

NATIONALISM AND DIRECT RULE*

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The rise of nationalism and the creation of the nation-state have been among the most striking political developments of the last two centuries. Emerging in the late 18th century, the nation-state came to supplant both petty, homogeneous principalities and grand multiethnic empires in attempting to merge the boundaries of nations and states (Gellner 1983). Making sense of a phenomenon as pervasive and varied as this is far from an easy task: the burgeoning literature on nationalism is rife with conceptual, epistemological and theoretical disputes. Despite this apparent disarray, this chapter argues that a small set of social mechanisms is responsible for the emergence, persistence and evolution of various types of nationalism.

Nationalism is *collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation, a territorially concentrated and culturally distinctive solidary group, congruent with those of its governance unit*, the agency responsible for providing the bulk of public goods within the nation's territory (Hechter 2000: 7). Since it is all about nations seeking self-determination, any theory of nationalism must begin by first considering mechanisms of group formation and group solidarity (Hechter 1987; Brubaker 2002). Rational individuals form groups to gain access to jointly-produced goods that they are unable to provide for themselves. Once formed, however, the resulting groups will have varying levels of solidarity. The greater the proportion of members' resources contributed to the group's ends, the greater its solidarity.

Group solidarity increases with members' dependence on joint goods and on the group's control capacity (Hechter 1987). The more dependent members are on their group, the greater their willingness to contribute to it. Dependence alone does not

guarantee solidarity, however, because no matter how much they value their membership, rational members still may be tempted to profit from it without contributing to the group. This is where control capacity comes in. A group's control capacity consists of its ability to monitor members' behavior and levy sanctions in the event of inadequate contributions.

Group solidarity is necessary for the development of nationalism, but it is insufficient. Just because a nation is highly solidary, it need not be nationalist. For example, although the Swiss canton of Jura is relatively solidary, at least compared to other cantons, it has no nationalist movement at the present time (see Jenkins 1986 for an account of earlier Jura nationalism). Nationalism only arises when a substantial, but indeterminate, proportion of the members of a nation demands sovereignty. This demand is variable rather than constant.

Since both individuals and groups prefer to be ruled by themselves rather than by others, why does the demand for sovereignty vary at all? On the one hand, the *expression* of the demand is affected by a variety of institutions. On the other, the *intensity* of the demand can be trumped by alternative collective goals. The expression of the demand for self-determination is influenced by several institutional factors. Some factors, like democratic institutions, affect a group's ability to engage in collective protest; no political demands of any sort are usually voiced in repressive regimes (Scott 1985; Kuran 1996). Other factors, like the electoral system, affect a group's ability to articulate its distinctive interests. No matter how great a nation's demand for sovereignty may be, this demand is unlikely to be articulated in a two-party majoritarian electoral system (Zielinski 2002).

The intensity of the demand for self-determination, however, hinges on the dependence of the nation on its host state (Jenne 2004). The more that the members of distinctive nations profit from their allegiance to the host state, the less the allure of self-determination. Hence, the less dependent a nation is on its host state, the greater the demand for self-determination.

As many analysts have argued, nationalism is a modern phenomenon (Gellner 1983; Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm 1992; Tilly 1975, 1990; Mann 1993; Brubaker 1996; Hechter 1975, 2000; Marx 2004). The rise of direct rule leads to intense struggles between central and local authorities over the right to govern. This chapter explains how the rise of direct rule led to the emergence of different types of nationalism beginning in the 18th century. This account can also be read as a critique of explanations that assign a timeless existence (Smith 1983; 1986; Hutchinson 2000; by contrast, see Ozkirimli 2003). Whereas the national identities that crystallized during the rise of direct rule may have had roots in the distant past, this cannot explain either the timing or the forms of the resulting nationalist movements.

The following section discusses the impact of direct rule on the levels and forms of solidarity of local cultural groups. Then we examine how the emergence of direct rule fosters both state-building and peripheral types of nationalism. Finally, to illustrate the theory, we apply it to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of Kurdish peripheral nationalism in its aftermath.

WHY INDIRECT RULE THWARTS NATIONALISM

Previous to the advent of modern communications technology, central rulers are compelled to rely on indirect rule to control their far-flung territories (Boone 2003).

Under indirect rule, the bulk of governance is delegated to local authorities. Indirect rule assuages local authorities by affording the bulk of governance rights in their domain. These authorities usually share a common culture with their subjects (Hechter 2000). Since subjects tend to be ruled by their own kind, their political demands are unlikely to be about sovereignty. Since local authorities in indirect-rule regimes are virtually sovereign they, in turn, have little to gain by seeking greater self-determination – unless the center rapidly increases its demands on them for taxes and other resources.

By minimizing the demand for sovereignty among local authorities and their subjects, indirect rule thwarts nationalism in culturally distinct regions. Even if indirect rulers are alien, cultural conflict is unlikely to persist because local authorities, unlike their central counterparts, have high control capacity. Moreover, alien indirect rulers tend to assimilate to their subjects' culture over time (as did the Old Irish following the Cromwellian Settlement). Once indirect rule is undermined, however, a potential for nationalism exists. The leading causes of the undermining of indirect rule are the rise of direct rule, on the one hand, and the collapse of the center in a multinational state, on the other.

DIRECT RULE AND STATE-BUILDING NATIONALISM

Direct rule consolidates power and monopolizes the right to rule in a single center at the expense of alternative loci of authority. One of the fundamental determinants of national dependence is direct rule. Direct rule is a variable that consists of two elements: scope and penetration (Hechter 2004). The scope of a state refers to the quantity and quality of the collective goods that it provides. Welfare benefits, government jobs, police, state-sponsored schools and hospitals and a functioning system of justice are examples of

such goods. Socialist states have the highest scope; *laissez-faire* ones have the lowest. Scope induces dependence: where state scope is high, individuals depend primarily on the state for access to collective goods (see Hechter 2004 for a discussion of the preconditions of direct rule).

In contrast, penetration refers to the central state's control capacity – that is, the proportion of laws and policies that are enacted and enforced by central as against regional or local decision-makers. Penetration is at a maximum in police states in which central rulers seek to monitor and control all subjects within their domain. Polities relying on local agents to exercise control (municipal police forces, for example) have lower penetration. Scope and penetration often covary, but not necessarily. For example, federal states with similar scope have less penetration than unitary states.

Instituting direct rule poses a daunting challenge to central authorities because it can only be attained by destroying the pre-existing social order. Not only do local elites have to be weaned from their own pre-eminent social position, but the loyalty of culturally distinctive groups must also be secured (Hechter 2000: 60; Marx 2004). To this end, direct-rule regimes in multicultural polities must invest substantial resources to transform a diverse population into a culturally homogeneous one. State-building nationalism extends the regime's scope and penetration via the establishment of centralized taxation, banking, military, welfare and educational systems, among other administrative innovations. The attempt to create a nation out of a multitude of local cultural groups in post-Revolutionary France is the archetypical example of state-building nationalism (Weber 1976). Overall, the direct-rule state assumes an historically

unprecedented intrusion into the daily lives of its subjects (Bourdieu 1994; Foucault 1991).

As the scope and penetration of the nationalizing state (Brubaker 1996) increases, subjects come to focus their political demands on central as against local authorities. Historically, this led to the development of legally circumscribed and institutionally enforced citizenship rights (Lipset 1963; Marshall 1964; Bendix 1966; Tilly 1975). Moreover, those individuals and groups who have been disadvantaged by direct rule will tend to resist it by creating *peripheral nationalism* (Hechter 2000).

DIRECT RULE AND PERIPHERAL NATIONALISM

Peripheral nationalism occurs when residents of a culturally distinctive territory resist incorporation into a centralizing state by attempting to secede (as in Quebec, Scotland, Turkish Kurdistan and Catalonia). It emerges when the institutions of direct rule fail to erase cultural distinctions in a state. Local authorities instigate peripheral nationalist movements to preserve their own privileged positions in the periphery. More puzzling is the motivation of the governed to support nationalist movements that are instigated by local rulers.

A common by-product of direct rule is a *cultural division of labor* (Hechter 1978) which relegates the members of cultural minorities to distinctive – often subordinate -- positions in the occupational structure. Because a group's position in the cultural division of labor affects the life chances of its members, this kind of stratification system affords psychic and political salience to cultural distinctions. If cultural minorities perceive that they are disfavored by the center's provision of collective goods, they are at heightened risk of mobilization by nationalist entrepreneurs (Hroch 1985). Such

nationalist resistance will be greatest in territories where strong patron-client ties and organized community relations allow local authorities to mobilize a dependent populace (Hechter 2000: 67-71).

When groups having low rank in a hierarchical cultural division of labor are territorially concentrated (as in Quebec or Southeast Turkey), this provides optimal conditions for the development of peripheral nationalism. Since both hierarchical and segmental cultural divisions of labor favor the establishment and maintenance of separate social identities, they provide an important social base for the development of nationalism if the relevant groups are territorially concentrated. In contrast, peripheral nationalism is less likely to emerge in the absence of a cultural division of labor, and in societies where culturally-distinctive groups are not spatially concentrated. Whereas stable cultural divisions of labor are responsible for the salience of cultural distinctions in a society, rapidly shifting cultural divisions of labor – typically the outcome of conquest or revolution – are often responsible for the outbreak of violent intergroup conflict (Petersen 2002).

This theory has straightforward implications for the consequences of the disintegration of multi-ethnic empires in Europe during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Nationalism was conspicuously absent in multicultural pre-modern empires until their governing structures transformed from the late 18th century onward (note, however, Gorski's [2000] claim that Dutch nationalism arose in the 16th century). This points to the inadequacy of primordialist theories of nationalism. To illustrate the theory in greater detail, the chapter analyzes the disintegration of one of the most important of these pre-modern polities, the Ottoman Empire, and identifies the factors responsible for its

disintegration along ethno-national lines. It holds that the transition to direct rule -- itself a response to the growing economic and military decline of the Empire -- paved the way for the emergence of state-building nationalism (in Turkey) and peripheral nationalism (in the Balkans and Arab lands) in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire

Emerging first as a small principality in northwest Anatolia, the Ottoman Empire expanded into a vast world empire during the 15th and 16th centuries. It ruled over much of today's Middle East, North Africa and the Balkan peninsula until its demise following the first World War and the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922. The Ottomans devised a particular form of indirect rule to maintain control over its extensive territories. Under the *timar* system, central authorities gave to non-hereditary tax-collecting administrators the right to control and exploit the peripheral territories in return for a steady flow of revenues to the center and the provision of troops during military campaigns (Inalcik 1995; Keyder 1987). This gave the *timar* holders responsibility for the maintenance of social order, collection of taxes and raising of soldiers in their respective domains. So long as the center could control the *timar* holders, this system functioned efficiently (Keyder 1997: 30).

If the *timar* system enabled the Ottomans to control distant territories, the *millet* system allowed them to rule over an extremely multicultural population. Under this system, the state granted a degree of self-determination to different confessional units, the *millets*. The heads of these quasi-independent units (*millet bashi*) were primarily responsible for maintaining social order in their own communities. The center did not

intervene in the internal affairs of the *millets*: for example, there was no uniform education system in the Empire, and the respective *millets* had the right to operate their own religious schools. Similarly, each *millet* had its own unique legal structure; this gave the Empire a legal pluralist structure that would be unthinkable in direct-rule states. As the empire was Islamic, the Muslim *millet* -- consisting of many different ethnic groups -- held a privileged position with respect to Christians and Jews. Until the 19th century, the *millets* had no ethnic or national connotations; they were purely based on religious affiliation (Karpát 1982: 141-169). The *millets* only began to acquire ethno-national consciousness after direct rule began to be implemented in the 19th century (Augustinos 1992; Rodrigue 1995).

Why did this two-tiered system of indirect rule collapse and spur nationalism among the ethnically diverse *millet* communities? The growing economic and military power of direct-rule Western European states served to limit the Ottomans' territorial and economic expansion (Karpát 1972; Keyder 1997; Barkey 1997). Since expansion provided the life-blood of the Empire, the center's decreasing returns provided an opportunity for peripheral notables (the *ayans*, the primary holders of tax farms) to assume much greater power than had been permitted under the classical *timar* system (Keyder 1997; Khoury 1997; Aksan 1999; Haddad 1977; Barkey 1997; Toledano 1997; Pamuk 1987; Karpát 1972).

Especially in the Balkan territories closest to the European markets, the same process also led to the emergence of merchant groups, new urbanites, and an educated middle class. In contrast to the *timar*-holders, these new groups were far less dependent on the center, and far more dependent on European markets. They all played leading roles

in the rise of nationalism because the conditions that had maintained the mutually beneficial coalition between local and central authorities were eroding. Moreover, various European states gave open protection and support to these newly enriched groups, further improving their relative position vis-à-vis the center (Keyder 1997: 33). These local, regional and international dynamics led to the emergence of nationalist movements in the Balkan territories (Karakasidou 1997).

As peripheral authorities began to challenge state authority, the Ottomans did not stand idly by. To counter this threat in the westernmost provinces they instituted direct rule. This is principally why nationalism first arose in the Balkans. Serbia was the first Balkan province to develop nationalism. After enjoying considerable autonomy under a benevolent governor of Belgrade, Serbia was besieged by Istanbul's crack troops, who killed the governor and many village chiefs. Local notables fought back in the first Serbian insurrection in 1804 (MacKenzie 1996: 210). What began as a series of revolts by local leaders against the janissaries soon acquired the larger goal of national independence as local notables sought to secede from the Empire. Independence was only attained after the defeat of the Ottomans in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78. Greece was the second Balkan province to become nationalist. As in the Serbian case, the immediate cause of the Greek war of independence (1821-27) was Sultan Mahmud II's attempt to institute direct rule in the peripheral lands of the empire. After long years of fighting between the Ottoman army and Greek insurgents, an independent Greek state was founded in 1832.

The *Tanzimat* reforms (1839-1876) attempted to create a unified nation out of the ethnically and religiously heterogeneous population. To this end, the state implemented

legal and administrative reforms to undermine the power of the *millet* communities and incorporate them into the new Ottoman polity based on a unitary legal system (Berkes 1964: 90-99).

Direct rule had varying levels of success in different parts of the empire. Whereas the *ayans* in most of the Anatolian peninsula and in the Balkan territories closest to Istanbul (such as Thrace) were decisively defeated, the process unfolded in a different way elsewhere. Direct rule spurred a second round of peripheral nationalism in the remaining Balkan provinces under central control. Uprisings and anti-center revolts occurred in many provinces in the Rumelian territories, including Bulgaria and Romania. These hostilities took on a religious-national form as Christian subjects attacked Muslims, attempting to drive them out of their provinces. Rather than dismantling the traditional *millet* system, the move towards Ottomanism via direct rule was leading to the nationalization of the ethnically heterogeneous *millet* communities (Karpas 1972). The decisive moment for the final failure of direct rule in the Balkans was the Russo-Ottoman War (1877-1878) and the ensuing Treaty of Berlin (1878) which gave independence to Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania.

Direct rule was implemented last of all in the Arab lands. Local Arab notables retained much of their political and economic power (Toledano 1997; Kayali 1997; Khouri 1997; Haddad 1977). The Ottoman state had proved to be adept in its relations with these local power-holders (Toledano 1997: 155-6); as a result, there was no whiff of nationalism in any of the Arab territories until the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) came to power in 1908.

In order to save the empire from total collapse, the CUP implemented policies that were directed at creating a unified and secular state structure with universal norms of citizenship. Arabs were removed from key provincial posts, and the Turkish language was imposed in government schools, the judicial system and local administration. Naturally, these moves toward direct rule met with strong resistance from local Arab notables. As the CUP switched to even more authoritarian rule in the Arab provinces following territorial losses during the Balkan Wars and the First World War, Arab notables (most notably, Sharif Husayn of the Hijaz) decided to “pursue opportunities other than those emanating from a close identification with Istanbul that would enhance [their] personal power and prestige” (Kayali 1997: 172). Thus the emergence of nationalism in the Ottoman Empire was a consequence of direct rule.

State-Building Nationalism in Turkey and the Emergence of Kurdish Peripheral Nationalism

The Ottoman Empire devolved from an immense multi-cultural, multi-national Empire stretching from Europe to the Middle East into modern-day Turkey. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, the Young Turks and their successors undertook a vigorous course of state-building nationalism. Non-Muslim minorities were considered enemies of the Turkish state: the Armenian population was ethnically cleansed, and the Greeks were expelled.

By contrast, the non-Turkish Muslim population -- comprised predominately of Kurds -- was designated a legitimate part of the new Turkish nation. Turkey’s leaders hoped that Kurdish incorporation would eliminate the nationalist threat responsible for the demise of the Ottoman Empire. To this end, they imposed direct rule in Southeast

Turkey (Poulton 1997). The Kurdish language was banned; in the 1930s, for example, people who spoke Kurdish in public were fined five *kurus* per word (Barkey and Fuller, 1998: 19 fn18). Compulsory education was to be conducted entirely in Turkish, and conscription required Kurdish men to spend at least 550 days of their lives in an all-Turkish environment (Kocher 2002: 11). The center passed laws displacing Kurds from their traditional territories to parts of the country where they were in the minority (van Bruinessen: 1990: 45; McDowall 1997: 199-201). In response to these measures, sporadic Kurdish revolts broke out during the period from 1924 to 1937. Ankara responded to these by continuing to exile large numbers of Kurds to Turkish cities (McDowall 1997: 194-202).

This increase in penetration was not matched by a corresponding extension of state scope, however. Ankara never provided the collective goods required to wrest the Kurds' dependence from local to central authorities. Most Kurds remained dependent on their tribes. Not coincidentally, they spoke many different sub-dialects and adhered to a number of religions. For a short period following the 1960 coup, Turkey's political structure opened. The government – the National Unity Committee – enacted one of the most liberal constitutions in Turkey's history, which allowed for freedom of expression, association, and publication (McDowall 1997: 405). For the first time the Kurds were able to express their demands in Parliament.

During this period, Kurdish youth began to migrate in large numbers to cities in the west, especially Istanbul and Ankara, in search of increased employment and educational opportunities (Laizer 1996: 102). While economic development transformed Turkish cities in the 1960s and 1970s, living conditions in the Kurdish Southeast were

steadily declining (Barkey and Fuller 1998: 14). In addition, Kurdish peasants suffered at the hands of exploitive *aghas*, who collaborated with the State to keep the Kurds in a subordinate position (McDowall 1992: 19). In these western cities Kurdish migrants formed organizations based on regions of origin rather than tribal affiliation. They came to connect their unfavorable position in the cultural division of labor with their Kurdish origins (McDowall 1997: 423). The PKK was formed in 1977 with the intent of releasing the urban and rural Kurdish proletariat from the fetters of the exploitive *aghas*, merchants and the ruling establishment (McDowall 1997: 423).

The PKK's mobilization activities were confined to Kurdish migrants in the cities throughout the West. Since they lacked the support of the Kurdish peasants, their uprisings in the late 1970s and early 1980s were easily defeated (Imset 1987-1988: 26). Nonetheless, this cycle of violence provoked the state to expand its penetration. Approximately 300,000 soldiers and 95,000 'village guards' – Kurds and Turkish paramilitaries who are financed and armed by the state (cited in Bozarslan 2000: 47) – were sent to the Kurdish lands. This provoked a reactive mobilization. By the early 1990s the PKK was engaged in a guerilla war, now with the participation of a large number of Kurdish peasants.

Violence increased apace with the solidarity of the PKK. Human rights violations were committed by soldiers, "village guards", the Islamist group, *Hizbullah*, and intelligence services (Bozarslan 2000; Randal 1999: 259; and Laber 1988). PKK fighters killed entire families believed to be serving the state (Gunter 1990: 85; and White 2000: 145). By 1990, a super-governor in Diyarbakir was empowered to ban publications and seize Kurdish printing presses, displace civil servants, evacuate villages, and deport

Kurds at will (Randal 1999: 256). By the end of 1994, the fighting and insecurity had emptied more than 2,600 hamlets and villages, sending an estimated two million rural Kurds into cities (Randal 1999: 257).

Sheltered in the mountains, the PKK erected a parallel government providing education and food (Ignatieff 1993). The organization compels Kurdish families to pay a monetary fee if their sons fail to report for military service (cited in Kocher 2002: 12). The PKK also provides its members with cultural symbols (i.e. history, language, myths, and notions of sacredness) as a means to unify Kurds and challenge the State's legitimacy.

The PKK offered private goods which increased the Kurds' dependence on the PKK and invested in monitoring and sanctioning to promote its solidarity (Imset 1996: 30). The PKK does not tolerate criticism of party policies and has severely punished dissenters (Imset 1992: 83; Gunter 1990: 85; and White 2000: 145). Torture seems to have been widely applied against members accused of betrayal (Bozarslan 2000: 52).

Despite this extension of direct rule, however, there was little evidence of Kurdish nationalism in the Southeast until the late 1970's. What accounts for this half-century delay? The answer is that Kurds were internally divided. Prior to the twentieth century, few among them regarded the Kurds as a distinct cultural group with common interests (van Bruinessen 1992; Mardin 1989). Individual Kurds were dependent on their tribes, villages, *millets*, or *shaykhs* for access to collective goods. Because the Ottomans divided their subjects according to religion, Kurds were among the privileged subjects of the Sultan. Sunni Kurds could and did pursue political careers without shedding their Kurdish identity. Although some Kurdish voluntary associations were established

during the Ottoman Period, they did not promote Kurdish nationalism (van Bruinessen 1992). Tribal and religious leaders looked upon nationalists with suspicion and hostility. These social divisions continue to hamper the PKK's mobilization efforts at the present time.

CONCLUSION

Nationalism is a complex modern phenomenon that has assumed a variety of forms – from benign to malevolent – across geographic space and time. Since nations are solidary groups whose members perceive that they share a distinctive culture and history, processes of group formation and solidarity are key to explaining variations in the timing, strength and forms of nationalism. This chapter argues that these processes, in turn, are decisively affected by the rise of direct rule, which replaces dependence on local notables with that on central authorities. By enacting culturally exclusive policies, central authorities in direct-rule states provide an impetus for nation-formation and nationalist collective action.

Although two centuries have passed since the first pillars of the Ottoman Empire began to crumble, its legacy lives on. Perhaps the signal achievement of the long-lived multi-ethnic empires lies in their success in maintaining an often precarious equilibrium between central and local power. Despite the massive social changes of the last three centuries, contemporary policymakers continue to turn to federalism and other forms of indirect rule to reduce the stakes for nationalist conflict. Today Nigeria, Belgium, Bosnia, and Iraq, among other states, are home to on-going experiments in constitutional engineering. Yet as the emperors of yesteryear were so keenly aware, finding the optimal balance between local and central power is no easy task.

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