interests of the roughly 2,000-3,000 Taters with the government. These interests are concentrated on economic compensation for the ethnic cleansing they have experienced as a group and the illegal removal of children, lobotomy and sterilisation experienced by individuals.

*The Rom* (Gypsies of the Vlax Rom category) are a relatively new minority in Norway. They started settling in the country around 1850, but have always been nomadic and only live in Norway in the winter season. They speak Vlax Romanes, an Indic language. They have always been few, numbering only about 350 today (1999), and all belong to one tightly knit kindred group linked to groups all over Europe through kinship ties. Gypsies avoided Norwegian assimilation policies before the first world war by going to Germany, France and Belgium. When fascism and the war approached in Europe, a group of 50 Gypsies, some with Norwegian birth certificates, tried to get back into their country for security. They were, however, refused entry and sent back to Central Europe, where most of them died in the concentration camps. In the early sixties the survivors and their children returned to Norway and applied for citizenship, which they were granted. In the seventies the government launched a massive programme to settle, educate and create jobs for the 350 Gypsies. This programme lasted for about 20 years, while at its height the state paid all the Gypsies' expenses in exchange for adjustment. The project was, however, totally unsuccessful from the government's point of view. Today the Gypsies form a distinct ethnic community in Oslo and make their living by trading in carpets, cars and gold, by grinding tools and by social security benefits. They travel in Europe during spring, summer and fall. Their children do not attend school, they are illiterate but economically quite well off. They have no minority status but full rights as Norwegian citizens.

## 2. Ethnic minorities and anthropological research

The Saami people have been the focus of extended research by Norwegian sociologists, linguists and historians and last but not least,

anthropologists. A joke used to state that in the seventies a Saami family consisted of mother and father, three children and an anthropologist. This research has had an important impact on the development of Saami consciousness and ethnic struggle. It has also inspired the development of academic studies of ethnic relations and related theory building at Norwegian universities. Among other works, Fredrik Barth's *Ethnic groups and boundaries* is a result of this focus on ethnicity and research on Saami relations, as is Harald Eidheim's *Aspects of the Lappish minority situation*. Saami research has been concentrated at the University of Tromsø in Northern Norway, where the Department of Anthropology was first established as a Department for Saami Research, and the curriculum has been focused around indigenous matters, ethnicity and resource management. Today all Norwegian universities are engaged in some sort of minority research. The Kven population has been less studied than the Saami, but some important research has been carried out in this area. Tater and Rom have been studied mostly at the master level and no theoretical framework or research milieu have been developed for such studies. Jews in Norway have only recently emerged as a group and are only these days on the verge of being defined as an ethnic minority.

### 3. Today's European discussion: classifying national minorities

Apart from a Saami policy the Norwegian government has no official minority policy. This situation is, however, changing. Currently the government is establishing arenas for discussion with the country's minorities about their legal status. Norway has entered the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Council of Europe, 1995), and the implementation of this agreement rests on the ability to define which groups should be recognised as national minorities. One meeting has been held in Oslo between the Ministry of Municipalities, researchers and representatives of the minority groups discussed above (Kommunal og regionaldepartementet, 1998). This interesting meeting clearly pinpointed the problems in defining and delimiting minority groups for bureaucratic purposes. The different representatives reacted to this effort in different ways.

The Jews are very few in Norway and their representatives neither objected nor adhered to the idea of becoming a "national minority group". Their main concern was to have some political connections to support their interests as a "people", the confiscation of Jewish property being a central issue. The Saami were not interested in being classified

as a national minority as their status as an indigenous people defines them in a more appropriate way. No Rom representatives attended the meeting; they are not very interested in the issue, but influential Rom had stated that they would like to have a powerful contact person in the department to turn to for support of their interests, such as a permanent camping site in Oslo and general permission to practise itinerant trading.

The Kven representatives were the only invited representatives who were genuinely positive to the idea. The status of national minority would enable local communities in northern Norway with a great percentage of Kven people to seek financial support for local museums etc. As a surprise a representative of a category presented as Skogfinner (Forest Finns) appeared at the meeting. This category contains many different groups of descendants of Finnish people who practised slash and burn agriculture in the forest area of Southeastern Norway up to the twentieth century. They no longer speak Finnish and consider themselves assimilated into Norwegian society, but their representative regarded the status of national minority as a means to obtain economic support for research, protection of the cultural heritage, and contact with other Finnish Diaspora communities.

The meeting was especially illuminating when it comes to the reaction among the Tater, who have been the most persecuted group in Norway. Individual Tater had telephoned and written to the Ministry long before the meeting. Many were in panic and believed that to be classified as a national minority would imply that they are recognised as less Norwegian than other Norwegians and that the old persecution would start over again. Others were afraid they would have to learn their old language and wear certain marks of identification or live in certain areas. The Ministry's officials had great difficulty in convincing the Tater of their honest and innocent motives: that the status of national minority was meant as compensation for previous wrongs. One of the Tater representatives commented: "The convention for the protection of national minorities is 20 years too late; today we are no longer a people and we are no longer persecuted by the state".

I believe the Tater's reaction to the state's aims to define national minorities should be taken seriously. The effort is in line with the general process of Europeanisation of the nation state and, as such, a possible continuation of an old modernist theme of "tidying up" to secure the centralisation of power. What profit may there be in that for minorities?

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## Minorities, policies and strategies in Europe: Germany

Wolfgang Bosswick

Unlike other countries reported on in this book, Germany does not have a large indigenous minority, although the country is not as homogeneous as it might appear at first glance. Nevertheless, as a result of the modernisation under Wilhelm II after the violent unification of Germany by Bismarck in the last century, Germany under Prussian rule developed a dominant national identity. After World War I the largest part of the only major minority within the German Empire, the Polish population in the Eastern areas, was included in the reborn Polish State. The traditional mixed population of Poles or Czechs and Germans in Central Europe was further separated by the massive migration after World War II. Today, reunified Germany has only a few indigenous minorities, which are quite small compared to the total population of approximately 89 million: there is a Danish-speaking minority (c. 50,000) in Schleswig-Holstein in the north, a Frisian-speaking population in the north-west (c. 10,000), the Sorbians, a minority of c. 70,000 people in Eastern Saxonia speaking a Slavic language, and the Sinti and Roma, the Gipsy groups, of approximately 70,000 people. The Danish-speaking minority has had a special status since World War II with special minority rights, including political representation in the Schleswig-Holstein parliament. For the Sorbian minority, the former German Democratic Republic provided a supporting programme to foster their language and local culture within its authoritarian political system. The other minorities mentioned above received official minority status in 1997, in accordance with the European convention on minority rights (HECKMANN, 1992).

As in other European countries, post-war labour migration and, from the eighties onward, refugee movements, formed new minorities in Germany, although it is still open to question whether the migrant communities will persist as stable minorities. The labour shortage in

Germany's economic miracle of the fifties led to the guest worker programme in which official recruiting facilities were installed in some of the relevant countries. In 1955 the first treaty on hiring guest workers was signed with Italy. Spain and Greece followed in 1960 and, due to Turkish diplomatic interventions, a corresponding treaty with Turkey was signed in 1961 (STEINERT, 1995). Further agreements were made with Morocco in 1963, with Portugal in 1964, with Tunisia in 1965 and with Yugoslavia in 1968. The inflow of guest workers peaked in 1970 with about one million, resulting in a net immigration of 547,000 in the same year. Although the guest worker programme envisaged a rotation scheme, thus expecting a return home after a limited period of two or three years, the immigration led to a quite stable population of immigrants who remained —although often not intentionally— in Germany. Only the former GDR enforced this rotation scheme for their foreign employees from Cuba, Mozambique, Angola and Vietnam. As a consequence of the oil crisis, the German government imposed a halt on recruitment on 23 November 1973. After this regulation, immigration to Germany was only possible via family reunification regulations, which became the prime source of net immigration into Germany in the eighties. On 1 December 1983, the German government launched a programme to encourage, and support financially, the repatriation of former guest workers. This programme resulted in a small repatriation of approximately 80,000 Turkish guest workers and their families. It seems that in many cases a planned repatriation took place earlier than originally envisaged in order to get support from the programme, since the repatriation figures decreased sharply after the end of the programme. Apart from this limited result, the programme certainly had some impact on the migrant population by stating symbolically that their departure was desired.

In spite of this policy, the population of former guest workers in Germany became increasingly stable. As an indicator, one can look at the gender distribution. The proportion of female foreigners reached 45 % in 1987, maintaining this level approximately since then, while the figures for the years before were between 37 % and 42 %. Between 1952 and 1995, about 28 million people immigrated into Germany and 19.5 million emigrated, resulting in a net immigration of 8.3 million. A considerable share of this gross immigration —3.9 million— took place after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, mainly caused by the immigration of ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union, and by asylum seekers, which peaked in 1990 (ethnic Germans) and 1992 (asylum seekers) at around 400,000 per year. The populist uses of the asylum issue in several election campaigns, the obvious

consequences of this immigration peak on the population level, and the position of the German government, which repeatedly stated that it was unable to deal with the serious problem of "asylum abuse" due to Article 16 of the German Basic Law and the opposition's reluctance to change this article, all contributed to the rise of violent attacks against foreigners. This "violent populism" (LEGGEWIE, 1992) decreased after the compromise on the change to Article 16 in July 1993, which also included a ceiling on the annual number of ethnic Germans immigrating (BOSSWICK, 1997). The level of xenophobic violence in Germany decreased considerably after this compromise, although it remained on a quite high level compared to the years before 1992. Regardless of the sharp decrease in the annual figures of both asylum seekers and ethnic German immigrants in recent years, xenophobic crimes still amount to more than 2,000 per year.

In 1996, the foreign population in Germany was 7.3 million, 8.9 % of the total population. Almost half of this population had been resident more than 10 years (49.4 %) or was actually born in Germany (approximately a quarter of all foreign nationals). In 1994, 6.3 % of all births took place in a family of Turkish origin, 33.7 % in a family with at least one foreign parent. Thus the immigration to Germany which was intended to be temporary in the eyes of both the migrants and the receiving society, resulted in the formation of new minorities: 28 % of the foreign population in 1996 was of Turkish origin, 19 % from Yugoslavia, 8 % from Italy, 5 % from Greece and 4 % from Poland, to name the most represented nationalities (LEDERER, 1997).

The policies of the German government towards minorities are ambivalent. First, there is a distinction between the indigenous minorities named above, which were officially recognised as national minorities enjoying certain minority rights, and the minorities formed by immigration. This policy became apparent when spokesmen for the Turkish population and the Green Party demanded the acknowledgement of the Turks as national minority in 1996, a request which was clearly refused by the governing coalition.

More important is the ambivalence of the policy guidelines relating to migrants. According to various statements by government representatives, the German policy towards migrants encompasses three principles: *integration* of the ones who are likely to remain, *restriction* on further immigration, and *encouragement* of return to the country of origin. It remains unclear whether this policy is directed towards a perpetuation of minority status, or towards acculturation and integration, requiring a certain openness of the receiving society including the provision of full rights as German citizens (HECKMANN, 1998). This ambivalence is also

reflected in the remarkable contrast between, on the one hand, full integration in the welfare system of the Soziale Marktwirtschaft regardless of nationality (this crucial decision was made in the fifties, supported by all the unions, the employers' associations and the political parties), and on the other, the dominance of the ethnic concept in German nationality legislation (*jus sanguinis*), which results in an increasing share of the population being excluded from full participation, despite being residents for more than a decade or even born in Germany. This exclusion doubtless causes obstacles to the integration of these residents, and calls into question the legitimacy of democratic representation, since an increasing share of the resident population remains excluded from voting in elections, even at the community level.

This ethnic concept of nationality, which emerged in the German Romantic period, has been thoroughly discussed in recent years. The German nationality law created in 1913 has recently been evolving towards a political concept of nationality, expressed in the German discussion by the term "Constitutional Patriotism". In an amendment in 1993, a legal claim for naturalisation after eight years' residence and the fulfilment of some other requirements was invented. Before this amendment, the authorities granted at their discretion naturalisation applications for foreigners fulfilling the prerequisites. After it, the number of naturalisations increased (70,000 in 1995), but still did not match the number of children born as foreign nationals in the same year (100,000). Although there is a clear majority in the Federal Parliament for reform of the naturalisation and citizenship legislation, a bill put forward by the Social Democrat opposition which reflected this majority position was recently rejected by a majority vote of the governing coalition due to political tactics for the 1998 federal election campaign.

Apart from the migrant population's lack of legal integration, there is a considerable inequity in the social situation of the foreign population in Germany. In 1996, the average unemployment rate of the total population in Germany was 10.1 %, while the unemployment rate of the foreign population was 18.9 %. The stagnation in the labour market (the average rate is currently above 12 %) is strongly affecting migrant workers, since migrants are usually occupied in traditional sectors of the economy (VON LOEFFELHOLZ/THRÄNHARDT, 1996) which are increasingly shrinking. The shortage of apprenticeships in the German dual system, especially, raises serious problems for the integration of second generation youth into the labour market and German society, although there are a lot of programmes funded by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs targeted at these young people.

This risk of the formation of a permanent *underclass* out of the migrant population and their descendants raises the danger of increasing social conflict. It might result in an ethnicisation of this conflict, especially in the case of the large Turkish minority. A sound policy targeted at the integration of former migrants and their children into German society is urgently needed. The experiences of "classical" countries of immigration show that this policy should aim at overcoming social inequality along ethnic lines and should offer support for the second generation, based on individual criteria, not ethnicity. It should provide opportunities for integration into the receiving society, especially by facilitating naturalisation and by including elements of *jus soli*; for example, granting German citizenship automatically upon birth and accepting dual citizenship until adulthood. It should consequently fight xenophobic populism, present not only on the extreme right wing, and it should support integration by factual and symbolic expressions of willingness to integrate these German residents. Further, it should also require the countries of origin to release these migrants and their descendants, and not to contribute to segregation due to political or economic reasons.

Any progress in this respect is very unlikely in 1998. On the contrary, one has to expect some polarisation during the federal election campaign until September 1998. Germany can still be seen as a "reluctant land of immigration" (MARTIN, 1993), refusing to deal properly with the consequences of the massive immigration during recent decades. The growing consciousness that integrating the migrant population is important for the peaceful and prosperous future of German society is still not resulting in serious political action. But in the long run, there is no real alternative.

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# From conflict to harmony: the Greek case

Maria Dikaiou

I would like to start by stating two truisms of general application: first, the increasing scale of world problems demands a greater awareness of global interdependence and responsibility; second, as our European community grows smaller in terms of accessibility and joint enterprises, the possibility for ethnic conflict increases proportionally. With these two processes taking place, it appears likely that much of the conflict in the 1990s in Europe and beyond will involve cultural diversity at some level, whether the diversity arises from gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, culture, language, or other factors (MITCHELL, 1991).

## 1. Introduction

My aim is a) to describe the recent changes and to identify conflict situations arising from intergroup diversity, one of the most critical problems facing Greek society today; and b) to identify the conflict areas most urgently requiring measures in terms of research studies, policy development and resources.

Conflict may arise out of a variety of contexts in personal, interpersonal and intergroup relations, leading to various forms of passive or aggressive behaviours (BROADMAN/HOROWITZ, 1994). Generally speaking, and except for cases of war and forced expulsion, conflict is not always a bad thing. Contemporary research shows that conflict may have positive or negative effects, depending on the issue involved, the types of groups opposing each other and the specific socio-historical contexts in which such phenomena take place (BROADMAN/HOROWITZ, 1994). Within this perspective, it can be the root of personal and social change or the medium through which problems are solved.

The social and scientific issue, therefore, is not how to eliminate conflict but rather to develop the knowledge that would enable us to assist human development. Today, issues of constructive vs. destructive management of conflict situations are discussed much more thoroughly and there is a tendency to move away from old notions of “conflict resolution” to “conflict management”. Before we can discuss these issues further, it is important to define the concepts of conflict and harmony, titled in this presentation.

## 2. The definition of conflict and harmony

When perceived in a continuum, conflict seems to be the opposite of harmony; however, looking deeper at the processes involved, one finds that the two terms are closely interconnected. Conflict points to macro- and micro-social processes leading to “incompatible activities” (DEUTSCH, 1973, p.10), whereas harmony refers to the outcome of such activities; taken from Greek Pythagorean philosophy, “harmony” is used to describe a system of balance, e.g. the “cosmos” system where all parts coexist and contribute to each other’s existence.

When referred to people, the term “harmony” is used to describe “agreement” reached by people as a result of co-ordinated actions by different, even opposing, sides. Within this perspective, it seems to me that what we ought to be discussing is the management of conflict; in other words, finding ways to handle conflict constructively. Further, what should concern us is the prevention not necessarily of conflict itself, but of its destructive expression.

Although many aspects of conflict are still to be investigated, researchers from social psychology, (DEUTSCH, 1949; JOHNSON/JOHNSON, 1989), sociology (AVRUCH/BLACK/SCIMECCA, 1991), economics (SCHELLING, 1960), political science (TOUVAL/ZARTMANN, 1985) and anthropology (GLUCKMAN, 1967), have identified a number of different factors that influence the development of constructive vs. destructive forms of conflict as well as its outcomes. These include such variables as the type of conflict (whether the conflict is over resources, beliefs, values or the nature of the relationship), the size of conflict, the individual or group characteristics and type of intergroup diversity. I will be concerned with intergroup diversity in Greek society because it contributes to an increase of social incompatibilities between groups, especially between those formed after the massive migration movements towards or through Greece.

### 3. Group diversity as the result of demographic changes

In discussing issues of intergroup diversity, Greece is a country of great interest. Being in the centre of the processes of social change for the past fifteen years, Greece has become a multicultural carpet of various ethnic minority groups—especially after the recent events in Eastern Europe—which are repatriating to the area of their “designated” identity. Since 1989, 60,000 people of Greek origin (entire families, sometimes communities) from the Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia have migrated to mainland Greece (VOUTIRA, 1992). Of these, more than 60 % are under the age of 25. Meanwhile another group, Albanians of Greek origin, have also entered the country. Although statistics are always questionable, there are estimates that as many as 150,000 Albanians crossed the border illegally or legally just after the frontiers were opened.

However, the above groups are not the only “foreigners” presently residing in Greece. Another category is that of foreign refugees, defined by the Greek state as those without blood ties to the Greek nation. Today it is estimated that as many as 13,000 foreign migrants are currently arriving in the country each year, of whom up to 3,500 are characterised as refugees. Like other southern European states, Greece has permeable borders, across which refugees and other migrants can travel relatively easily. Since the Greek government views all foreign refugees as being essentially in transit to third countries, those unable to resettle are forced to survive often without formal legal status or government assistance. Most of the refugees currently in Greece are Kurds from Iraq, Iran and Turkey, Tamils from Sri Lanka, and asylum seekers from Poland, Lebanon and many parts of Africa. They are found mainly in Athens but also in other parts of Greece. The size of the respective groups remains largely undocumented, and there has been no academic work on their socio-economic situation.

Such large migration movements have created severe socio-economic problems for the newcomers as well as for the receiving country. Besides financial problems, lack of employment and lack of proper housing, they face difficulties in intergroup relations. What we witness today, is a dramatic change in intergroup relations. Traditional values and ideals concerning foreigners are replaced by suspicion, doubt, fear and hostility. As a result, phenomena of racism and intergroup conflict are present in everyday life. This situation is further aggravated by the presence of great numbers of youth working and/or living on the streets (PINIOU-KALLI *et al.*, 1993). School-age adolescents

engage in various activities on the streets: selling small objects, cleaning windows, shop-lifting and pick-pocketing, prostitution and begging. In most cases, the minors concerned show particular features of ethnic origin (Balkan or Gypsies), minority status, poverty, parental deprivation, lack of schooling and lack of protection by the social welfare system (DIKAIIOU, 1996). These characteristics are similar to those given to the broad group known worldwide as "street children".

Demographic changes as described above do lead to diversity and social incompatibilities between groups. This again forms the social background to conflict situations and antisocial phenomena. This is not to say that diversity (cultural and social) in itself causes conflict. It is rather the way diversity is perceived and socially constructed within the dynamics of a particular socio-economic system (LYNCH/MODGIL/MODGIL, 1992). It is interesting that in this respect Greece seems to be imitating other European countries with a long tradition of immigration. The hostility, violence and racism seen in them is now happening in Greece, though at a different pace and with variations. Do these features of conflict point to a repetition of trends in other European countries? And if so, to what extent is the European Community ready to deal with such commonalities? It is true that greater economic and political integration in the European Union has opened up new perspectives for examining social inequalities, differences and similarities between groups. The question is whether European Community members are prepared to handle conflict constructively and move towards a condition of harmony?

If this prospect is at all possible, which seems unlikely, then we are only beginning to take the first steps. Within the field of Applied Social Sciences, theorists and practitioners have explored many of the basic variables and principles which are important to achieving a constructive resolution to a wide range of social problems. These include school conflict and violence (JOHNSON/JOHNSON, 1994), homelessness (HOROWITZ/BOARDMAN/REDLENER, 1994), and organisational conflict (DONELLON/KOLB, 1994). This research, however, remains primarily nationally oriented. An opening up has become more apparent in the past five years or so; ongoing research is showing more signs of furthering comparative and intercultural perspectives than has been the case for traditional conflict resolution research where a community of discourse has yet to be firmly established. As some authors point out, "Once communities of discourse do begin to constitute themselves, they can generate productive theoretical energy through mutual interrogation of interpretations and explanations" (CHISHOLM/BUCHNER/KRUGER/DU BOIS-REYMOND, 1995, p.1).

Finally, within the field of social policy, things do not look much better either. While it is now commonly assumed that contemporary European societies find themselves in a phase of accelerated change, the processes involved remain very poorly understood, whether in research or policy terms. These processes tend to be described theoretically in terms of differences and similarities in life chances and risks between and within groups in Europe. Often enough this translates into a rhetoric of equality of opportunity and common interests, and lack of common understanding and policies which are perceived by state officials as promoting integration.

The complex intersections between regional, ethnic, social background and gender differences will play a part in shaping these processes and will inevitably influence people's lives and futures prospects in Europe. In spite of this, we are far from being in a position to transform and co-ordinate all these factors into coherent steps towards harmony.

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# **Padania resurrected or, how to invent an ethnic identity in a land with a thousand bell towers**

Enzo Pace

## **1. Ethnic identity as a social construction**

Ethnic identity is a social construction. As such, it can often rely on history, with its long time-scale, to build up a system of symbolic references broadly shared by groups of people or an entire population. Yet it may also be invented in what Braudel calls “a short breath of history” (BRAUDEL, 1949), to serve exclusively political ends, criticising or opposing the power system or established institutions. In this case, ethnic identity appears to an even greater extent to be the product of a symbolic investment made by collective movements to assert themselves more effectively in the political market-place. The invention of an ethnic identity serves to mobilise for collective action; it can produce the forms and repertoires of mobilisation. This is not to deny ethnicity its relatively independent status; undoubtedly, it constitutes a system of identification for the collective consciousness, which endures through time and marks out a space by making it sacred (TULLIO-ALTAN, 1996).

Nevertheless, in the social phenomenology of movements claiming ethnicity, we occasionally find cases of pure invention. That is to say, a system of beliefs has been conjured up for the purpose of creating and consolidating the sense of belonging to a social and political movement. The individuals involved would otherwise be drawn together only to defend their economic interests or by a common sense of grievance against the powers that be, felt to be inert, corrupt or incapable of facing the problems of society.

I propose to show very briefly how it is possible to invent an ethnic identity, taking as my example the case of Lega Nord (the Northern League). In recent times, the Italian social and political situation has been greatly affected by the rise of the Northern League, which has for

some time been advocating the secession of Northern Italy—or Padania, in the language of League militants—from the rest of the country. This is a movement which grew out of a wave of protest against political corruption and excessive taxation and gradually changed to become a political party whose aim is to represent the economic interests and demands for moral reform of large sections of the population in Northern Italy (but not only the north). Moreover, it also increasingly claims to represent the supposed ethnic and cultural differences between the people of the north and those of the south. As we shall see, these differences have been consciously constructed by the League's leaders, using a communicative strategy based on several elements:

- a) the historical memory of the Northern population with roots in Celtic civilisation;
- b) the evocation of a system of esoteric-religious symbols, including the River God Po—in Latin *Padanus*—flowing through the great plain—the Po valley—which stretches from Piemonte to the Veneto, from its source on Mt. Monviso to its delta south of Venice; the green star, which represents the edelweiss flower and dominates the League's banners; and the green shirts of the vigilantes known as the *Guardia Padana*;
- c) the identification of a land sacred to the people of Padania, bounded by the Alps to the north and the River Po to the south; and
- d) the assertion of a linguistic identity—*lingua Padana*—encompassing all the linguistic differences which have historically separated the inhabitants of regions such as Piemonte, Lombardy, Veneto and Friuli (with its own language, *Furlan*).

These claims to ethnicity run counter to the general Italian cultural and historical picture. Italy is a relatively young nation (1861) whose path to national identity has been somewhat tortuous (PACE, 1997, 1998; RUSCONI, 1993, 1997; SCHIAVONE, 1998; SCIOLLA, 1997). Indeed, the centralised state model, based on that of France, has never been able to rely on the full and convinced adherence of its citizens. In many ways, Italy has remained faithful to a polycentric model; despite everything, people have strong links to their local environment. The bell tower is an effective symbol which portrays the attachment most Italians feel for their own small town with its church and the inevitable *campanile* (bell tower).

The symbolism of the bell tower has several aspects: it reminds us not only of Catholicism and municipal pride but of the particular type of economic development in many Northern regions from the seventies

to the present day. It could be said that there is a factory for every bell tower; there is widespread industrialisation based on a network of small and medium-sized firms not concentrated in the large cities, but scattered throughout the urbanised countryside (STELLA, 1996). Significantly perhaps, in May 1997 the bell tower of St. Mark's in Venice was stormed by a group of extremists who had left the Northern League. It thus became a symbol of ethnic conflict as, with the aid of a primitive home-made tank, they hoisted the flag of the Serenissima Venetian Republic in a bid for independence. For some, therefore, secession from Italy is not enough; only a return to the impossible splendour of the Doges of Venice will do.

## 2. The Northern League: from criticism of the centralised state to ethnic movement

Those who have observed the earthquake-like Northern League from its inception (BIORCIO, 1997; DIAMANTI, 1993; RUMIZ, 1997) have pointed out the following important features.

- a) The epicentre (1983-87) is the Veneto, a traditionally Catholic area both in religion and politics (for over forty years, the vast majority of the inhabitants —peaking at 60 % in some places— voted for the Christian Democrat party, the Catholic party which governed Italy for almost fifty years). This shows the erosion of the social and cultural basis of consent enjoyed by the Christian Democrats. Rome has become the symbol of a distant seat of power whose interests are far removed from those of the regions. In the early 1980s, two slogans began to be scrawled on the walls and bridges of Northern cities: *Roma ladrona* —Robber Rome— *Roma cancro dell'Italia* —Rome, cancer of Italy.
- b) The tremors later spread to Lombardy (1987-90), where the movement found its charismatic leader, Umberto Bossi. Bossi was responsible for the movement's fundamental change. It became a new political force to be reckoned with, and picked up on three basic grounds for social protest. First, the notion that Northerners are hard-working and productive whereas Southerners are work-shy acquired political dignity. Anti-south feelings became more visible and violent with slogans such as "Come on Etna!", urging on the active volcano in Sicily, which had destroyed a number of nearby villages in 1987, to wipe out the whole south (synonymous to Northern Leaguers with the Mafia and the waste of public money). The second concept was

that, instead of money paid in taxes going to Rome to fill the coffers of the centralised state, it should be handled at a local or regional level (no taxation without representation). Thirdly, Bossi was able to tap the considerable moral indignation at political corruption. The first kickback cases were being brought to justice around 1989-90. Shortly afterwards, all the major government parties (from the Christian Democrats to the Socialists) were to be devastated by the corruption investigations.

- c) There was a great swing to the Northern League at the 1992 general election which went beyond the Richter scale (it took up to 25-30 % of the vote in many areas of the north —not so much in the big cities as in the small towns in the foothills of the Alps). This success prompted the movement to push for federalism (without, however, ever clarifying which model of federalism was being proposed) and later (1996) to go for secession from the rest of Italy. In September 1996, a very high-profile demonstration was organised —the so-called *Marcia sul Po* (March on the River Po)— when green-shirted League militants accompanied their leader from the source of the Po on Mt. Monviso all the way to Venice. Here Mr. Bossi proclaimed the independence of the North and Po water taken from the source was sprinkled over the “faithful” in a kind of secular benediction. The Italian flag was then lowered to be replaced by a new one bearing, against a white background, an odd star-shaped green flower, which, as some maliciously observed, looked more like a stylised marijuana leaf than an edelweiss.

To place the emergence of the Northern League in its social and political context, we should look at the domestic and international events which so upset the order of things from 1989 to 1992. The fall of the Berlin Wall produced unexpected consequences in Italy, which may in some ways be considered a post-communist country (MICHEL, 1996). Naturally, the events of 1989 speeded up the changes in the Italian Communist Party (one of the largest in Europe with a 25-30 % share of the vote), turning it into a social democratic party (PDS). But they also removed from the political system the ideological pole that opposed the moderate Catholic one which since 18 April 1948 had held the majority of votes. The ideological “war” which had for years divided Italian society into two political subcultures ended in 1989. The “white” (Catholic) area was stronger in the north (Piemonte, Lombardy, Trentino and the Veneto); the “red” (communist) area was mainly based around central Italy (Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna)

(TRIGILIA, 1981). The Christian Democrat party had held power virtually uncontested for almost fifty years in the role of defenders of moderate and Catholic values. Thus, from an ideological viewpoint, the disappearance of the Communist Party from the political scene and its transformation into a social democratic party effectively de-legitimised the Christian Democrats. The political corruption brought to light from 1990 to 1992 by a group of Milan examining magistrates (known in the mass media as the "Clean Hands" team) accelerated the end of the Christian Democrat and Socialist parties, which vanished from the political scene in the space of two years. This event in itself demonstrates the sudden and cataclysmic change in the traditional party system and the emergence of a new political force, the Northern League, which undertook to fill the vacuum among most of those who had previously voted Christian Democrat or Socialist.

### 3. The invention of *Padania*

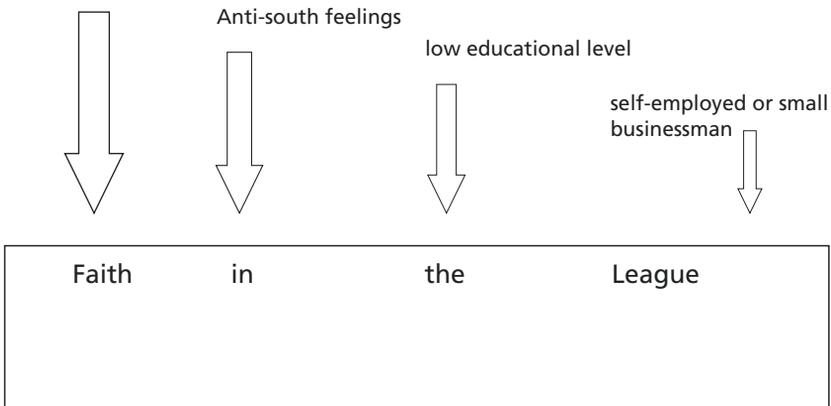
Now, therefore, there exists a repertoire of symbols which evoke the purported ethnic identity of the people of Padania: the population of the Po valley who supposedly share common Celtic roots, who speak a language the Italian nation-state allegedly suppresses and who have purportedly been oppressed by "Rome" for centuries and can therefore claim a "natural" independence from Italy. This set of symbols has undoubtedly made it possible for the Northern League to strengthen the ties within the movement, increase its militancy and select a nucleus of local leaders and militant activists who are firmly convinced of the cause and vow blind obedience to the leader. In the last general election (4 April 1994) the League obtained four million votes (10 % of the Italian electorate) concentrated above all in the north. Its organisational network consists of about a million militant activists who can guarantee the mobilisation of the wider ranks of League supporters for various events such as a mock general election for Padania and rallies with the charismatic leader, Mr. Bossi.

One of the most recent sociological surveys of League militants (DIAMANTI/JORI, 1998) demonstrates how successful the operation has been. There now exists a stratum of League supporters who have internalised the movement's typical ideological features and are convinced of the idea of secession from the rest of Italy. This is despite a recent series of arrests regarding the illegality of such a proposal, which is in any case held up by an attempt to decide on federalist reforms currently under discussion by a special parliamentary commission.

At present, the greatest obstacle to the idea of secession is Italy's acceptance into the European Monetary Union (ERM). The League's leaders had been counting on the fact that Italy would be unable to satisfy the Maastricht criteria. In that case they would have been able to shout it to the rooftops that the economically backward south had stopped the modern, industrialised, hardworking north from soaring independently into Europe.

The striking thing about the type of grass-roots organisation the League has been able to stimulate is the relative stability of the factors which account for faith in the League itself. The chart below shows these factors using different types of arrows, from wide to narrow, to indicate the importance of the ideological components and the social variability which comes into play.

#### Faith in the charismatic leader



The chart is based on the following answers (Table 1) to a series of questions which were asked of a representative sample of the public, including Veneto League supporters (1,200 subjects were interviewed by telephone in the second week of March 1998).

As can be seen, the syndrome is one which Adorno (ADORNO, 1950) would not hesitate to call authoritarian (a strong leader, dislike of the south, xenophobia, unconfined laissez-faire liberalism, the legitimacy of tax evasion and so on). Strikingly, on all items (except the issue of retirement age) the percentages for League supporters' attitudes are considerably higher than those of the average sample; from 13-15 % to 28-29 % higher on issues like capital punishment and dislike of the south.

**Table 1**

	% of League supporters	% of total sample (1,200)
Italy is too chaotic, we need a strong leader	78.8	63.2
There should be capital punishment for really serious crimes	59.4	31.6
Immigrants are a threat	45.0	29.6
The south is a millstone to Italy's progress	55.4	26.3
Tax evasion is necessary	36.2	21.3
Firms should be free to hire and fire employees	45.2	31.9

The leader of the Northern League has applied a kind of ethnic prosthesis, as it were, to these social and economic ills. The success of his preaching in traditionally Catholic and Christian Democrat areas would suggest that the social strata the League now represents are undergoing a twofold crisis: as regards traditional party politics, and the system of values which the parish-based Catholicism of Italy had passed down from generation to generation. Nowadays, many appear to be secular in their moral attitudes and their life choices, as well as in their political leanings. It is no accident that one of the institutions most strongly opposed to the League is the Catholic Church (PACE, 1997). The Church's opposition is not aimed at safeguarding the religious values it embodies, but at defending national unity. (This is paradoxical since the Catholic Church refused to recognise the Italian state at the time of the Risorgimento, considering it an enemy to the Holy See.) The Church defends national unity because it sees it as a coded symbol of a collective consciousness which shares the values rooted in Catholic culture.

The phenomenon of the Northern League has, in fact, shed light on a number of paradoxes and contradictions. These concern first, the weak sense of national consciousness which Italians have; second, the immobility of the previous political system (a democracy which was at a standstill for years because a shift of power which would let in the Communist Party was unthinkable); and third, a reversal in the trend from a country of emigration to one of immigration (without the immigrants the economic growth of many areas in the north would not have taken place). These considerations apart, if we take the Northern League as a case for the interpretative examination of concepts

concerning ethnic identity (SMITH, 1998), it is clear that such an identity can be constructed artificially. This may be done by inventing symbols and a repertoire of collective action which cannot really be traced back to the long-term existence of a group (whether it be a race or an ethnic minority) claiming recognition for its own identity and consequently its own living space.

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## **Federal “Balkania”, “Kosova Republika” or Balkan meltdown?**

Robert C. Hudson

Adem Demaci, the human rights activist and leader of the second strongest Kosovar<sup>1</sup> political party, the Parliamentary Party, addressed his supporters recently with the rhetorical statement that: “We have come full circle, haven’t we?” This claim is posited upon the generally accepted belief that the more direct causes of the break up of Yugoslavia can be traced back to the unrest that broke out in Kosovo in the 1980s, and that unrest, based upon rival ethnic nationalist tensions in Kosovo, is once again back on the Yugoslav agenda.

Since the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, there have been three wars in the “former” Yugoslavia, taking place in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina; with further conflicts situated within each of these conflicts. At the time of writing (March 1998), there is a strong possibility that Kosovo will be the scene of a fourth “Yugoslav war”, long predicted by many academics, politicians and people in the field. Should war break out, the “prophets of doom” believe that it could be far bloodier and more widespread than its predecessors, given that so many parties, states and interests could be involved. For the current tensions in Kosovo affect not only relations between Kosovars and Serbs, but also relations between a number of other states which have Albanian minority populations, given that more than half the Albanians in the region live outside the matrix state of Albania. Reference can be made to: Macedonia (443,000), Montenegro (50,000), Greece (50,000), Serbia excluding Kosovo (80,000) and Italy (100,000), to say nothing of Albania itself (3,000,000). Thus there is a variety of tensions and links between these states, with the potential for future alliances between

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<sup>1</sup> “Kosovar” is used to refer to ethnic Albanian residents of Kosovo.

Serbia and Macedonia, or between Albania and the Kosovars, and concomitant with this, the potential background tensions between Greece and Macedonia, Greece and Turkey, Turkey and Bulgaria, and Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. Given all these factors, we could witness the outbreak of an all-out Balkan war, which could have a greater impact upon European security and stability in South-eastern Europe than has been caused by any of the earlier Yugoslav wars.

For most Serbs, Kosovo is acknowledged as being the “cradle” of Serbian civilisation and ethnic identity, mainly because of the vast mythology that has been built around it concerning the battle of Kosovo fought between Serbs and the Ottoman Turks in 1389. Besides this, the region contains important Serbian Orthodox religious sites, while Pristina was a major (Serbian) city during the reign of the great Serbian medieval emperor, Stefan Dusan. The myth of the battle of Kosovo became central to the whole canon of Serbian literature from the 16th century and has been interpreted as sacred to the cause of Serbian extremist national identity, reinforced by nationalist awakeners such as the language reformer Vuk Karadžić. The impact of myth upon the Serbian ethnic nationalist discourse should not be ignored; the Serbian academician Antonije Isaković wrote in 1992 that:

Our myths give us greater strength and we must live with them. Each time that we have been faced with difficulties, we have returned to Kosovo, to Karadjorde and to popular poetry. These myths and all our mythology, which affect our intellectuals as much as our Church, take us down a fairly narrow corridor (ISAKOVIĆ, 1992).

Furthermore the Serbian ethnologist, Ivan Čolović, has emphasised in his recent publication, *Bordel ratnika* (The warrior's brothel), that: “*Naša politika puna je folklorika...*” (“Our politics is full of folklore”) (ČOLOVIĆ, 1994, 23). Taking up the mantle of nationalist discourse in 1987, Slobodan Milošević exclaimed that: “Yugoslavia does not exist without Kosovo! Yugoslavia would disintegrate without Kosovo! Yugoslavia and Serbia are not going to give up Kosovo!”

Despite this, the two million Kosovar population makes up approximately 92 % of the total population of Kosovo. Under Tito, Kosovo and Vojvodina were granted greater autonomous status by the Yugoslav constitution of 1974, with considerable political power and near equality with the six republics that made up the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija or SFRJ). This led to bitter condemnation as the Serbian nationalist discourse developed from the mid-1980s. (See for example the *Memoandum* issued by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Belgrade,

1986, which advocated the belief that Yugoslavia could only be strong if Serbia was kept weak.)

The autonomous status of both Kosovo and Vojvodina was ended by President Slobodan Milošević in 1989, since when, the Kosovo Albanians have been "...oppressed, humiliated, and deprived of any vestige of control over their own affairs...[and]...turned into non-persons in their own homeland" (WOOLLACOTT, 1998). Meanwhile, an exclusive Serbian state structure was grafted on to an Albanian society, with the practice of an ethnic apartheid that, until the events in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in recent years, would have seemed unimaginable in modern Europe. As a result, Kosovars have been denied rights to their own educational institutions and medical facilities in their own land (IGRIĆ, 1997). After ending the autonomous status of Kosovo, one of the first acts of Milošević's government was to end all teaching in Albanian, replacing Albanian by Serbian and insisting upon the use of the Cyrillic alphabet. The role of language cleavage and language politics is of vital importance in the political discourse of ethnic exclusion and national identity, since it provides the legitimisation of a community's culture and history, thus leading to the creation of an "in group" and an "out group". Furthermore, national languages provide in themselves the symbols of sovereignty; the propagation of one language to the detriment of another serves as an instrument of the hegemonistic power politics of a nation-state. In the case of Kosovo the Kosovars form the "out group" and the Serbs the "in group", despite the fact that the Serbs comprise only between 7 and 8% of the population. Since language is one of the most profound expressions of ethnic national identity, it is not surprising that the struggle for rights to their own education in the Albanian language has been one of the key issues in the Kosovars' passive resistance against the Serbs; a passive resistance which had to be carried out underground until 1996.

In the meantime, throughout the events of 1991 the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia did not try to secede and form a separate state or unite with Albania, while the Albanian government in Tirana also remained passive (TROEBST, 1997, 24). It could be argued that the Kosovars had missed their moment in history at the time when Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians and Macedonians seceded from Yugoslavia.

The Serbian authorities' total disregard for the rights of ethnic minorities, and the massive and arbitrary police repression and violence against the Kosovars, also stem from the lack of any civic society and democratic culture in Yugoslavia. Ultimately, healthily functioning democratic institutions are needed if ethnic disputes are to be resolved (SCHMIDT, 1997, 18). Fabian Schmidt has even argued that the issue of

the Kosovo conflict is not just the absence of self rule, but the absence of any rule of law, thus firmly situating the current situation in Kosovo in the problematics of the ongoing debate of the failed state, posited upon the absence of both a civic society and democratic process in the the region (see GELLNER, 1994, and also the discourse on "High Trust Societies" and "Low Trust Societies" recently developed and highlighted by FUKUYAMA, 1996).

Thus once again Yugoslavia has been transmogrified into the "pariah state" of Europe, and again there have been threats of sanctions and even of intervention by the international community. Nevertheless, not only the Yugoslav government is to blame for the situation in Kosovo. Previously the international community did nothing about the Kosovars' situation, apart from refusing Yugoslavia access to IMF funding in the period, post sanctions, when its own economy and infrastructure critically need redeveloping.

The plight of the Kosovars was not even mentioned by Lord Carrington at the first international conference on Yugoslavia in Brussels in 1990. Their sufferings went unheard, as Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo), activated a non-violent campaign, effectively establishing a shadow Kosovar Parliament, University and other institutions. It almost seemed as though Western governments had appreciated and benefited from the Kosovars' patience, because it allowed them to keep the Kosovo issue out of the negotiations over Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, thus making it easier for Milošević to sign the Dayton agreement (SCHMIDT, 1997, 17), whilst creating a better opportunity of bringing the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina to an end. Consequently LDK representatives were not present at Dayton, Ohio, nor was the Kosovo problem mentioned in the treaty (TROEBST, 1997, 25). As Miranda Vickers recently pointed out:

The single most important message the Kosovars have learnt from Dayton was that it gave value to the armed struggle of the Bosnian Serbs by recognising, even if only partly, the Serb Republic of Bosnia (VICKERS, 1998).

Tensions began to erupt again almost immediately after Dayton. Support for the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) has grown since April 1996; it has been armed by Albania and Kosovar and Albanian migrants in Switzerland, and has carried out assassinations of Serbian police, army officers and Albanian collaborators. The increase in armaments smuggled to Kosovo from Albania was particularly noticeable after the chaos that arose in Albania during the summer 1997 elections.

As for the Serbs in Kosovo, they witnessed what had happened in the Krajina in August 1995, when Milošević refused to lend Yugoslav support to the Krajina Serbs in the face of the Croatians' "Operation Storm" (Oluja). Likewise they saw the cooling of relations between Milošević and Karadžić throughout 1994 and 1995, and as recently as March 1998 the Yugoslav media was full of reports about the plight of Serbian refugees from eastern Slavonia in the wake of the reintegration of Vukovar into the Republic of Croatia, whilst the government internet press organ *Yugoslav Daily News* remained silent on the repression taking place in Kosovo.

Meanwhile, in August 1996, the Chetnik leader and accused war criminal Zeljko Raznatović, also known as Arkan, began to infiltrate his "Tiger" paramilitaries into the region. Herein lies a problem for Milošević. Can he control these paramilitaries, who have different leaders, different chains of command and are not a constituent part of the Yugoslav People's Army (Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija or JNA).

At the same time, the ever pragmatic Milošević had been trying to win support from the United States and other governments by opening discussions with Rugova on the educational issue in September 1996, which would result in an agreement that would bring the shadow Albanian education system back into the open. This agreement was a bid to bring about the lifting of the so-called outer wall of sanctions, a remnant of the Dayton Peace Agreement, whereby the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would be able to join international organisations such as the OSCE and the UN (IGRIĆ, 1998, 19), thus ending its exclusion from the international community. At a time when Serbian public opinion remained strongly opposed to Albanian separatism, Milošević offered to negotiate over the re-establishment of Kosovo's autonomy within Serbia. In a bid to gain some political kudos, Milošević's key opponents, the liberal leaders of the Zajedno (Togetherness) Bojkot, Vuk Drašković of the Serbian Restoration Movement (Srpski Pokret Obnove or SPO) and Zoran Djindjić of the Democratic Party (Demokratska Stranka or DS) criticised him for this, suggesting that Milošević was willing to give Kosovo away. It was only at a press conference in Vienna on 27 January 1997, that Djindjić for the first time intimated that he might favour autonomy within a democratic Serbia for Kosovo (SCHMIDT, 1997, 16). For the short term, international attention was left with the impression that Serbian liberal opposition to Milošević appeared to be even more nationalistic than Milošević himself. This strange scenario might explain to some extent why the Kosovar elite remained silent during the mass demonstrations against Milošević that began in November 1996 in Belgrade and other major

towns throughout Serbia (TROEBST, 1997, 23), whilst during the three rounds of presidential elections last autumn the Kosovars refused to vote, showing that they did not recognise the Yugoslav state. Of the other Serbian political parties, the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) had taken the view that Serbia is an indivisible state organised on civic principles, but would now seem to be open to some limited form of autonomy. Meanwhile nationalist extremists gathered around Vojislav Šešelj's ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party (Srpska Radikalna Stranka or SRS) continue to oppose any form of autonomy. Šešelj won the majority vote of 49 % in the second round of the Serbian presidential elections in October 1997, and was only precluded from coming to power by the rule that the winning candidate must have a clear 51 % majority.

Meanwhile, Aleksander Despić, president of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, advocated the division of Kosovo, based upon an earlier idea expressed by the novelist, academic and former president of Serbia, Dobrica Ćosić, that the Serbs should keep the coal mines and the "sacred sites" so important to Serbian ethnic identity and the Yugoslav economy, whilst granting autonomous status for the rest of the region to the Kosovars. If Kosovo were to be granted some degree of autonomy, which is the minimum that might stop conflict, it might also bring down the man who came to power on the strength of his promises that he would never abandon Kosovo, a place that is so sacred to the nationalist mythology of Serbian identity. Nevertheless, Milošević is faced with an *impasse* since the risk of yet another lengthy war and its concomitant economic sanctions could also end his career.

## Scenarios and possible solutions

What then are the scenarios and possible solutions to the Kosovo crisis in the foreseeable future?

- One solution to the problem might be for the Yugoslav government to grant autonomy to the Kosovars; not unlike Tito's constitution of 1974. However, it could be argued that if Milošević made such an offer, the Kosovars would reject it. Furthermore this was offered once before in 1974 and then annulled by Milošević in 1989, and the Kosovars are very much aware that the same could happen again.
- Another solution might be the setting up of a new federal Yugoslav constitution that would give Kosovo and probably the other minority regions of Sandjak and Vojvodina an equal constitutional status to that of Serbia and Montenegro (MARKOTITCH,

- 1997, 43), thus reducing Serb domination of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
- Adem Demaci has put forward the idea of creating a new state called "Balkania". Once again this would entail the end of Serbian hegemony in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with the additional point of avoiding any reference to any form of Slav identity; being a federal construct whereby Kosovo, Vojvodina and possibly Sandjak would share equal republican status with Montenegro and Serbia. This would mean a profound restructuring of Yugoslavia, based upon *raison d'état* rather than upon nationalism and the politics of exclusion.
  - Some Serb academics, led by Despić and Ćosić, have advocated the partition of Kosovo along ethnic, religious, historical and geo-economic lines. However, the handing over of some of the most sacred sites of Serbdom would be seen as treason and a national shame, especially to Šešelji's ultra-nationalist SRS party.
  - Meanwhile the LDK has advocated a "Kosova Republika" since 1990, which could lead to unification with the Albanian population of western Macedonia (443,000) or with the matrix state of Albania; leading to the creation of an Albania *irredenta* which might soothe the "Albanian Problem", unresolved since 1912, from an Albanian perspective, but would hardly be popular in Serbia, and would lead to further tensions if not the outbreak of war.
  - Another solution might be to resort to peace enforcement policies by the international community, with intervention by SFOR (Stabilisation Force), given that there are 20,000 troops only 150 km from Kosovo and a further 1,100 UN troops based in Macedonia. However, this would be a short-termist policy and would not be easy to introduce because it would mean keeping the Albanians and the Serbs together. Had such a policy been desired by the two factions, there would have been no risk of conflict in the first place. If NATO troops were deployed in the region they could seal the border and safeguard domestic security. There are nevertheless risks of "mission creep" and also of lack of inter-governmental commitment to such a policy. One has only to think of what might happen in Bosnia-Herzegovina when SFOR eventually pulls out. Furthermore the Yugoslavs currently resist the idea of international intervention in Kosovo (see *Yugoslav Daily News*, 20 April 1998).
  - A more drastic solution might be for the KLA to carry out an armed uprising, since there are enough smuggled light weapons

- in the region, and the insurgents might be able to survive a Serbian offensive long enough to ignite external support. However, this would be a highly dangerous alternative which could detonate the so-called "Balkan time-bomb".
- It is unlikely that Albania, given its poor military resources, would declare war on Yugoslavia; however, if there were a conflict in Kosovo, the Kosovars might seek military support in the Islamic world and Turkey.
  - However, if there were to be warfare between Albanian insurgents and Serbian security forces, what would be the reaction of Serbian public opinion? Could Serbia, economically and militarily, endure yet another war? If this led to sanctions from the international community it would cripple once again a very weak economy. *Realpolitik* might opt for this option in the long term because it would topple Milošević from power, although it would be better, in the medium term, if Milošević granted autonomy as this could equally loosen his hold on power.
  - There are the domino theories mentioned above, which could result in the outbreak of a general Balkan war, involving Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, Turkey and ultimately one or more of the superpowers.
  - One could always maintain the *status quo*, but recent events have militated against such an option.

Having considered the variety of potential scenarios and possible solutions, ultimately a return to the autonomous status of 1974 might be the easiest to achieve. The refederalisation of Yugoslavia would seem to be the preferable solution, since potential conflict in Kosovo would be defused, along with tensions in the Sandjak; and Serb dominance over Yugoslavia would be counterbalanced.

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## **The Northern Ireland case: intercommunal talks and the re-negotiation of identity**

Stephen Ryan

In this short paper I shall do no more than offer some disconnected observations on the attempts to move away from violent intercommunal conflict in Northern Ireland. I shall not provide a history of the “Troubles”, which has been more than adequately provided elsewhere. Instead, I offer four points that I hope will help to illuminate the nature of the “peace process” there.

(1) Firstly, I would like to disagree with the title of the session for which this paper was prepared: “From Conflict to Harmony”. The idea that you can create a harmonious multi-cultural society seems to me to be misguided, if by harmony is meant an absence of conflict. Banks (1987) has pointed out that the attempt to define peace as harmony is a “self-indulgent diversion”, since conflict is inevitable in situations where people have different values, beliefs and interests. In fact, conflict may even be a sign of a healthy society —as long as it is dealt with in a constructive rather than a destructive manner. Furthermore, the process of conflict transformation is an ongoing one, since it is likely that when some conflicts are resolved others may be created. I also recall a comment by the Israeli writer Amos Oz, who once stated that what he wanted Jewish and Palestinian leaders to do was to “make peace not love” (in ROTHMAN, 1992, 32).

Yet we should beware lest we think that the practical activity of building peace only involves pragmatic accommodation and technical issues relating to constitutional provisions and the sharing of political and economic power. For what I want to raise for discussion is the possibility that sometimes these intercommunal talks are so difficult and slow because implicit in them is a fundamental re-negotiation of identity that may be required before peace agreements can become self-sustaining. For such talks raise issues of self-definition and involve the breaking of taboos.

(2) Northern Ireland is at a point in the conflict cycle that many other protracted social conflicts have now reached. This is where the parties have come to a realisation that the fighting must stop, but are unsure about how to rebuild peaceful and democratic multi-cultural societies. This is what the UN has labelled the “post-conflict peacebuilding stage”, a phrase I do not like because, of course, the conflicts are continuing even if the guns have been silenced. Other states grappling with the problems that this stage of the conflict presents include South Africa, Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, Angola, Mozambique, Bosnia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

In all or most of these cases similar problems are arising: economic reconstruction or development, political reconstruction and participation, policing, the administration of justice, the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and how to come to terms with the past and “neutralise history”. It is my experience that many significant actors in these conflicts are willing to learn from each other about how to move forward. Politicians in Northern Ireland, for example, have made visits to South Africa to talk with their counterparts. In the case of the conflict in Northern Ireland this has also involved some degree of redefinition of the conflict. For what was once seen by many as an anachronistic affair, rooted in the European wars of religion in the seventeenth century, has now become a conflict full of relevance in a contemporary world where most of the significant “wars” are identity conflicts.

(3) Many in Northern Ireland have recognised the futility of violence, believing it to be counterproductive. Furthermore, the general shape of a political agreement is already there, involving the creation of a new Northern Ireland Assembly, elected through a proportional representation system; the creation of some cross-border institutions; and, perhaps, a rewording of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution which make a territorial claim to Northern Ireland. This sort of proposal would probably win the consent of the majority in Northern Ireland, though it has to be said that opinion polls here are not always accurate: people living in a sectarian society often learn to hide their true feelings and tell questioners what they believe they want to hear rather than what they truly believe. They seem to agree with the Nobel prize-winner Seamus Heaney, himself from Northern Ireland, who once commented: “whatever you say, say nothing”. Nonetheless, most people do seem willing to accept an agreement along the lines outlined above.

Yet there are still problems in moving the “peace process” forward, and I would like to offer some explanations of why this is the case. First, the conflict in Northern Ireland is what conflict researchers have

called a “real conflict”, rather than an unreal one rooted in misunderstandings and misperceptions. At the root of the conflict is a disagreement about the legitimacy of the partition of the island of Ireland at the start of the 1920s. Hence today there is still fundamental disagreement about whether Northern Ireland should be part of the sovereign territory of the United Kingdom or the sovereign territory of the Republic of Ireland. The situation in Northern Ireland, therefore, is not like South Africa, where the majority of South Africans accept the legitimacy of the state boundaries (with the possible exceptions of the white far right and the Inkatha Freedom Party). The problem with the territorial/ sovereignty conflicts found in places like Northern Ireland (and, for example, Sri Lanka) is that they are notoriously difficult to resolve because they tend to be defined in a zero-sum manner.

This should warn us not to “over-subjectivise” the conflict (see, for example, RUANNE/TODD, 1991). However, this does not mean that there are no subjective factors at all and that inter-subjective dialogue is worthless. Much, though, depends on the level at which this dialogue takes place. For in any inter-communal conflict there are at least two levels of interaction: the me-you level and the us-them level. The social psychology literature suggests that the us-them axis is usually too powerful for the me-you level and therefore little movement can take place at the individual level unless the inter-group dialogue is also progressing (see HEWSTONE/BROWN, 1986). One of the factors that inhibits this inter-communal dialogue in Northern Ireland is that one way the people cope with the conflict is to avoid the discussion of controversial issues such as politics and religion in mixed company. It can, therefore, be difficult to provoke an open and honest “us-them” dialogue.

A second inhibiting factor on the peace process is the legacy of twenty-five years of violent conflict. This has reinforced or triggered a whole series of destructive processes that inhibit intercommunal dialogue. These include: militarisation and warlordism; residential segregation as people move to mono-cultural areas where they feel safer; the construction of an enemy image based on stereotyping, dehumanisation and scapegoating; demonisation and sanctification (which exists when one or more of the parties sees the conflict in religious terms as a battle between good and evil); entrapment; economic underdevelopment; and alienation and a sense of remoteness from power (see RYAN, 1996).

A third problem for the peace process is the lack of *intra*-party consensus. This means that the more progressive element in each community may be frightened of moving too far in case they are accused of “selling out” by other groups on their own side less

committed to a negotiated settlement. Some analysts have labelled this a problem of “ethnic outbidding”. A fourth factor is that there has been an inability or an unwillingness to exert leverage on certain actors to push forward the peace process. This has meant that the talks have stalled on several occasions and have become bogged down on procedural issues at other times. A fifth factor is that of political underdevelopment. Since the closure of Stormont in 1972 Northern Ireland has been ruled by a Secretary of State appointed by the government in London that will represent a political party (Labour or Conservative) with very little support in the province itself. This “democratic deficit” means that all the major political parties have become opposition parties and so none have had to take political responsibility for governance. This promotes an attitude of opposition and criticism rather than an attitude of political compromise and negotiation.

A final explanation for the slow rate of progress in the Northern Ireland peace process is the claim that the costs of violence there have been too low. This is the “acceptable level of violence” argument, the idea that although there is a stalemate it does not hurt enough to force the parties to accelerate the move to peace and justice. Many seem more comfortable with the status quo than with the situation that could arise from compromise and concession. Of course this “acceptable level” argument could be overstated. Over three thousand people have been killed in Northern Ireland and this represents a sizeable proportion of the total population of about 1.5 million. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that many in the province can lead relatively normal lives, largely untouched by the violence.

(4) Finally, I would agree with the other contributors to this book who argue that many of the other paper givers at this conference that identity can be fluid and dynamic. It is also possible to carry multiple identities (Scottish and British, Basque and Spanish and so on). However, in situations of violence moments of truth may occur where people have to choose what their “terminal loyalty” is. Also, identities do tend to become fixed in situations of violent conflict, where the options available tend to narrow. Increased insecurity tends to produce increased ethnocentrism and a reduced tolerance of dissent (DEUTSCH, 1991). One recalls the comment of a Belfast man who once claimed that it was easier to fire bullets at the other side than to fire questions at his own community. Pressures to conform become intense and are felt by all members of a community. One of the best studies of this is the book *Balkan Express*, written by the Croatian poet Slavenka Drakulic. Here she explores how she is forced to play “the cruel and self-

perpetuating game” of nationalism even against her better judgement and resents being “pinned against the wall of Croatian nationalism”.

Yet although one has seen this simplifying process operating in Northern Ireland it may be that a situation is emerging where identities are being re-thought. This may be one reason why the talks process has been so difficult, for the parties are not just trying to answer technical issues about the nature of proportional representation and so on; they are, in a fundamental way, renegotiating their identity.

Crudely put, what seems to be happening is the following. The majority Protestant community, that defines itself as British, is finding itself more and more alienated from London. The Downing Street Declaration of 1993 and the Framework Document of the following year make it clear that the British state will only keep its sovereignty over Northern Ireland as long as the majority of people want this to be the case. There is, therefore, a conditionality to their Britishness that many Protestants must find unnerving. Furthermore, as the Irish state modernises, the old self-image of Protestants as the progressive and modernising force on the island compared to the backward “natives” is harder to sustain and many Protestant businessmen are now recognising the advantage of the “whole island economy” approach.

For republicans in Northern Ireland, their self-image has drawn on one of the most powerful discourses of the twentieth century—that of colonisation, settlement, expropriation of land and wealth, oppression and resistance through nationalism and appeals to the right of self-determination. Yet it must be questioned if this discourse has the same relevance in Ireland as the twenty-first century looms. We have noted that the colonial power has expressed a willingness to leave under certain conditions. The status of Catholics has improved enormously during the past twenty-five years and their rights are now better protected. Furthermore, the colonial argument ignores the fact that Northern Ireland is also an integral part of the UK, and this has had an effect on local culture and local identity. Many middle class Catholics, for example, would have much to lose if the ties with the British exchequer were severed tomorrow. So their desire to reach a united Ireland is similar to their wish to enter heaven: they want to get there, but not yet. The Europeanisation of Ireland, North and South, through Irish and British membership of the European Union may also be undermining the old conflict formations. What is the “imagined community” in a globalising world? It is also interesting to note how the anti-colonial discourse is now in decline at the global level, and is being replaced by a discourse based around the concept of ethnic conflict—which focuses more on internal problems than external ones.

This identities may be changing, though this is not a quick or easy process. My major worry, however, is that these identities are changing in a monologic rather than dialogic way and that much more needs to be done to replace the intercommunal silence with genuine inter-cultural dialogue. This deconstruction of exclusive and antagonistic identities may be the best hope for long-term peace in Northern Ireland.

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# Negotiating identities in a diasporic context: the Pakistani population of Bradford

Charles Husband

## 1. Background

Europe has become an increasingly multi-cultural space and there is a considerable literature exploring the variety of responses to the growing ethnic diversity of nation states (WRENCH/SOLOMOS, 1993; HECKMANN/BOSSWICK, 1995). And the theoretical ferment generated by post-modernist arguments has been reflected in an increasingly complex analysis of ethnic identities; with notions of hybridity and diasporic relations enjoying almost a vogue status (RADHAKRISHNAN, 1996; WERBNER/MODOOD, 1997; YOUNG, 1995). At the same time the role of communications systems and mass media in shaping identities and constructing values has been framed within a theoretical debate regarding the role of globalisation (ROBERTSON, 1992; HANNERZ, 1996; FEATHERSTONE, 1995), with an increasing recognition of the complex cultural and psychological geography of Diaspora (BRAH, 1996; LAVIE/SWEDENBURG, 1996). All of these phenomena, and the related theoretical debates, form the broad framework for this paper.

In Britain the development of minority ethnic communities has been well charted, most recently by MODOOD *et al.* (1997) and there is an extensive background literature. The role of the media in shaping ethnic relations and being part of a process of minority cultural and political mobilisation has been a small sub-set of this field. From the initial major study of Hartmann and Husband (HARTMANN/HUSBAND, 1974) there has been an active process of academic analysis of mainstream media content and its role in representing minority ethnic communities (VAN DIJK, 1991; ROSS, 1996; SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI/ROSS, 1995; DOWNING/HUSBAND, forthcoming). There is an emerging

literature on minority ethnic communities' production and consumption of media (HUSBAND, 1994; GILLESPIE, 1995; COTTLE, 1997).

In formulating the research reported here<sup>1</sup> we were very conscious of the growing Islamophobia that has been apparent within the European Union and within Britain. Muslim communities in Britain were subjected to critical media coverage in response to "the Rushdie affair" and the Gulf War, and the role of religion as a marker of minority identity has become an increasingly important issue in contemporary Britain (LEWIS, 1994). The location of Muslim communities in Britain may itself be analysed in relation to a wider debate around the position of Islam in the late twentieth century world (AHMED, 1992; TURNER, 1994). Thus in this research we focused upon two Muslim "communities", the Pakistanis in Bradford and the Iranians in London, who have experienced very different routes to settlement in Britain and have different national and cultural roots: to use terms developed by GILROY (1993). This paper will focus particularly upon the experience of the Pakistani population of Bradford.

The overarching objective of the research was to chart the media environment of two Muslim "communities" in Britain and to place this in a dynamic understanding of the local demography and the communities' involvement in cultural, political and economic flows at the local, national and global level. In doing this we were very aware of the problematic nature of the concept of community in analysing multi-ethnic urban Britain (HUSBAND, 1996).

The first tactical objective was to generate a descriptive model of the current demography of these two "communities". It was important to be able to establish the existence of Iranian and Pakistani populations within, respectively, London and Bradford, as both demographic patterns and subjective communities. These were very different tasks in the two locations. The Iranian population was very nearly undocumented whereas the Pakistani population of Bradford is very well documented by the local authority and has been extensively researched. Through a variety of approaches we have been able to generate a descriptive account of the demography of the very dispersed Iranian population in London and have identified the subjective networks of identity which are threaded through this spatially dislocated population; whilst in Bradford, given the available documentation, it was possible to construct

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<sup>1</sup> This research was funded as a project within the ESRC Research Program on Media Economics and Media Culture. The project team were Professor Charles Husband and Dr Yunas Samad (Ethnicity and Social Policy Research Unit, Bradford University), and Professor Annabelle Sreberny and Mr Adom Sabondchian (Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester).

a very detailed picture of the demographic distribution of the Pakistani population and to identify the well developed patterns of social organisation operating within this demographic profile.

However, a demographic profile in itself offers only a relatively static and sterile model of each population; consequently, a complementary task required us to generate a rich social and cultural understanding of the history of migration and settlement of each population, and of their socio-cultural and political profile within their respective urban settings. In order to advance the project it was necessary to generate a descriptive account of the media environment of each population. This objective was defined in terms of charting the current media infrastructure rather than attempting, at this stage, any measure of media utilisation. In addressing this objective the team went beyond identifying print and broadcast media, and also identified other significant sites of cultural reproduction and social interaction. Again, for the two research populations this was a very different process, with the Pakistani population in Bradford having a much more diverse and extensive media environment than that operating for the Iranian population in London.

A core objective of the project was to generate a dynamic account of individuals' behaviour within their social context and media environment as they sustain their identities and locate themselves within a diasporic subjective space. Whilst the previous stages of the project allowed the researchers to anticipate the range of salient identities and the potential relevance of a glocalised media environment this stage of the project sought to generate a range of qualitative data that would illuminate the lived relevance of media in relation to individuals' reproduction of subjective identities. Two methods were employed: a questionnaire to generate a common base line of information across the research sample, and focus groups to generate a more richly textured body of data revealing the articulation of identities and related media use. Whilst the questionnaire data was amenable to numerical manipulation, it was nevertheless also essentially qualitative data, in as much as the procedures of respondent selection and sample size would not allow those questionnaires in any way to be regarded as adequate representative samples.

The research team employed focus groups to generate qualitative data which would illuminate our understanding of the construction of identities, including the salience of Islam in this process, the use of media and the interaction of the two. A common schedule was developed by the two teams to guide the management of the focus groups. The focus groups were recruited in relation to a sampling frame which employed gender and age as key variables. However, the logistics of

constructing such groups within the two populations has not made it possible to adhere strictly to this framework. Both teams sought to utilise existing groupings which offered a distinct profile in terms of membership, and which would ensure a reflection of the diversity of opinion within each community.

While many in the Iranian community warmly welcomed the idea of this research, it proved very difficult to find appropriate times and places in which people were prepared to participate in focus group discussions. At language schools parents had little time and in community gatherings members felt that they met so rarely that they could not afford to give up even part of a session to participate in research. People were suspicious about the purpose of the research and who was funding it, and worried about controls and sanctions both from United Kingdom authorities and from the Islamic Republic. Thus considerable time was spent in reassuring people that participation was anonymous and that the researcher's purposes were academic in nature. All of these factors meant that the diversity and clarity of boundaries built into the purposive sampling frame for the recruitment of focus groups could not be fully operationalised in the field. What was methodologically clinical and purposive became in reality rather more opportunistic and pragmatic.

In the case of the Bradford population, its much longer period of existence, in conjunction with the denser localised areas of residence, provided the basis for a rich diversity of potential settings to recruit focus groups. As with the Iranian community, the logistics of using schools, community centres, job clubs and community organisations required the research team to be flexible in the face of the time schedule determined by the setting. Middle class respondents proved the most difficult to identify and recruit. This was partially a function of the class profile of the population and partially a consequence of the groups' limited availability due to their full work and social agendas. In contrast with the Iranian population, a difficulty encountered in Bradford arose from the fact that the Pakistani population perceived itself as over-researched. This meant that there was some resistance from gate-keepers in specific settings to agreeing to facilitate our entry. Considerable effort went into setting up the focus groups, not just by team members, but by those facilitating the groups; even so, some groups did not materialise when promised, and others were a long time in being confirmed.

However, once the initial difficulties of access were overcome, it was a positive experience running the focus groups. Overall participants' response was positive and the majority opened up quite quickly and were quite voluble. Generally women of all ages and class backgrounds

were the most responsive. Following initial piloting, the Bradford team recruited a young Pakistani woman to run the focus groups with female participants. Not all groups ran entirely smoothly. On some occasions the participants become so exercised in discussing a topic that managing the group was quite arduous.

In order to generate a complementary set of data, a questionnaire was developed which aimed to tap *individuals'* use of the media, and their construction of personal identities. Through piloting, the very different nature of the two populations, already revealed in the earlier stages of the research, became critical in shaping a divergent strategy in utilising the questionnaire within each. Given the high level of education and literacy within the Iranian community, a self-completion questionnaire was eminently feasible. However, the very different class, educational and literacy profile characterising the Pakistani population rendered this an inappropriate strategy in Bradford. It was decided that given the likely success of recruiting focus groups in Bradford the questionnaire data should be derived from the focus group participants. This had two advantages. In relation to the earlier issue of literacy, the focus groups provided a context in which, where necessary, respondents could be assisted in completing the questionnaire. Additionally, this strategy allowed the focus group data and the questionnaire data to be cross-referenced since they were derived from the same population.

The data generated in this stage of the project revealed a complex interrelation of ethnic identity and the salience and significance of religious affiliation; and very strong evidence of gender and generation as major variables operating through each of the two populations. The analysis of the data has underlined the very different history and demography of the two populations and accords with the current theoretical concerns to disaggregate the "immigrant" experience into a richer and more sensitively nuanced conceptualisation of diasporic populations living within the contemporary global context (HESSE, 1993; EADE, 1997).

Given this very diversity of experience and identity within our research populations, we would have to recognise the limitations of what this project has been able to achieve in relation to this objective. With the resources available, the research methodology has amply illuminated the complexity of identity construction and the relevance of media within two very different United Kingdom minority ethnic communities. The very extensive nature of these differences has promoted confidence in the adequacy of the theoretical framework underpinning this project to provide a robust common conceptual repertoire. And yet at the same time the richness of the theoretical and descriptive analysis resulting

from this data should not be allowed to obscure the fact that this research has provided an essentially broad-brush picture. This is in itself important in challenging naive debates around the relevance of Islam within minority ethnic communities and complementary simplistic accounts of the "immigrant communities'" location within Britain. This research has shown the diversity *within* minority ethnic communities, and the global-local dynamics operating within and across this diversity. The account of individual and community identity construction and media use offered by this research has revealed the complex interface of mediascape (APPADURAI, 1990 and 1996[?]) with socioscape (ALBROW, 1997) in a multi-layered topography.

In order to complement the socio-cultural and political analysis inherent in the previous objectives, the research project sought also to recognise the political-economic substratum of the research populations' media environment. A political economy approach to the media constitutes a well-established and important level of analysis within communication research (GARNHAM, 1990; HERMAN/McCHESNEY, 1997). In the context of this project this helps to expose the economic determinants of the infrastructural dimension of ethnicity (WALLMAN, 1986). Within the resources of this project, this could always only be an illustrative exposition employing heuristic exemplars, rather than an extensive and inclusive survey of all the relevant media. Consequently, from the overall media environment operating in each research site, case study exemplars were selected.

However, here again the very different circumstances of the two target populations impacted upon the ways in which this objective could be addressed. The very rich media environment of the Pakistani population allowed for a deliberate choice of media to target from within a wide range of possible instances. For the Iranian population, this was a much more limited and volatile media environment.

## 2. Mapping ethnicity: the space and time of community

In both the research sites an essential foundational task for the project was the descriptive mapping of both the target populations in relation to their demography and history. It was not assumed that this account would be synonymous with the mapping of the current subjective identities of "community" (HUSBAND, 1996) which might be extant within these populations. This was the focus of the subsequent stage of the research.

In Bradford, there were extensive demographic data available on the Pakistani population. Bradford and District Metropolitan Council

has a very active research and planning group, and there is consequently a body of statistical data which allows for a tracking of the historical development of the Pakistani population, and which has also been employed to develop sophisticated projections of its future demography. Through accessing this data it has been possible to derive a detailed descriptive account of the demography of the Pakistani population in Bradford. Additionally, there is a long history of academic research on this population (SAIFULLAH-KHAN, 1976; SAMAD, 1992). Consequently a detailed review of this literature provided an informed descriptive account of the history and social organisation of this population.

Bradford Metropolitan District is a major conurbation in the north of England, and unlike other major cities its population is growing. Following initial migration and settlement in the 1960s Bradford has over the last three decades established a significant Pakistani population. In 1981 the Pakistani population numbered 34,116 persons, in 1991, 38,059 persons; and it is estimated that in the year 2011 this population will number 104,000 persons, or approximately a quarter, or more, of the city's total population. Currently the Pakistani population makes up over 10 % of the Bradford population; and 50 % of the Pakistani population are under 18. Spatially the Pakistani population is heavily concentrated in a number of inner-city wards, with two wards having over 50 % of their population of Pakistani background, and one being over 70 % Pakistani. This spatial concentration allows for the localised presence of an important infrastructure of community resources in terms of shops, social organisation and mosques. Significantly kinship and religious networks are important organising principles within the Pakistani population, providing a basis for both institutional mobilisation and friendship networks. The Pakistani population is predominantly working class with high levels of unemployment, particularly among the young males, and many live in areas characterised by the local authorities as areas of high social stress. Through events like "the Honeyford Affair", "the Rushdie Affair" and the Gulf War, this is a population that has felt itself to be subject to harsh external scrutiny, and hostile stereotyping, by agencies and spokespersons for the majority white population; if not an embattled community, then at least a self-conscious collectivity.

The majority of Pakistan's immigrants to Bradford came from Mirpur and were deeply conservative people from one of the more underdeveloped areas of rural Pakistan. The mosques established in the first phase of migration and settlement were frequented irrespective of regional, caste and sectarian origins. But with family reunification a fission process occurred with segmentation taking place along regional, sectarian

and caste lines. This resulted in the proliferation of mosques, Islamic schools and religio-political organisations. Religion is a significant aspect of social organisation within the Pakistan community. The many divisions within Islam are also echoed in Bradford, with Shiah, a range of Sunni groups including the Bareilvi, Deoband, Jamat-i-Islami and Tabligh-i-Jamat, and Sufi orders, all active in the city. These religious internal boundaries are also quite often overlaid with linguistic and regional identities; so that, for example, a Bareilvi mosque may have its management committee and Imam from a particular region and speak a particular language or dialect (SAMAD, 1998). As a counter to this fragmentation, and with the active encouragement of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, the Bradford Council of Mosques was formed as an umbrella institutional presence in the city (SAMAD, 1992; REX/SAMAD, 1996). However, to assume that the Council of Mosques represented all Muslim opinion in Bradford would be incorrect. A number of more militant organisations, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, have also been active in the city.

It is important to note that as an established and demographically concentrated, minority ethnic population within Bradford, members of this Pakistani community are all British citizens. Thus both in legal terms, and in relation to their perception of an entitlement to equality of treatment, they must be seen as enjoying full citizenship status, as well as limited polyethnic rights (KYMLICKA, 1995) founded in British "race relations" legislation (see MacEWEN, 1994). This is clearly a different political environment to that enjoyed by minority ethnic communities in other multi-ethnic states (WRENCH/SOLOMOS, 1993; HECKMAN/BOSSWICK, 1995). However, it is the gap between their experience of their formal and substantive citizenship rights (BRUBAKER, 1989) which informs their understanding of their location in British society. Economic disadvantage, racial discrimination and a strong sense of having been subject to national scrutiny and abuse as the quintessential Muslim presence in Britain have all impacted upon the life chances and experience of members of this population and may be seen as the background to extensive rioting which took place in the inner city in 1995 (BRADFORD COMMISSION REPORT, 1996).

### 3. Religiosity and identity

With this background it is not surprising to find that, in contrast to the Iranian population in London, the majority of Pakistani respondents to the questionnaire expressed a distinct religious affiliation. This religious identification, however, has strong generational and gender-

linked variations. For example, of those men claiming that they were very strongly religious only 33 % were under 25 years of age, whereas of those claiming that they were weakly religious 59 % were under 25. And the comparable figure for women was that of those claiming they were very religious only 16 % were under 25, whereas of those claiming they were weakly religious over 70 % were under 25. However, a degree of caution is required in considering these data for, as the descriptive analysis shows, this is a religiously active community; and thus even those who declare themselves only weakly religious and do not maintain all the required forms of devout practice may be regarded as much more religious than the norm by the majority ethnic population. And of course truly devout Muslims may be too modest to claim that they are very religious. Despite these comments it remains the case that the data suggest religiosity follows an age profile, with the older members of the community being more religious than their younger counterparts. For the older members of the community their understanding of Islam is located within an oral tradition which is intimately linked to life-cycle rituals. This form of Islam is steeped in rural traditions and inevitably is influenced by non-Islamic practices, which have a meaning and context within the Pakistan they left behind rather than contemporary Pakistan. The patriarchal and authoritarian tendencies within this perspective can have a powerful synergy with Northern English cultural mores. The patriarchal and authoritarian values present within the conservative Islam reproduced in Bradford have much in common with the northern machismo of working class inner city Yorkshire (ALI, 1992). A common agenda regarding the role and control of women may particularly facilitate a reproduction of a traditional cultural version of Islam among the younger men, which does not enjoy a similar symbolic synthesis for the younger women growing up in the context of a strong feminist agenda within British youth culture.

The younger generation are being partially enculturated within this oral tradition, while at the same time their understanding of Islam is partially textual and derived from English language sources. Thus younger respondents gravitate towards a more ecumenical Islam which glosses over the differences which have been so divisive among the older generation. Additionally the focus group data indicates that among the young women, born or brought up in Britain, their understanding of Islam differs both from the older generations and from their male peers. While the young men are tending to reproduce a patriarchal Islamic ethos, with a strong melding of Northern male machismo, the young women are challenging this in a number of ways. Rather than

questioning Islam, they are challenging their community's cultural interpretation of Islam as non-Islamic. The qualitative findings show that there are significant differences in the understanding of Islam along gender and generational lines.

The role of religiosity in the lives of the Pakistani population takes on new meaning when the data revealing the respondents' self declared identifications is examined. When asked which of a range of labels they would personally identify with, employing Pakistani as a label was more associated with the older generation. However, the use of Muslim as an identifier was much more prevalent in the young generation; both male and female. Thus for example, of those males happy to describe themselves as "Pakistani" 29% were under 25, whereas of those happy to call themselves "Muslim" 89% were under 25 years of age. The comparable data for females showed that of those happy to describe themselves as "Pakistani" 11% were under 25, and of those happy to call themselves "Muslim" 53% were under 25 years of age.

These findings appear to contradict earlier evidence where religiosity was positively correlated with age. The focus group data suggests that subscribing to a Muslim identification is not necessarily synonymous with religiosity but relates to a transformation of ethnic identity within the context of British society. For the older generation clan and tribe loyalties remain very real, and Islam is an inherent framework which is subsumed in a Pakistani identity that is itself reinforced through linguistic and clan identities. The younger generation lack the immediacy of these older affiliations and, perhaps finding that it is their religious identity rather than national/ethnic affiliation which most troubles the majority population, see "Muslim" as an identity that has social and political credibility. As we have seen, Islam is also a vehicle through which they are negotiating their generational and gender identities *within* the Pakistani community. The qualitative data suggests that for the young men in this community, outperformed by their sisters in the educational system and marginalised in the labour market, an assertion of Muslim identity may allow for a reassertion of a male ascendancy reproduced within the community's conservative expression of Islam, and for an identification with powerful images of militant Islam elsewhere in the world. For many young women, on the contrary, self-identification as Muslims allows them to invoke a devout Islamic identity which exposes the Pakistani cultural accretions illegitimately used to limit their freedoms. Rather than challenging Islam they are asserting a textual knowledge of it and are consequently critiquing their community's interpretation of Islam as

non-Islamic. From this perspective they are also able to challenge the double standards and hypocrisy of their menfolk. Thus the qualitative data indicate significant differences in the understanding of Islam and its incorporation into a "Muslim" identity along gender and generational lines. The young men and women are engaged in a creative hermeneutic in their use of Islam in order to negotiate their gendered and generational space.

#### 4. Media and identity

The very rich media environment which bathes the Pakistani population allows for very considerable audience fragmentation. Minority ethnic communities in Britain are well served by the press and the Pakistani community is no exception. As well as daily newspapers such as *Jang* and *Asian Age* there is a wide variety of weekly papers including the *Asian Times*, *East* and *Eastern Eye*. And at the local level the mainstream *Telegraph* and *Argus* and *Yorkshire Post* are complemented by *Ravi*, *Awaz* and *Pegham*. In terms of radio, as well as the local BBC and commercial radio stations which make modest gestures toward minority ethnic audiences, there is also Sunrise Radio which specifically targets South Asian audiences, and a pirate station Asian Air which operates without the statutory inhibitions of the licensed radio stations. Bollywood Hindi films and Urdu dramas are easily available to rent from the plethora of small video rental shops scattered through the denser areas of Pakistani residence. And the local cable television operator offers Asia Net and Zee TV. Thus the Pakistani community's environment has a rich infrastructure of media that offer entertainment and information aimed to address a range of appetites defined by generation, gender, political affiliation and linguistic competence within the Pakistani population.

Linguistic barriers which lock some of the older generation into Asian language media such as video, television and minority language press, apply equally to younger members of the community who may not be literate in the community language and are more comfortable in spoken English. This linguistic filter seems a major determinant of the revealed pattern of media use. Within the minority press, for example, the readership of *Jang*, predominantly in Urdu, is skewed toward the older generation, while the readership of the English language *Eastern Eye* is much younger. Of course there is more than a linguistic variable operating here, as *Jang* appeals more to those who are concerned with current events in the Indian sub-continent, whereas *Eastern Eye* has an

appeal for those whose horizons are more determined by Britain and Europe. Indeed, interviews with the editorial staff of the South Asian press showed that this was a clear basis of editorial policy, *Jang* deliberately focusing on Pakistan whereas *Eastern Eye* is deliberately inclusively "Asian" and focuses much more upon British and European news. The size and concentrated territorial location of the South Asian populations in Britain has made them viable commercial markets for media targeted at specific minority ethnic audiences; this is certainly true of the Pakistani population in Bradford. To a significant extent the British South Asian population constitute an extra-territorial location wherein the indigenous politics of the Indian subcontinent flourish among long established diasporic communities. Thus in terms of the press this defines both audiences and potential news sources. Much of the news in *Jang*, for example, is taken directly from its Karachi parent edition. Modern technology and media conglomerates' ability to cross-subsidise their diverse activities are critical to the diversity of media available to the Pakistani community in Bradford.

Age and gender were clearly significant in shaping patterns of media use and the findings indicated that consumption of mainstream media was widespread throughout the sample. As would be expected from the above, younger people consumed more mainstream media, broadcast and print, than older generations. For the older generation religious sensibilities were a potential determinant of their media use. The case studies revealed the very strong production economies which underpinned the operation of the print media, with, in some cases, international financial and technical linkages being fundamental to the viability of their operation.

## 5. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the data reveals the complex interaction of gender and generation in shaping the expression of ethnic consciousness. The socio-economic context within which the young Pakistani respondents are negotiating their identity is reflected in their articulation of age and gender with Islam and community mores. These data depict a very dynamic situation in which the media provides personally relevant options within mediascapes that reflect different political, geographical and cultural perspectives. The period of settlement and demographic profile of the Pakistani population allow for a rich diversity of media, themselves part of a transnational commercial infrastructure in which conglomerates can cross-subsidise media, and

create considerable economies of scale through the multiple exploitation of news and entertainment. This minority media activity is generating a fast-changing and increasingly sophisticated media environment. The demography of the Pakistani community has built into it a necessary logic of change as linguistic competence in the community language changes over time, and as new cohorts of young people negotiate their own affiliation to Pakistani, Kashmiri and British political and cultural agendas. The current identity politics of minority ethnic community boundary construction and territorial concentration seem likely to ensure a vital minority ethnic media into the foreseeable future.

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