

Nationalism and Globalization

East and West



Edited by **Leo Suryadinata**

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≈ Preface ≈

After the end of the Cold War, nationalism re-emerged as a challenge to world order. Many countries have disintegrated as a result of ethnic and religious conflicts, which have been interpreted as a clash of different types of nationalism. The former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia are two examples. The situation in the Balkans is often cited as an example of national disintegration. Some have cited nationalism and religion as two important factors that have disrupted the Balkans, but others have attributed it to globalization as the major culprit. What have been the factors contributing to conflict and national disunity? Is the situation in the Balkans unique? Why do some countries remain intact? Is it only a matter of time before other multi-ethnic countries will disintegrate?

It was the challenge of nationalism and globalization that led to the undertaking of this project. Apparently, the roles that these two forces play and the impact of globalization on the countries differ. A comparative study was initiated to find the answers to questions raised. This was not an easy task but we felt that the project was a worthwhile one.

The first hurdle was the definition of the terms themselves. There is no general agreement on the definitions of both nationalism and globalization as they are interpreted in accordance with the concept and theory used by each individual scholar. However, if there is no basic agreement on the key terms and concepts, a comparative study or any

generalizations will not be possible. For this project, it was suggested that the paper-writers adopt working definitions of the key words, or at least, to use some of the definitions in their study. The definitions have been taken from well-known writers but their selection reflects my understanding and perhaps bias on the subject matter. For instance, I view nationalism as a concept which is related to nation or nationhood, but I do not argue which one comes first. I also assume that nationalism is related to the concept of ethnic or ethnicity, but they are not identical. They are also different from the concepts of race, state, citizen or citizenship.

Key Terms Used

Below are the suggested definitions of the key terms used in the project:

- Ethnic or ethnic group is linked to assumed common descendant. Max Weber and many sociologists use it to refer to a group of people who share a common ancestry — real or imagined — and a common culture. However, the second component should be considered as secondary, because not all ethnic groups share an identical culture. I would like to suggest that ethnic is used primarily for a group of people who believe that they share a common ancestry;
- Nation is a socio-cultural and political concept. I would like to suggest that Rupert Emerson's definition of nation be adopted. It is defined in terms of a sense of belonging to a community of people who share the same heritage and would like to share the same future. It commands the "supreme loyalty" of the people who are prepared to die for it. A common language is an important component of a nation.
- There are at least two kinds of nation: ethnic-nation and social nation. The former is a nation based on one ethnic group; the latter is a nation based on multi-ethnic groups.
- Nationalism is hence defined as an expression of "national" feelings. It often takes the form of a movement to glorify the "nation" which is either in existence or in the making.
- Race is used to refer to physical characteristics, for instance, physical features and skin colour.
- State is a political entity where there are three major components — a sovereign government, a people, and a territory.
- Citizen or citizenship is linked to a state. It is a political and legal concept rather than a socio-cultural one. Therefore, citizenship should be differentiated from nationhood. Ideally, citizenship should

also be differentiated from nationality, but many continue to use them interchangeably as if the citizen is a member of a nation.

- Globalization is used to mean a process of globalizing but it is used here to refer to the following: “the intensification of worldwide relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa” (Anthony Giddens).

The Proposed Study

Scholars of nationalism often point to Western Europe, especially France, Germany and Italy, as the first countries where nationalism was born during the late eighteenth century. Since then, nationalism has spread all over the world. However, some scholars argue that quite a few Asian nations are older than those of the West. Others maintain that nations in East Asia are unique — the concept of Western nationalism cannot be compared with Asian experiences. How valid are these claims? Is it just a matter of different definitions or the existence of different historical experiences?

However, there is no doubt that both Western and Asian nations have faced the challenges of globalization in recent decades, and they have become more intense since the 1990s. The decline of communism and socialism as ideologies, the decreasing importance of national boundaries for capital, companies, and even labour, have had profound implications for national identity. Nevertheless, the impact of globalization on the states is not identical. It has been greater on some compared to others. What have been the effects? Did it lead to stronger nationalism or national disintegration? What happened to national identity? Is the concept of nation still relevant in the era of globalization?

To answer the questions raised above, we selected twelve countries — six from the West and six from Asia — for study. The selection of these countries was based on the availability of experts that we could mobilize, but the countries ultimately chosen represent a wide range of national experiences. In Europe, France is an example of the first Western modern nation, assumed to be homogeneous. The United Kingdom is a modern multi-ethnic nation. Yugoslavia is an example of nation-building that failed. Both the United States and Australia are immigrant states, one of which has arguably achieved “nationhood”, while the other is still searching for it.

In Asia, Japan is an example of a homogeneous nation. Both India and China are examples of multi-ethnic nations, but the former does not have a dominant ethnic group while the latter does. Indonesia is an

example of a nation based on a lingua franca. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic nation with an indigenous majority. Singapore is an immigrant country in search of nationhood.

Elements to be Included in each Case Study

We are aware that each country has unique features that cannot be subsumed in a general framework. Nevertheless, to make the studies comparable, each paper-writer was urged to include the following elements:

1. Origins of nation: the role of ethnicity, race and religion; a brief discussion on the nation and their major components.
2. Concepts of citizen, nation and ethnic; state-defined and community-defined ethnic and nation.
3. Presence and absence of “national indicators” or “national markers” (for example, national symbols, national language, national education, “national religion”, national institutions, etc).
4. Nation-building/nation preserving and ethnic groups: strategies and process. State policy to promote nation-building and preservation of the nation should be discussed. Although a historical account is needed, the emphasis should be more on recent/current periods.
5. Any separatist movement or major ethnic riots or ethnic war?
6. Challenges to nationhood, including globalization and immigration.
7. Is nationalism a force leading to integration or disintegration in the respective country? What are the problems and prospects of nationalism and globalization.

Of course, the above served only as a guideline. Some writers have developed their own themes, but they have addressed some, if not all, of the issues outlined in the above framework. The findings of the project are summarized in the conclusion.

Leo Suryadinata

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“Yugoslav” Nationalism at the End of the Twentieth Century

TROND GILBERG

Balkan Nationalism and the “Curse of History”

The tragic events occurring in Kosovo in 1999 represent the culmination of a long process which may be considered as the emergence of full-blown “ethnochauvinism” in this part of the Balkans. As such, Kosovo represents perhaps the most advanced (or most degenerate) form of a problem which is common to much of the Balkan area. This widespread phenomenon is the result of historical developments, geographical peculiarities, demographic trends, and the existence and development of various myths in the entire region. In Kosovo, personality factors and the idiosyncratic characteristics of individual leaders add to the general aspects found elsewhere in the region. Finally, actions by outside forces influence the manifestations of regional and specific examples of ethnochauvinism in the area, as will be shown below.¹

Scholars have discussed a number of concepts relevant for a systematic examination of nationalism in the Balkans. In so doing, they have examined phenomena which are variously called nationalism, “ethnonationalism”, and “ethnochauvinism”. In the process of this discussion, they have also launched concepts such as “ethnie”, ethnicity, and ethnic mobilization. Furthermore, some scholars have argued that nationalism as a practical manifestation is only possible if there are discoverers, myth-makers, and mobilizers who can find, conceptualize,

and operationalize the various forms of nationalism present in a region. Let us now proceed to examine this plethora of concepts, attempting in the process to establish a set of conceptual tools which can be used to examine nationalism in present-day Yugoslavia.²

Let us start with the simplest of these concepts, and work towards the more complex. "Ethnie" is seen as a group of people who have some characteristics in common, such as a common ethnic background. Normally, no other characteristics are attached to this concept; it does not connote a particular kind of political preference, nor does it assume any special form of organization. It is simply a marker which distinguishes this group from others. But students of "ethnies" also point out that there are frequently associated characteristics which produce additional markers, thereby enlarging the distance between this group and others. Such additional characteristics may include a language which is different from that of surrounding groups, and perhaps also religion; furthermore, a group of long standing and existence is likely to have developed its own historiography and iconography, which includes myths, heroes, and villains. As the group develops an awareness of its peculiarities and becomes convinced that it is special, it becomes an *ethnic group*, with ethnic consciousness. It comes as no surprise to students of history that many of the recorded events of previous generations, as well as our own, are replete with evidence of armed conflict between groups; thus, much of the mythology (as well as recorded factual evidence) shows conflict with "the others", with the resulting demonization of "ethnies" which are different from one's own. Depending upon the number of accumulative characteristics described above that are present in an "ethnie", that group may or may not be primed for political action of various kinds in relations with other "ethnies" surrounding it.³

A number of eminent students of nationalism argue that characteristics of "ethnies" are not enough to produce political action; it is necessary to have individuals who can *mobilize* the group for such purposes. Further-more, even prior to mobilization, it is necessary to have individuals who can "discover", conceptualize, and popularize the historical legacy of the group, and also disseminators, who can spread the message of historical commonality to the masses. There is an argument among these scholars about the times in history when the mobilization of "ethnies" could have been undertaken. Some argue that antiquity is replete with examples of such mobilizations (as, for example, Greeks vs. Persians), while others insist that the function of mass mobilization is only feasible under conditions of "modernity", when technological capabilities, such as the printing and mass distribution of books and pamphlets assist in spreading the word. Scholars who focus

on the emergence of the state as an organization in Italy a thousand years ago may also have a few words to add to this debate (see, for example, the magnificent history of Venice by Sir Julius Norwood).⁴ Fortunately, it is not necessary to enter this debate here, for nationalism in its various forms was alive and “well” (alive and sick may be more appropriate today) in the nineteenth century in the Balkans, and has developed further since then. Thus, it is not vital for the present argument to take sides in the debate on the issue of the birth of nationalism in European history. Suffice it to say that in the Balkans, *specific* forms of nationalism have been around for a long time, and they have shown themselves remarkably resistant to other political “isms”, such as globalism and the development of civil society. More on this later.

Who are the discoverers and myth-makers of nationalism? In European history, they can generally be identified as writers, poets, painters, scholars, teachers, and religious leaders. These are the people who are literate, who have the capability of reading manuscripts, and of producing a written record of the often confusing past in such a way that it could make sense to the illiterate masses. Furthermore, as the Renaissance swept Europe, it was individuals such as these who “rediscovered” the glories of antiquity, and thus could begin the process of tying the present day with the great days of the past. This, in turn, induced efforts to develop a myth concerning the relations between the contemporary ethnic group and its glorious heritage, originating from ancient Greece or Rome. In addition, the historical record *did* reveal actual instances of past greatness (which will be discussed later), and such past glories necessitated an explanation of what had befallen the group in the meantime. In Europe, the great powers of the nineteenth century could confidently point to their contemporary standing, with a tradition of considerable achievements going back several centuries at least, but in the Balkans, the various ethnic groups could only make reference to a more distant past, before the arrival of the Ottomans, sometimes even before the establishment of Byzantine power in the region. In the Balkans, then, national awakening meant not only a rediscovery of distant glories but also necessitated an explanation of why such great times had been superseded by the misery of foreign occupation. More often than not, the explanation for this bleak state of affairs focuses on the evil deeds of “others” and the need to take revenge for such injustices. The resurrection of the glorious past, therefore, was only possible by punishing those responsible for the present condition. This is a driving force in Serb nationalism today, as we shall see below.⁵

The Renaissance “rediscovered” antiquity, with two important political consequences in Europe. In the western part, studies of the ancient Greeks and Romans revealed an emphasis on the individual and his role in the