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*Nationalism and Liberalism*

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**Is the Nation of Citizens a Viable Political Programme?**

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NENAD MIŠČEVIĆ

Department of Philosophy, Central European University, Budapest

Summary

Contemporary French authors have been proposing sophisticated versions of “civic republicanism” and concepts of “civic nation”. The paper critically discusses the most developed proposal by D. Schnapper, who defines nation as an ethnic-neutral community of citizens. It is argued that this proposal does not come to terms with the actual ethno-cultural diversity of typical contemporary states.

*Key words:* nation, nation-state, ethnic nationalism, civic nationalism, citizenship, civic republicanism, ethnic groups, culture, multiculturalism



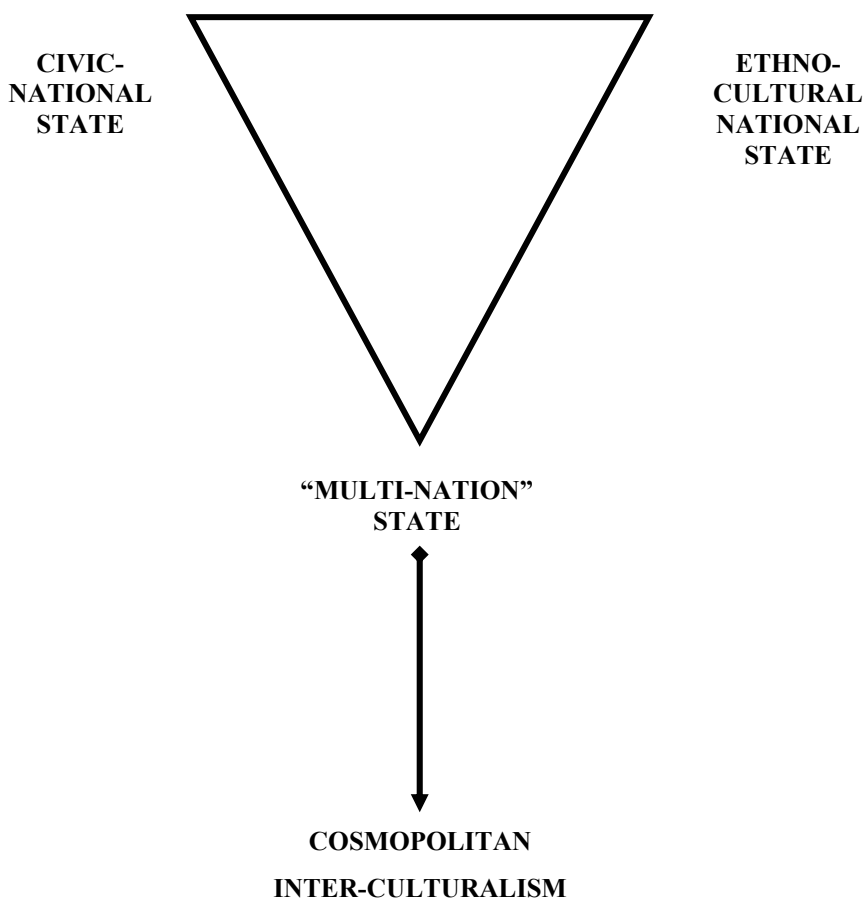
*Mailing address:* Central European University, Department of Philosophy,  
Nador u. 9, H 1051 Budapest, Hungary.

How should one treat the diversity of bigger ethno-cultural (linguistic, historical and so on) communities within a single state? For countries like Croatia it is a crucial question. The answers cluster around three general types of intra-state arrangements, to which one might add the trans-state, more cosmopolitan proposals (see Picture 1).

While classical nationalism proposes that each ethno-cultural community should have its own state, owned by the community in question, multiculturalism proposes a “multi-nation” state. The third option is the civic, republican one. It has a very respectable origin. In the contemporary French as well as in the older Anglo-American literature the dominant concept of nation was simply the civic, state-oriented one: all citizens of a state form a nation. According to the definition offered by Abbe Sieyes, a nation is “un corps d’associes viviant sous un loi commune et représenté par la meme legislature”. Of course, it has become clear that “nation” needs more than *un loi commune* in order to function. Still, on the civic view, it is citizenship that is essential for national

belonging. Dominique Schnapper has recently proposed a brilliant theorization of this concept in her *La communauté des citoyennes*. She points to the ancestry of this concept in Durkheim, Mauss and Aron (1994, Ch. 1). It is often contrasted with the Central-European, ethnically oriented one, for which a special term, “ethno-nation” has been coined: a group forms an ethno-nation if its members share – or, alternatively, believe they share – origin, language and culture. This civic concept forms the topic of the present paper. Is a purely civic nation a viable alternative to ethnic nationalism? I would say probably not, and that we have to go all the way to multiculturalism and the multi-nation. This is the view to be defended in the essay.

Picture 1: Types of intra-state arrangements between ethnic communities



Now, most nationalists in the contemporary world do not strictly distinguish between the two concepts. Both at the level of political, unreflective nationalism, and of the sophisticated philosophical defense of pro-national attitudes, the dominant concept is the mixed one of *a cultural group, possibly united by a common descent*, endowed with some kind of *civic ties*. Patrice Canivez puts it laconically: “nation, in this sense, is a community of culture” (1994: 210, all translations from French are mine). According to R. Polin “a l’idée de nation qui se définit par la cohésion politique (...) correspondent l’idée de nationalité qui relève d’une triple façon de cette réalité culturelle” (Polin, 1997: 71). A great deal of debate concerns whether all such groups should be granted the right to a state. They are variously called “nations”, “ethnic groups”, or even, “tribes”. Since we want to enter the debate with the nationalist, we have to accept its terms, and stick to this vague cultural sense of “nation”. We thus follow the division proposed by the title of a paper by Charles Taylor: *Nation culturelle, nation politique* (Taylor, 2000). Some recent commentators explicitly propose an analysis of this mixed concept (see Seymour, 1998, 1999). We shall be reminding the reader of the ethnic component, by occasionally writing the “ethno-cultural nation” in full.

Let me summarize. There is a purely political sense of a “nation”, captured by the famous definition by Abbé Sieyès, referring to a community as living by the same laws; and there is the ethno-cultural sense. The later allows for different nuances, the more primitive ones stressing the ethnic origins (“la terre et les morts”, the land and the dead, invoked by the French nationalist Maurice Barrès), and the more sophisticated ones stressing the cultural element.

### 1. *The community of citizens*

Let me now detail the civic model. It rejects any form of (what it considers to be) the ethno-cultural nation. It is often associated with France as its alleged cradle and the country of its paradigmatic realization. The model brings nation very close to the state (and some versions, but not Schnapper’s, identify the two), and considers it as *Etat-nation*. It does allow for a wide range of variations, depending on the degree of integration of the ethno-national culture and the state. At one extreme, we find the totally integrationist version, often considered to be the pure state of the model. This identification of the ethno-cultural and the politico-national features is also proposed by great French social thinkers like Marcel Mauss, Emile Durkheim, Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre. At the opposite extreme one finds a liberal proposal of a culturally completely non-integrated state, which is still strictly neutral among various ethno-cultural groups. It leaves the culture of these groups intact, and considers it to be a private matter of their members. Some proposals by Kukathas illustrate this opposite extreme.<sup>1</sup> A slightly less rigorous form is defended by Brian Barry in his recent *Culture and Equality*.

<sup>1</sup> Here are three typical quotes from his papers: “...liberalism’s counsel is to resist the demand for recognition. (...) In a sense, it recommends doing nothing” (1998: 687). “There is no more reason to insist that gipsy parents offer their children a ‘rational choice’ of life style through public education than there is to require that other parents offer their children the opportunity to become gypsies” (1995: 248). “Liberalism is indifferent to the groups of which individuals may be members” (1998: 691).

Between these extremes is a moderate version, exemplified by the work of Dominique Schnapper (1991, 1994). She is one of its most sophisticated contemporary defenders, perhaps the most sophisticated. She has come to construct her version through many years of top quality empirical research focusing on the actual ethno-cultural diversity of contemporary France. We shall therefore take her proposal as our favorite version of the model in order to consider it in its best variation. Schnapper remarks that “the very notion of ethnic nation is a contradiction in terms” (1994: 24). In other words, there is not much to discuss when it comes to ethno-cultural claims and ethno-cultural nationalism.

“Nation, as a historical relatium has to be distinguished from nationalism. This term designates either the claims of ethnic groups to be recognized as nations (...), or the will to power of constituted nations trying to affirm themselves against others” (1994: 36).

In a word, there is no real issue of nationalism: nation is a community of *citizens*, and citizenship is an answer to all the worries. Taking her moderate, mellow version as our paradigm, we sacrifice purity for quality: the alternative would be to consider the republican model in a pure but completely abstract version which is utterly blind to cultural heterogeneity and has no chance of being implemented *in concreto* (and, judged by my personal experience as a lecturer, to be accused of criticizing a caricature). However, we shall be referring to the works of other authors in the neighborhood of the model, particularly that of A. Finkelkraut. I apologize for having to be brief.

The model is organized around the contrast between the pre-national items, called *nationalité* or *ethnie* and the *nation* which is identified with *Etat-nation*. Schnapper is initially very clear and decisive about it. “There is only one idea of nation”, she claims (1994: 24). In the Introduction to her book (1991: 15), she quotes the Pope’s speech in the UNESCO in which he refers to his Poland as a “nation”, and stresses how “it has preserved, in spite of the partitions and the foreign occupations, its national sovereignty... relying upon its culture”. But even a Pope is fallible when it comes to confronting the model: Schnapper rebukes this Pope for confusing the *nation* with the *ethnie*: his dear Poland has been, during the occupations and the partitions merely an *ethnie*, not a *nation*. As already mentioned, the notion of an ethnic nation is considered by Schnapper to be a contradiction in terms. The two notions exclude each other. The *ethnie* is a historical community of culture, contrary to a community of citizens.

From the sociological point of view, a modern historical nation is a political form which has surpassed (transcende) the differences among populations, ... and has integrated them into an entity organized around a common political project. (1991:70).

The first key ingredient is the notion of *forme politique*. It is here that the Pope went wrong: in dark times when the community of Poles had no *forme politique*, their community *eo ipso* failed to be a nation. The Scots are not a nation by the same token. But Schnapper corrects the oversimplified pure model: the nation is not identical with the state, it is the community integrated into a state.

The second key element is rather a metaphor than a pure concept. It concerns the idea of surpassing or “transcending” the differences within the would-be nation. “The nation is defined by its ambition to surpass (*de transcender*) by citizenship the particu-

*lar belongings ...*” (1994: 49). The metaphor is quite wide, and a lot depends on how it is made more precise. The model is clear about what “transcender” means at the political level. It means abolishing.

Political recognition of ethnic groups integrated into a nation leads to disintegration and impotence (1994: 38).<sup>2</sup>

So, in the political case, the difference transcended loses *all* its political clout, not just part of it. We might infer that in this model, when it comes to politics, *transcender* means *obliterate*. The nation-state is a singular entity in a very strong sense, and it is the sentiment of political singularity which guarantees “la grandeur de son projet politique” (1994: 58). To take a fictional example: if Carpathia really wants to become a nation, it should integrate Lavinians to the point of denying them any political recognition.

The successful transcending ends up by creating strong sentimental bonds and the corresponding “social habitus”. Schnapper appeals to these bonds to justify a pro-national attitude.<sup>3</sup> “Let us retain from this passage the idea that the identity-related habitus and emotions are morally prior to objective integration. (The idea is very important for Schnapper and plays the key role in the final chapter of her book on integration (see 1991: 357-363 for a very forceful statement). Without it, the model loses its grip once it is conceded that the objective integration of a state into another political structure, say France into European Union, has become a reality.

Let me finally mention a somewhat curious feature of Schnapper's proposal. It affirms an *exceptional* character of France as the paradigm of the model. Such a stance points to significant limitations of the model, as we shall presently see.

Schnapper's work is sometimes interpreted as implying “a universalism inherent to the *national political form* (Balibar, 2001:97).<sup>4</sup> If I understand Balibar correctly, he wants to stress the link between the original ideal of the nation put forward by the French revolution and the idea of universal human rights. By identifying “société”, “peuple” and “nation”, these efforts “debouchent sur l'idée que, potentiellement au moins, 'tout homme est citoyen’” (2001:103). I must admit that I do not completely understand this train of thought. If one identifies *société*, *peuple* and *nation*, and believes that each human being is a member of society, one might end up with the idea that every human

<sup>2</sup> This claim is balanced, in the text which immediately follows, by a warning against the opposite danger: “l'Etat, lorsqu'il devient trop puissant...absorbe la nation et détruit la communauté des citoyens.”

<sup>3</sup> In order to remain as close to the terminology of the model, in this chapter I will mercifully avoid the term “nationalist” (Schnapper reserves it for very specific forms of what is usually called nationalism), and talk about the pro-national.

<sup>4</sup> “L'intégration objective des hommes...est aujourd'hui sans doute modiale, mais l'habitus social et les émotions identitaires et émotionnelles (sic!) ne sont-ils pas, eux, restés étroitement liés à l'appartenance nationale?” (1994: 183). Compare the comments by P. Allier who speaks of nationalist left proposing a “return to republic”. For them, he writes, “la nation est une construction identitaire qui, dans certains cas, peut s'universaliser et dépasser les particularismes” (2000:128). He cites R. Debray, M. Gallo, B. Kriegel, M. Ozouf, J. Julliard, A. LePors, O. Mongin and P. Thibaud and their republican manifesto published by *Le Monde* on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998. Balibar mentions the manifesto in a similar context (2001:95).

being is a citizen of one nation or another, which is a very weak form of universalism, and exactly the opposite of the strong universalist idea that there is one, world-wide political community, of which every human being is a citizen. But let me grant him the train of thought. He then goes on to show, correctly, that the idea mentioned would then make one expect “that the construction of modern nation-states would simply correspond to the tendency to abolish the loss of citizenship” (2001:103). He notes then that the expectation is not fulfilled. I agree that it is not, but his deeper diagnosis differs from the one I propose. He explains the failure of the abolitionist project by a “perverse effect of abstract universalism” (2001:104) which can be summarized in the following racist or bigoted nationalist’s sophism: If the nation is universal for human beings, and some beings are excluded from it, then the excluded ones are not human beings. I doubt that this is the actual reasoning of the typical bigoted nationalist or racist since both characters have no reason whatsoever to genuinely accept the antecedent, i.e. that every human being should be an equal citizen of a nation (take any classical anti-Semitic writer, French or German, and try to find anything remotely resembling the antecedent). But even assuming charitably that Balibar’s reconstruction is accurate, I fail to see how this is an “effect of universality”, rather than an expression of anti-universalism, disguised by a few universalistic-sounding phrases.<sup>5</sup> But let me return to Schnapper, the would-be universalist proponent of the idea of a civic nation.

<sup>5</sup> Let me note that I find the employed strategy to be an instance of a much more general pattern of how well-meaning intellectuals come to reject some rather obviously positive qualities like universality. Take any traditionally and commonly highly valued quality Q (for instance rationality and objectivity in research, high aesthetic value in art /being part of an ideal canon/, universality in morals and politics). Consider the biased, partisan thinker, call him discriminator, who appeals to one of the highly valued qualities in order to rationalize the discrimination of some group G. He will typically serve you a piece of reasoning of the following sort:

Q is highly valuable.

G does not have Q (e.g. Blacks are not beings to whom universalism should apply. Women writers cannot write prose of a high aesthetic value or “canonical” prose. Non-whites are not rational.) therefore

G is to be discriminated against.

Alternatively, the discriminator might appeal to Q as warranting discrimination indirectly. Let Q be objectivity. Then he can propose

A research possessing Q has shown that Gs are inferior (e. g. “Objective psychological research shows that women, Blacks, Jews etc. are inferior”).

3. follows.

We want to reject conclusion 3. The obvious way would be to attack 2 and 4, and show that they are false. But some well-meaning philosophers or theoreticians in general do not have will nor time to do empirical research, or go into the details of women’s writing so they need a shortcut, which is conceptual and “deep”, not merely empirical. So, they attack 1. It is not that G does not have Q, it is that *Q is not worth having*. Objectivity is a fraud, literary canon is to be deconstructed, universality is perverse. Q should be re-evaluated. We need an *Umwertung* (and then one can quote Nietzsche and enjoy other familiar philosophical conveniences).

Now, it seems to me pretty obvious that it is 2 and 4 that constitute the real crux of the matter. The discriminator is just appealing to a good thing, Q, and lying about G having or satisfying Q. This move of his (embodied in 2 and 4) should be criticized, and not the premise 1, which is completely innocent. One might call the pattern the *Umwertung*’s Mistake, since it well-intentionally suggests to “transvaluate” – in fact devalue – Q, thereby committing a mistake in reasoning.

If the above interpretation of her work is the proper one, she comes close to those writers who see national culture as universal in itself. Let me illustrate how the assumption works in the actual cultural debate with a short quotation of Finkelkraut's work. He has been denouncing what he sees as the twin dangers of the ethnic identity culture and of the superficial cosmopolitanism. With an attitude that clearly belongs to the tradition of civic republicanism, he ironises the identity culture summarizing it with a fine quip: "Where I was, the We has to come" ("La ou etait le 'Je', il 'Nous' faut advenir"). In his criticism of the UNESCO document on multiculturalism which claims that the cultural identity is the very core of the personal identity, he condemns the view that "le but de l'éducation n'est pas de donner a chacun les moyens de faire le tri dans l'énorme masse de croyances, d'opinions, de routines et d'idées reçues qui composent son héritage, mais bien au contraire de l'immerger dans cet océan (de l'identité – NM), da l'y plonger la tête la première." (1987: 113). But he also criticises the cosmopolitan "planete de la promiscuite" (in the Chapter on the rejection of cosmopolitanism). What then is the solution? Where do we find the place that avoids the twin dangers? Criticizing the identity politics, he claims that the "national culture" is a remedy against both dangers of identity glorification and superficial cosmopolitanism. Here is the passage from the identity culture to the national culture. First he criticizes what he sees as the identity bound project:

"La culture devient donc une pure et simple affaire d'identité et l'école une affaire de communication, de négociation et de dialogue, au détriment de la conception de la culture dont la nation a été très longtemps le véhicule. C'est précisément parce que nous sommes en train de changer de paradigme (...) que nous avons perdu cette conception initiale de la culture, cette conception inhérente à la nation..." (Finkelkraut, 1999: 484).

In his view, the concept of culture inherent to the nation is a "national culture" which is not identity-based.

## 2. *Discussing the civic model*

Before examining the model more closely, let me warn the reader. Given the standard terminology, which brings together cultural belonging and state organization, it is difficult even properly to present the alternatives to be compared. Even sophisticated authors tend to use the term "nation" ambiguously for the "majority nation", i.e. the people, or a group or a community that happens to be a majority within a state, and for the state itself. At the same time they use the adjective "ethnic" either neutrally for small groups, dominant minority groups, or pejoratively, as in "barbarie des pouvoirs ethniques" (Rupnik, 1995: 77). Then they contrast the "ethnic identity" (which is negative, or at least second-rank) with the "national identity" which is considered to be "ethnically" neutral, somehow civic and universalist. But then the other meaning of "nation", i.e. "majority group in its state" intrudes and creates confusion.

Here is a bunch of problems for the model. Remember how Schnapper claims that "the very notion of an ethnic nation is a contradiction in terms"? Nation is just a civic nation: "there is just one idea of nation" (1994: 24). Let me then briefly reply to Schnapper's claim by using her own conceptual tools. In the chapter on defining nation,

she admits that the term “nationalism” denotes “cultural demands of *ethnic* groups to be recognized *as a nation*” (p. 36, italics mine). It would then seem natural for the researcher of nationalism to use the notion of an ethnic nation. Moreover, she explicitly denies any ambition to impose definitions (“Il ne s'agit pas de prendre parti entre les innombrables definitions”) of a nation (p. 27), and predicts that her own definitions will be only justified a posteriori, if at all (p. 28). For her, “concepts are instruments of understanding, not concrete realities “ (Ibid.). Now, I fail to see how she can embrace this “nominalist notion” of concepts (as she explicitly calls it) and at the same time claim that “there is just one idea (concept) of the nation”. On the contrary, a conceptual nominalist and instrumentalist (as she declares herself to be) should admit that the civic-nation concept is better for some purposes and the ethnic-and-cultural-nation concept for others, and she herself defines nationalism so that the ethnic- and cultural-nation concept seems exactly the right one to use when discussing nationalism. All in all, the claim that it is the *only correct idea (concept) of the nation*, implying an extreme conceptual-methodological monism, is surprising. It suggests that anyone disagreeing with Schnapper have their concepts wrong (e.g. Lefort, who stipulates that “people ... est un concept politique, tandis que nation est un concept pre-politique” (2000: 40), or Kende, who claims that the idea of the nation as a politically integrated cultural community which Schnapper ties to the French tradition is “la forme centre-est europeenne de la nation politique” (1991: 26). But social items are flexible, and ideas or concepts even more than their referents. There is less consensus in the social sciences than in the natural sciences, and even in natural sciences the pluralism of key concepts is normally recognized (e.g. in biology the concept of “species” is a hotly contested one, and some varieties are agreed to be more appropriate for cladistics, others for population biology, yet others for genetics).

The next issue is what are the morally legitimate means of nation-building, of “transcendence”? How does a group commence the long march to nationhood? There seems to be no way to do it legitimately. To quote an example: Finikielkraut has been justifying the secession of Croatia partly on the basis of the assumption that Croats are a nation. Now, the model demands a nation to have a state, and Croats had none at the moment, in the year 1991. But Finkielkraut proceeded to argue this assumption by appealing to historical facts: Croatia was a (decently) independent state in the tenth century. I find it quite amusing that a fact about the political organization of a thousand years ago should have any bearing on the legitimacy of obtaining and having a state at present. (Especially given the fact that in the circumstances having one's own state was the only protection the Croatian citizens had against the very serious threat from Milošević.) Suppose it turned out that the Croatian historical documents had been falsified, and that the alleged kings at the close of the first millennium were really vassals to the Franks? Would that change anything regarding the right of the Croats living at the end of the second millennium? But given the model, Finkielkraut's strategy was a wise one, since the model seems to rely on the assumption that in order to be legitimately a nation you should have been one already.

Here is a related problem. Remember the moral priority of sentimental bonds and social habitus over the objective integration in Schnapper's model. It raises an awkward issue of ever legitimizing the state integration. At some given point in time, members of a given *etnie* had a much stronger bond to their own *etnie* than to some newly founded



state on their territory (for example Bretons, Provençales, in relation to the French state). According to the model, their bond ranks morally higher than the objective political integration. So any attempt to break the bond, even with a minimum force, is illegitimate. And conversely, if the adherents of the model accept that the objective integration may legitimately (in moral, juridical and political sense) trump the sentimental bond plus social habitus, then she or he must also accept that the European integration might legitimately trump the identity focused emotions.

Third, Schnapper proudly stresses that France is exceptionally integrated. But it seems that even France has problem with the model. Schnapper goes to considerable lengths (1991, Chapter nine in particular) to study influences that threaten the model's survival in France. Other authors concur.<sup>6</sup> So it is natural to be interested in the question of how far the model can be generalized. Schnapper is not helpful at this point, since she is enthusiastic about the “singularity of the French nation” (the title of the concluding chapter of her book, (1991), and its exceptional character. Taken literally, these formulations bode ill for the would-be generalisers: if France is singular and thereby exceptional in exemplifying the model, then generalizing the model beyond its frontiers makes little sense. I am leaving it open, and a matter for French experts to debate, to what extent is Schnapper's description correct for France itself. But other authors suggest that France may have similar problems like other countries.<sup>7</sup> But if we leave the French scene, the main issue is *how to apply the model to the countries that are not as integrated as France, i.e. the majority of countries in the world.*

Interestingly, the model might be nowadays most relevant for those rare multi-ethnic (multi-tribal) countries in which there is no clear majority ethnic group and several groups are competing for leadership (Africa might offer examples, but I would prefer to leave the particulars to specialists). In such heterogeneous surroundings, the imposition of a single common civic structure, together with some of its cultural concomitants (language) might be the right move. However, a large number of present day countries exhibit a different structure: a large majority culture, plus one or more significant minorities. To stay for a moment within the francophone area, and check whether the model could be used closer to home, culturally speaking, take the example of Quebec and of Canada. The options, *in abstracto*, are the following: either the country is not a

<sup>6</sup> “La crise de l’Etat-nation en Europe, et en France, du modele ‘jacobin’ ne peut manquer de susciter un interet pour l’histoire constitutionnelle americaine” (Raynaud, 1995: 88).

<sup>7</sup> For instance a study by Pascal Perrineau. He criticizes the expression “l’ere du vide” for the description of the eighties in France; to use it means to ignore precisely the identity issues: “C’est ignorer que ce ‘vide social’ a été occupé par une serie des mouvements identitaires, que l’identité revendique soit religieuse, ethnique ou nationale. Dans les années quatre-vingt, se developpe tout un tissu d’associations sur une base communautaire dans les milieux de l’immigration. Particulierement touchée par les processus de marginalization sociale, l’immigration reagit et met en place des reseaux de solidarite sociale. Ecartelees entre la voie de l’integration et celle de l’affirmation communautaire, l’immigration et sa descendance entrent en conflit avec le modele français traditionnel de l’integration individuelle. Face a cela se developpent des reactions tout aussi identitaires ou, sur fond de crise economique et de mutation urbaine, des citoyens français vivent le sentiment que leur pays, leur region ou leur quartier sont envahis. La voie est libere pour que s’epanouisse un nationalisme français, populiste et xenophobe” (1993:250).

For interesting points along similar lines see also Joel Roman (1995).

nation at all, or it is a nation, or it is something in-between, say a half-baked nation on the way to become a full-blown one. If it is not a nation, then presumably Quebec and the Anglophone part are each a nation, and they should automatically part company. (If neither part is even remotely a nation, as well as the whole, then the model leaves us completely in the dark about what should be done). If Canada as a whole is a nation, then it is the nation of the majority, i.e. an Anglophone nation. Then the prohibition of political recognition of ethnies applies to the Quebecois. None of the two seems remotely plausible. The remaining option is that Canada is a half-baked nation, on its way to become one. But then the recipe of the republican model would be to integrate the Quebecois, by all means available to a strong government. The Quebec example should help us locate the critical weak spot of the model. To start at the relatively superficial level, in most countries of the world, the majority culture is not the only one, and in many it is not the only autochthonous one (for what autochthony is worth). Now, the majority may try to integrate everyone “autour d'un projet politique”, but it would be *its* project, not the minorities'. How does the majority then integrate minorities into its political project without granting them political recognition? What means of “transcender” should be employed, and are there democratic means at all that will on the average tend to achieve the result?

A simpler, deeper, and more general point is then that the majority culture *is not a neutral culture*. Although it appears neutral in a perfectly integrated *Etat-nation*, in any country which is less than perfectly integrated, it remains recognizably bound to the majority. Similar criticism has been raised in contemporary literature, most vociferously from Canada. A cautious and a thoughtful version has been recently offered to the French readers by Dieckhoff, in the second part of his book (2000). Balibar notes, along similar lines, “deep antinomies” hidden in the model (2001:100).<sup>8</sup> The most elaborated criticisms are those of Kymlicka (1989 and 2001). Let me illustrate the point by using first a fictional example, and then a real-life illustration, moving away from Schnapper's work to consider some related writings of Finkelkraut. First, the fiction. Lavinians are the majority in Lavinia, Carpathians a minority. In the state-sense of the nation, call it the “state-nation”, a Carpathian citizen of Lavinia is of Lavinian state-nationality (i.e. citizenship). In the other sense, i.e. of belonging to a minority group, call it the group-nationality, he/she is of Carpathian nationality (i.e. group-nationality), whereas his/her majority co-citizen is of the Lavinian group-nationality. Now, culture generally seems to go with the group-nationality and not the state-nationality. And the group-nationality *is not culturally neutral* while the state-nationality might be. The confusion arises because the model *identifies majority's group-nationality with state-nationality*, and describes the minority group-nationality as not being national at all, but “ethnic”. Suddenly, the very culturally immersed majority Lavinian starts to look like a paragon of neutrality and universality, whereas his/her poor Carpathian neighbor is relegated to ethnic barbarity, exactly for the same kind of attitude for which his neighbor is praised. The very French attitudes of Frenchmen are then implicitly portrayed as embodying neutrality and universality, while those very Corsican of Corsicans are depicted as “ethnic”, potentially or actually “barbaric” sentiments.

<sup>8</sup> Compare the notion of “culture nationale-etatiste” developed by M. Kail in his book (2000).

Let me now very briefly turn to Finkelkraut's remark concerning the concept of culture which has been for a long time carried by nation. He regrets that "we have lost this initial concept of culture, one inherent to the nation". In his view, the concept of culture inherent to the nation is a universalist "national culture" which is not identity-based. But what is the difference between *la culture identitaire* and *la culture nationale*? In contrast to Schnapper, Finkelkraut is in no position to answer that he is talking about some specific nation that is allegedly exceptional for its absence of cultural nationalism. He is very much concerned about small nations, which he justly sees as having a morally equal standing as the big, historical ones. So, what would he propose to his dear Czechs, Croats and Slovaks? If he asks them to focus upon their *national culture(s)*, he will be peddling the same identity-based goods he condemns so decisively. In all these countries, national culture is the culture of the ethno-nation, period. More importantly, national cultures are particular, not universal and Finkelkraut seems to be aware of this: he praises Montaigne for preferring humankind to his fatherland, but above all he praises Renan for saying that "there is a human culture, before the French, German and Italian one" (1987: 51). This implies that in Finkelkraut's own view there is a difference, and the nationally neutral *culture humaine* is not the same as the national culture, and is prior to it.

On the other hand, if he proposes to the peoples of the earth to get rid of the culture focused on identity, he will have to propose a universalist view of culture, maybe slanted a bit towards local sources, but in its essence non-local and not entrenched. He would then come to cosmopolitanism, only under a different name ("universe" replacing "cosmos"). We can glean his preferred solution from the passage quoted above: the aim of the education should be "donner a chacun les moyens de faire le tri dans l'énorme masse de croyances, d'opinions, de routines et d'idées reçues qui composent son héritage". But what is national about this way out? He claims that the "nation" "has for a long time been a vehicle" for such a culture. But mere teaching does not make the nation a vehicle of things taught, nor does it make the universalist culture national. (A lot of mathematics has been taught in the same schools, but does this make nation a vehicle of mathematics?) On the other hand, recognizably *national cultures* have been based on national cultural identities. My conclusion is that his way out is not really one. There is no culture that is at the same time neutral and national. Polin is right when he claims that a "nation stems from a slow elaboration of a culture of a very particular type" (1997: 70) and when he implies that the result embodies the culture of the origin.

I am very much aware that neither my very brief account of the model, nor my criticism could do full justice to the subtlety and intelligence of its proponents and defenders. Still, let me summarize: the civic republican model is faced with a profound difficulty if it is to be generalized and applied to typical contemporary countries. Either it poses as culturally neutral without actually being such (as in Finkelkraut's example), and the pose is then quickly unmasked. Or, it manifestly takes a cultural stance and proposes a cultural integration into the majority culture (as in Schnapper's work). In that case, minorities seem to have a moral right to say no, and it is probable that this right will be sooner or later exercised. As Dieckhoff has put it "the state itself does not escape into culture" (p.71). In practice the alleged "purely civic" states are characterized by a particular culture, the culture of the majority group. To see the tension this creates in the model, compare the following two quotations from Schnapper taken from the same

page. She offers the following normative principle: “The action of a nation-state consists in introducing and strengthening national singularities, thanks to which the community of citizens, an abstract notion, becomes a concrete reality, situated in time and space, capable of mobilizing populations” (Schnapper, 1994: 24). And she makes it then more concrete: “It is the effort of the emancipation from the identities and belonging experienced as natural, by means of abstracting citizenship which properly characterizes the national project” (Schnapper, 1994: 24). But there is a tension between the two. The first claim portrays a nation as a concrete reality potentially mobilizing people, the second as an “abstraction of citizenship”, opposed to “belonging experienced as natural”. The two seem to clash. In certain situations, the clash is resolved by the state through privileging one culture and one belonging experienced as natural, namely the majoritarian one. Minorities are suppressed as being too dangerous for the stability of the nation-state. But the model has little to offer in the direction of justifying the majority rule in the case of conflict. Especially in the contemporary Western countries, which are, by the adherents' own admission, objectively integrated into larger, trans-national units, the mere sentimental attachment of the majority to its cultural identity gives it no right to trample on the corresponding attachment of minorities. In conflicts it is just sentiment against sentiment, given that the objective integration is anyway pointing in a quite different direction. Maybe the wisest way then is to let the champions of the model go on admiring the uniqueness and singularity of its unique representative, and remain at that. The issue of nationalism is still a burning one, in spite of their optimism.

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