The Role of Minority Myths in Nation-Building: The Cases of Georgia and Serbia

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Abstract

This thesis presents the findings of the research on the causes of the exclusionary nationalist myths. During the research, two cases have been analyzed – Georgia and Serbia during the collapse of the USSR and the SFRY respectively. In the course of the dissolution of the old states, old identities waned and the newly emerged states faced the problem of creating new identities. These heated up nationalist discourse both in Georgia and Serbia thus begetting a number of exclusionary myths about their minority. However, Georgian nationalism developed hostile myths about the Abkhaz and the South Ossetian minorities and nothing like that about the Ajar minority. Similarly, Serbian nationalism created exclusionary myths about the Albanian minority in Kosovo while it was relatively accommodative towards the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. In my thesis, I argue that these differences in the trajectory of the development of nationalist discourse are determined by the "national identity markers" (descent, language, culture, religion, and citizenship) on the basis of which the majority is constructed. In particular, if the content of a dominant identity marker of the majority conflicts with the content of the respective identity marker of the minority, the majority does not perceive that minority as "us," the part of the same nation but rather as "them," the "other." This is reflected in the nationalist political discourse.

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War was marked with the dissolution of and the transition period in the former socialist states. As a result of those processes, the old identities waned and the states faced the problem of creating new identities in order to ensure their own stability. Thus, the process of nation-building (or more precisely "nation-rebuilding") in Eastern Europe and on the ex-USSR space began. The task was exacerbated by the multiethnic composition of the newly emerged states as well as by mismatch between political and ethnic boundaries. All these contributed to the spurge of nationalism which led to a number of violent ethnic conflicts and hostile nationalist discourse. Both are equally a result and a means of nation-rebuilding.[1]

There are a number of theories which aim to explain ethnic conflicts (primordialism, instrumentalism, economic competition approach, security dilemma approaches and others) while the salience of hostile nationalist discourse still remains an under-researched area.

According to Crawford, discourse is "the content and construction of meaning and the organization of knowledge in a particular realm."[2] As to nationalist political discourse, it is composed of the stories ("myths") told about the "other." These nationalist myths may assume two forms – inclusivist or exclusionary. The former accept different ethnic groups as parts of a single nation while the latter contain claims that some ethnic groups are the "other," not "us" thereby excluding those groups from the "nation-under-construction." But why do some nationalisms produce exclusionary myths while other – inclusivist?

Currently, the field of analysis of nationalist political discourse is dominated by state-centric approaches which in general try to address the above stated question by analyzing the

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[1] Ger Duijzings, Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2000), 33.
[2] Quoted in "Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis," Newsletter of APSA 2 : 1 (Spring 2004), 15-40.

structures and characteristics of political and social spheres. For example, Van Evera[3] looks into the ethnic composition of a state in the light of security studies. Snyder and Ballentine[4] analyze political discourse as the "market place of ideas" focusing on the effectiveness of state "watchdog" institutions and norms. Wimmer[5] proposes a multilevel process theory which analyses the institutional order, distribution of power, and political networks.

Although these approaches help to understand variances in nationalist discourses across states, they fail to explain why opposite myths (inclusive and exclusionary) are simultaneously produced towards different groups by one and the same nationalism. It leads to my research question: under what conditions does the process of nation-building produce exclusionary myths about minorities?

Since nation-building is the process of the construction of national identity, this identity is made on a certain bases ("national identity markers"), namely descent, language, culture, religion, and citizenship. The relevant importance of different national identity markers vary across nations and over time. Since different nations are constructed differently, I argue that if the content of a dominant identity marker of the majority conflicts with the content of the respective identity marker of the minority, the majority does not perceive that minority as "us," the part of the same nation but rather as "them," the "other." There originates exclusionary myths about minorities. In other words, it is all about the question what it is to be "us."

My argument is inspired by Mansbach and Rhodes[6], who analyze the possibility of violent ethnic conflict and suggest going beyond the traditional focus on the characteristics of

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[3] Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," International Security 18 : 4 (Spring 1994).
[4] Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," International Security 21 : 2 (Fall 1996).
[5] Andreas Wimmer, "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory," American Journal of Sociology 113 : 4 (January 2008).
[6] R. Mansbach and E. Rhodes, "The National State and Identity Politics: State Institutionalisation and "Markers" of National Identity," Geopolitics 12 (2007).

state towards the characteristics of nation. Thus, in my thesis I adapt Mansbach's and Rhodes's approach to the analysis of nationalist political discourse to find the answer to my research question. However, in my focus on characteristics of a nation as opposed to the characteristics of a state, I do not intend to compete with the above mentioned state-centric approaches, but rather to complement them.

In order to understand the conditions under which exclusionary myths are purveyed about some minorities but are not purveyed about other minorities, methodologically, I use qualitative comparative analysis based upon the method of difference with nationalist myths being a dependent variable. In other words, I chose two types of minorities in one state – one with exclusionary myths and the other without such myths. Georgia in the late 1980s – 1990s provides an excellent example for such a case study since Georgian nationalism was hostile towards the Abkhazian and the South Ossetian minorities while it was relatively peaceful with regard to the Ajar minority.

Since nationalist myths are a part of political discourse, the main technique in my research is discourse analysis which helps to deconstruct nationalist myths in order to tease out the pivotal values (national identity markers) around which the national identity is constructed. In the course of discourse analysis, I analyze the speeches by political leaders in the period under consideration, legal documents relating to nationalities policy adopted by domestic legislature, political party platforms, political slogans, and the like.

In order to show the applicability of the determined casual mechanism between national identity construction and exclusionary myth salience to more than one case study, I also analyze the nationalist discourse of Serbia of the same time period because the two countries are similar. In fact, both countries are multinational and have experienced the transition period from socialism to democracy. And in the case of Serbia, there were

exclusionary myths about the Albanian minority in Kosovo whereas it was not the case for the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina.

Structurally, my thesis is divided into two parts – theoretical and empirical – each of which consists of two chapters. In the first part, I elaborate the theoretical framework for discourse analysis of minority myths to be further employed for case studies. In fact, the first chapter deals with theories of nationalist mythmaking where three main types of nationalist myths are distinguished. The second chapter provides the scheme for the deconstruction of national identity using national identity markers such as language, religion and so on.

In the second part of my thesis, I carry out an empirical analysis of my case studies according to the framework developed in the previous part. In fact, the third chapter deconstructs nationalist political discourse in Georgia in the late 1980s-early 1990s vis-à-vis Abkhaz, South Ossetians and Ajars, and explains the presence of exclusionary myths about the first two minorities. The fourth chapter deals with the nationalist political discourse in Serbia in the same period in vis-à-vis Albanians in Kosovo and Hungarians in Vojvodina and explains the presence of the exclusionary myth in the former case. Finally, in the end, I conclude on the conditions under which the process of nation-building produces exclusionary myths about minorities and I also make relevant policy prescriptions.

Chapter 1. Types of Nationalist Myths

According to the classical definition of nationalism, it is in essence a political principle,[7] thus being present in political discourse. According to Obeng, political discourse is "[a]ny text uttered or written that may have political implications or that may influence the outcome of a communicative procedure politically."[8] In other words, nationalism is reflected in political discourse through stories ("myths"). Thus, this chapter provides theoretical ground for understanding the phenomenon of "nationalist myth" and proceeds as follows. First, I give the definition of a "nationalist myth." Second, I discuss the questions of who purvey nationalist myths, for what reasons and under what conditions. Finally, I provide classifications of different types of nationalist myths and illustrate them with paradigmatic historical examples.

To start with, it is necessary to point out that ethnic groups by definition are organized around myths. In fact, Smith suggests that ethnic community has six characteristics: a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity[9] – all of which bare certain degree of mythology. Therefore, it is necessary to understand what a nationalist myth is.

In broader sense, myth is "a belief held in common by a large group of people that gives event and actions a particular meaning."[10] In other words, the purpose of myth is "to help a person understand what a set of event means to him or her,"[11] for example to define enemies and heroes, the ideas of right and wrong, and so on. In a nutshell, such myths create a

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[7] Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.

[8] Richard Wafula, "Language and Politics in Easter African Swahili Prose: Intertextuality in Kezilahabi's Dunia Uwanja wa Fugo 'The World, a Playground of Chaos'," in Surviving through Obliqueness: Language of Politics in Emerging Democracies, ed. Samuel Gyasi Obeng and Beverly Hartford (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers), 20.

[9] Anthony Smith, The Ethnic Origins of Nations (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1986), 22-31.

[10] Murray Edelman. Quoted in Stuart J. Kaufman, Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War (New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 16.

[11] Kaufman, 16.

worldview, a Weltanschauung shared by the members of an ethnic group – a prism through which an ethnic group perceives reality. On the part of the members of ethnic group such myths are treated as received wisdom.[12]

However, for the purpose of this thesis, I define myths narrower, namely as "assertions that would lose credibility if their claim to a basis in fact or logic were exposed to rigorous, disinterested public evaluation."[13] Although on the surface, this definition is an instrumentalist one since it implies the distortion of the truth and manipulation of public opinion, it adequately defines biased content of myths which affects interethnic relations. Accordingly, nationalist mythmaking in an instrumentalist sense is the employment of "dubious arguments to mobilize support for nationalist doctrines or to discredit opponents."[14]

However, this does not imply that all nationalist myths are essentially based on the distortion of the truth. In fact, some scholars such as Anthony Smyth[15] distinguish another type of myths, namely stories "about the origins, special character, and destiny" of the nation thus viewing them as "mythomoteurs" (driving forces).[16] For example, Smith points out at a myth of "ethnic chosenness" which helps to ensure longevity to an ethnic group.[17] In other words, such mythomoteurs are basically myths how nation perceives itself and its values. These mythomoteurs are examples of Durkheim's notion of collective representations which, inter alia, are used for group boundary drawing.[18] In general, mythomoteurs can lead to hostility towards others if they "if they identify a territory as the group's homeland which

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[12] Michael E. Brown, "Causes and Implications of Ethnic Conflict," in Ethnic Conflict and International Security, ed. Michael E. Brown (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 11.
[13] Snyder and Ballentine, 66.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Smith, 15, 24.
[16] Snyder and Ballentine, 66.
[17] Anthony D. Smith, "The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism," in Ethnic Conflict and International Security, ed. Michael E. Brown (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 32.
[18] Duijzings, 193.

must be defended and dominated politically and define a mythical enemy with which the other group can be identified."[19]

Snyder and Ballentine argue that nationalist myths inherently tend to beget ethnic conflicts.[20] Similarly, Van Evera describes myths as a perceptual factor of war-causing nationalism pointing out at the correlation between the effects of nationalism, on the one side, and self-images of nationalist movements and their images of "the other," on the other side.[21] In fact, the co-existence of ethnic groups is possible when these beliefs converge, that is when they share a non-contradictory interpretation of their mutual history, and of one another's current behavior. Historiographically, it results from mutual convergence of images on something close to the "truth," or from convergence on the same distortion of "the truth." Conversely, relations are bad if images diverge in the antipodal directions. In fact, Brown notes that myths of ethnic groups involved in competition are most frequently mirror images of each other.[22] For example, during Serbo-Croatian war, Croatian Serbs saw themselves as victims of the neo-Ustashe regime and, hence, Croats as thugs whereas Croats viewed themselves as sufferers from the Serb aggression and, therefore, Serbs as attackers. As a result, any provocation on either side is considered as a confirmation of such systems of beliefs and provides the justification for retaliatory response or even preemptive attack.

Such nationalism which is artificially created or enhanced by chauvinist myths is called, in Van Evera's words, "myth-poisoned nationalism."[23] Thus, conflict caused by such nationalism stems from the beliefs of ethnic groups, not from their circumstances.[24] Mearsheimer states that these beliefs may derive from false propaganda or from real

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[19] Kaufman, 30.
[20] Snyder and Ballentine, 67; and Kaufman, 34.
[21] Van Evera, 47.
[22] Brown, 11.
[23] Van Evera, 47.
[24] Ibid, 47.

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experience.[25] Extreme variations of myth-poisoned nationalism tend to be asymmetrical[26] in a sense that they advocate that only "our" ethnic group is entitled to statehood while others should be denied it. Thus, nationalism changes from a self-liberating idea to a hegemonistic one. However, this does not mean that myth-poisoned nationalism is a rare and completely distinct type of nationalism. In fact, chauvinist mythmaking is widely practiced by almost all nationalist movements to a certain degree.[27]

Controversially enough, Van Evera argues that myth-making is not an indispensable part of nationalism because, according to him, nationalism may also derive from "a group solidarity based on truth."[28] But since the very notion of "truth" is socially constructed, this statement appears to be at least challengeable. In this line, Ernst Renan's words that "[g]etting its history wrong is part of being a nation"[29] reinforce the idea that myth is unalienable part of nationalism. The question is rather to what degree nationalism is governed by myth and what type of myth it is. Having defined the phenomenon, now it is necessary to analyze under what conditions it is likely to come into being.

Although myths are omnipresent in political propaganda, their salience and hence impact vary dramatically across nations and time. Such myths become politically important when elites embark on them to reach their ends. Although myths are usually purveyed by nationalist political elites and serve significant political functions, they can be of benefit not only for those political elites but also for an ethnic group as a whole. Duijzings points to the strong likelihood of nationalist mythmaking during crises arguing that functionally, myths are

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[25] John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," International Security 15 : 1 (Summer 1990), 21.

[26] Van Evera, 47.

[27] See examples in Boyd C. Shafer, Faces of Nationalism: New Realities and Old Myths (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 313-342.

[28] Van Evera, 48.

[29] Quoted in Eric J. Hobsbawm, Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17-18.

supposed "to create order out of chaos."[30] Van Evera distinguishes four principle factors which influence the proliferation of nationalist myths: first, the legitimacy of the regime or of nationalist movement's leadership in case of stateless ethnic groups; second, the scope of the demands posed by state on its citizens; third, domestic economic situation; fourth, the influence of independent evaluative institutions ("watchdogs").[31]

First, when it comes to the legitimacy of regime, nationalist myths may help political elites to enhance their power.

Second, as to the scope of the demands posed by state on its citizens, this factor deals with the level of popular mobilization required by regime to accomplish its design. For instance, in case of war, when regimes need vast mobilization, they are more likely to use myths to encourage sacrifice by their citizens and to justify their cruelties towards others. The prime example here is the dehumanizing myth that the Slavs are "Untermenschen" purveyed by the Nazis to motivate their troops on the Eastern Front.[32]

Third, re domestic economic crisis, on the one hand, elites are interested in diverting populations attention from their domestic mal-performance by putting the blame on the external "other;" while, on the other, populace is more receptive to believe that others are to be blamed when they are suffering from economic problems.

Finally, when it comes to the influence of independent evaluative institutions, societies without free speech, free press, and free universities are more vulnerable to mythmaking. However, the existence of these elements does not guarantee absence of such myths. For example, after World War I, German academia contributed to official German mythmaking. In this respect, Van Evera argues, these institutions essentially need "a truth-squad ethos,"

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[30] Duijzings, 194.
[31] Van Evera, 51-54.
[32] Joseph Montville, "The Pathology and Prevention of Genocide," in The Psychodynamics of International Relationships, ed. Vamik D. Volkan, Joseph V. Montville, and Demetrios Julius (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990) : 121-143.

that is an understanding that myth-debunking is a part of their professional mission.[33] However, such ethos is often missing, which may turn these institutions into additional weaponry in the hands of nationalist elites. The extreme example here is the notorious role of the Hutu "Hate Radio" in encouraging genocide against Rwanda's Tutsi minority.

Although all aforementioned factors are important, they can show only why certain nationalist myths gain political salience at some point of time. In other words, they just answer the question why political elites sometimes bring myths in the sphere of politics. However, nationalist elites chose and employ certain myths which pre-exist in public discourse. In fact, on the part of regime, such myths are disseminated through the educational system (especially in history teaching), literature, military service, or public relations apparatus, thus molding official nationalist discourse. Therefore, the questions how these myths were created and what roles they play in unofficial public discourse still remain unanswered.

Now, I analyze different types of nationalist myths focusing on their content, political function, and the ramifications they may have on inter-group relations. To understand the influence of nationalist myths on inter-ethnic relations, the typology of myths suggested by Van Evera seems to be very useful. In fact, depending on the content of myths, he boils them down into three major types: self-glorifying, self-whitewashing, and other-maligning.[34]

Contentwise, the first type of myths – self-glorifying ones – serves to claim special virtue, competence, and past benevolence towards others. Most mythomoteurs are self-glorifying myth of a different degree since they ascribe certain benevolent characteristics to ethnic group. As to political function of these myths, they encourage people to contribute to their ethnic community, namely to pay taxes, join the army, defend their group's homeland,

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[33] Van Evera, 53.
[34] Ibid, 48.

and so on. On the surface, these purposes seem to be benign. However, such myths can also have dangerous side-effects. In fact, such myths also maximize the political power of nationalist elites since they create more glorious image of incumbent elites compared to that of their predecessors'. When it comes to the impact of self-glorifying myths on inter-ethnic relations, in extreme cases, self-glorifying myths may become chauvinist if they feed faith in an ethnic group's capacity and right to dominate or displace others resulting in expansionist wars.[35] For instance, in World War I–era in Britain, Thomas Macaulay advocated that the Britons were "the greatest and most highly civilized people that ever the world saw" who were "the acknowledged leaders of the human race in the causes of political improvement."[36] In such cases others' complaints against an ethnic group are viewed as expressions of ingratitude.

The second type of nationalist myths is self-whitewashing which seems to be the most widespread. In terms of content, such myth aims at denying past wrong-doings against others. Van Evera distinguishes two different ways self-whitewashing myths can be constructed, namely "whitewash-by-denial" and "whitewash-by-spin."[37] The former aims at denying past wrong-doing altogether while the latter is about reinterpreting wrong-doing as having benign intent. Denial may stem either from unintended ignorance which usually happen to small-scale wrong-doings or from the willful forgetting of greater wrong-doings. The example of "whitewash-by-denial" was Weimar Germany's denial of German responsibility for World War I, which could be found in German school textbooks of that time: "To-day every informed person inside and outside Germany knows that Germany is absolutely innocent with regard to the outbreak of war and that Russia, France and England wanted the war and

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[35] Kaufman, 16.
[36] Quoted in Paul M. Kennedy, "The Decline of Nationalistic History in the West, 1900-1970," Journal of Contemporary History 8 : 1 (January 1973), 81.
[37] Van Evera, 48.

unleashed it."[38] Examples of "whitewash-by-spin" are also numerous. Leonid Brezhnev, for instance, admitted the presence of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan from 1979 onward but portrayed it as the defence of the "national independence, freedom and honor" of Afghanistan "at its government's request."[39]

Re their political functions, like self-glorifying myths, self-whitewashing ones serve to consolidate the power of political elites. Regarding the influence on inter-ethnic relations, like with self-glorifying myths, self-whitewashing ones may also lead an ethnic group to claim a right to rule others with others' complaints against an ethnic group being perceived as a token of malice. As a result, both self-glorifying and self-whitewashing myths can create conflict-spirals. In fact, the denial of greater wrong-doings conveys more significant insult to the victims and, thus, may elicit greater hostility from the victims. This, in turn, may anger the perpetrator which believes in its innocence viewing victim's claims as malign denigration. Thus, conflict spiral is set on. For instance, the Croats' denial of the Ustashe's mass murder of the Serbs during World War II fueled Serb hostility towards the Croats which ended up with the Serbo-Croatian war of 1991-1992.[40]

Finally, the least common type of myths is other-maligning. In terms of content, such myths usually come in three forms: claims of others' cultural inferiority; blame of others for past wrong-doings; or claims that others now harbor malevolent intentions against an ethnic group. Concerning the political function of other-maligning myths, Van Evera suggests that they serve diversionary purposes. Specifically, they enhance the power of political elites by claiming the existence of the external threats to an ethnic group. Thus, popular hostility is drawn away from nationalist elites and their poor domestic performance towards outsiders.

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[38] R. H. Samuel and R. H. Thomas, *Education and Society in Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 2003), 75.
[39] Quoted in Van Evera, 49.
[40] Ibid, 51.

Hence, Van Evera's viewpoint converges with that of Gagnon who proposes the idea that ethnic war is an incumbent elites' strategy to demobilize domestic opposition.[41]

As to the impact such myths have on inter-ethnic relations, they serve to support claims that minorities should be denied equal rights with majority. The logic of such myths is that these minorities and other people will pose a threat to majority if not suppressed because this type of myths tends to stereotype the "other" as "irremediably hostile, yet inferior and vulnerable to vigilant preventive attack."[42] Moreover, their suppression may be viewed as morally justified because of their past wrong-doings and present malign intentions. As Vesna Pesic rightly notes, ethnic conflicts stem from "the fear of the future, lived through the past."[43]

But what is the "fabric" which is used to construct other-maligning myths? According to Van Evera, past mass murder, past population expulsions, and past land theft are the crimes which are most frequently referred to when developing other-maligning myths towards other ethnic groups.[44] Past mass murder leads to the development of "diaspora-recovering" ideologies[45]. Past population expulsions foster "diaspora-intolerance,"[46] that is when ethnic group cannot accept the existence of its diaspora abroad and demands that the diaspora should be restored to the ethnic group by making territorial concessions. In other words, if others created diaspora by population expulsions in the past, they have to pay the price at present. Past land theft fosters claims to land that exclude the rights of people now on that land. The

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[41] Valère P. Gagnon Jr., The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).
[42] Snyder and Ballentine, 67.
[43] Quoted in Gareth Evans, "Conflict Prevention with Regard to Inter-Ethnic Issues, Including the Role of Third Parties: Experiences and Challenges from the Asian-Pacific Region," International Journal on Minority and Group Rights 8 (2001), 31.
[44] Van Evera, 44.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid, 45.

Israeli Likud's concept of "the Land of Israel" provides a particularly salient example of this since this concept encompasses the lands claimed to be illicitly taken by others.

Like Van Evera's typology of nationalisms based on the attitude towards diaspora, for the purpose of my thesis, I suggest classifying nationalism as either inclusivist or exclusionary depending on the attitudes towards minorities. The former means that nationalism of the majority does not deny equal rights of minorities while the latter implies the contrary. By the same token, nationalist myths can be either inclusivist or exclusionary. The former stress the commonalities between majority and minority thereby underlying their membership in the same nation while the latter convey the idea that minorities are not the part of the same nation as majority.

To conclude, nationalism as a political principle is reflected in political discourse through nationalist myths. Although myths are ubiquitous in political discourse, their salience varies. So do their content, purpose, and impact on inter-ethnic relations. Thus, this chapter has provided a theoretical framework which helps, first, to predict the salience of nationalist myths; second, to identify nationalist myths and tease them out of the broader political discourse; and third, to comprehend their purpose as well as possible effects on inter-ethnic relations. This theoretical framework is utilized in the last two chapters of my thesis in the course of discourse analysis.

Chapter 2. The Role of National Identity Markers in Ethnic Boundary Making

Since myths, as it was noted in the previous chapter, reflect nation's perceptions of its values, now it is necessary to understand what kind of values it may be and how these values determine characteristics of nation. In particular, the question of how these values inform the character of nationalism (inclusivist or exclusionary) is of a great importance. Since nationalism is about distinguishing between "us" and "them" for political purposes, all these have a lot to do with group boundary drawing. In other words, the way nation is constructed determines whom it perceives as the "other." Thus, in this chapter, I analyze the possible ways in which nation can be constructed and the effects this has on inter-ethnic relations. I proceed as follows. First, I discuss how nationalism is connected to group boundary drawing. And second, I analyze one by one different values ("national identity markers") which may serve as a cornerstone for nation-building with the emphasis on how they determine perception of the "other." Historical examples are provided to illustrate my inferences.

For the discussion on group boundary making, the concept of mental maps is very important. Mental maps originate from subjectivities that produce psychological proximity or distance irrespective of geographic ones. Psychological space reflects the distribution of affinities such as respect, esteem, enmity, and so on.[47] The primary examples of the striking mismatch between territorial maps and psychological maps are the following: Anglo-Saxon Australians and Americans feel kinship for each other regardless of vast physical distance separating them whereas Muslims and Hindus in India feel rather remote from one another in spite of being neighbors. All these are acts of connecting and distancing which is evidence of ethnic boundary making. The notion of boundary is twofold, namely it is a tool of

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[47] Mansbach and Rhodes, 427.

categorization as well as ground for social behavior.[48] The former helps to divide the social world into "us" and "them" while the latter offers appropriate actions towards these categories. All these make the concept of mental maps related to the concept of identity. In fact, Jenkins point out that identity is a link between an individual and a group. Therefore, it is about perceived sameness and, at the same time, about difference from the "other."[49]

For the purpose of this thesis, I will use those definitions of "nation" and "nationalism" which deal with psychological and not physical space.

Nation is a "politically relevant identity group"[50] in the sense that it demands or control a state of their own[51]. In essence, nation is "the largest society of people united by a common culture and consciousness," and which "occupies a common territory."[52] The essence of nation is a "psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it."[53] Consequently, it is a "moral community"[54] which distinguishes between "us" and "them." Functionally, this differentiation is very important because it imposes a set of reciprocal ethical obligations on members of the community and confers certain rights on them, both of which are not to be extended to the "other."[55] Van Evera rightly notes that nationalism has been defined "in an annoyingly wide range of ways."[56] However, for the purpose of this thesis, I adopt the definition by Emerson and Cottam, namely it is "a belief on the part of the large group of people that they comprise a community, a nation that is entitled to independent

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[48] Wimmer, 975.
[49] Richard Jenkins, Social Identity (London: Routledge, 1996), 3-4.
[50] Mansbach and Rhodes, 432.
[51] Max Weber in Anthony D. Smith, Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism (London: Routledge, 1998), 14.
[52] In Van Evera, 27.
[53] Walker Connor, "A Nation is a Nation, is an Ethnic Group, is a...," in Nationalism: A Reader, ed. J. Hutchinson and A. D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 361.
[54] Mansbach and Rhodes, 435.
[55] Andrew Linklater, The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1998), 113-119.
[56] Van Evera, 27.

statehood, and a willingness of this group to grant their community a primary and terminal loyalty."[57]

Mansbach and Rhodes argue that the likelihood of violent ethnic conflict depends not only on the character of the state (regime type and so on) but also on the character of the nation, that is on the principal "marker" (myths told of what separates "us" from "them"[58]) used to construct national identity. National identity may be constructed on the bases of the following markers:

1. belief in blood kinship or common descend (blood as a marker),

2. use of a common language (language as a marker),

3. common but unique culture (culture as a marker),

4. unique national church (religion as a marker),

5. loyalty to common sovereign political institutions (citizenship as a marker).[59]

It should be noted that ideology is not among important identity markers since it lost its significant in the aftermath of the Cold War. Obviously, this list of potential markers is not comprehensive but it contains the most common and thus influential ones.

A nation is likely to rely to the different degrees on more than one of these markers. And since nation as a social construct is in a constant flux, the relative importance of these markers may change over time and depending on context. Therefore, a nation which defines membership in terms of only one of these markers is an ideal type to which real nations may only approximate to some degree. However, this ideal type of a nation is analytically useful since it helps to tease out a dominant marker which largely informs the character of the nation with other markers being secondary in terms of importance or being derivative from the dominant one. The view that nations have dominant identities is supported by the logic of

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[57] Quoted in Van Evera, 27.
[58] Mansbach and Rhodes, 445.
[59] Ibid, 426.

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modern states which require unambiguous identity of their population to manage their territories and populations.[60] Moreover, Ferguson and Mansbach note that nation is a "second-order socially constructed trait derived or implied from one or several other socially constructed traits like language, ethnicity, religion, or citizenship."[61] Thus, nation and hence nationalism can be constructed in a variety of ways. Consequently, it is a difficult task to generalize about nations and nationalisms since in each particular case such markers vary. These markers defines membership in nation and, by inference, they define the "other" and possible threat which emanates from it. Consequently, which of these markers is pivotal has huge importance. In fact, Mansbach and Rhodes argue that not all ethnic groups are likely to carry out violent identity politics.[62] Thus, it is necessary to analyze these markers one by one.

The first is descent. When it comes to international relations, historically, such blood-based nations have tended to view inter-ethnic relations as a zero-sum game. In fact, blood-based nation see their survival in terms of biological reproduction. Hence, they can grow only with reproduction at a higher rate than mere replacement. Thus, depending only on natality, these nations are easier to become threatened. Therefore, in the struggle for the control over resources, blood-based nations tend to subdue, or even exterminate the "other" as a competitor.[63]

Domestically, "internal others" in terms of blood may exist, but even if they are co-citizens who speak the same language, share the same culture and espouse the same religion, they will never become "us." Therefore, blood-based nations perceive such "internal others" as posing a threat. The character of this threat is not only the competition for domestic resources but largely the danger of intermingling with "us," polluting "us," threatening the

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[60] Duijzings, 23.
[61] Y. H. Ferguson and R. W. Mansbach, Remapping Global Politics: History's Revenge and Future Shock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 145.
[62] Mansbach and Rhodes, 429.
[63] Ibid, 447-448.

very essence of "us" which is bloodline, genealogy. Thus, Mansbach and Rhodes argue that the existential threat blood-based nations are fearful of is primordial and sexual in nature.[64] So the response to such a threat is to reduce the possibility of sexual intercourse between "us" and "them." Thus, the level of intermingling between majority and minority may serve as the indicator of importance of blood in each particular case of nation-construction. Ethnically, such nations tend to be largely closed for outsiders and, thus, the most homogeneous. Another threat which may threaten the majority is the demographic change in favor of minority.

Blood-based nations produce respective ideologies and mythologies. One of the most extreme and notorious ideologies stemming from the self-conception of a blood-based nation was the Nazi movement in Germany. And even now, for the Germans, blood does matter. For example, Turks who speak German as a mother tongue remain Turks and not Germans.

The second national identity marker is language. The tradition of considering language as the sine qua non of a nation goes back to the "romantic nationalism" of German philosophers and in particular to Johann Herder.[65] Survival of a language-based nation equates to survival of its language. By the same token, such nations can grow if "others" become us by acquiring "our" language. Conversely, it is threatened when "our" children or newcomers cease to learn "our" language. Thus, a minimal requirement to the "other" is to allow "us" to use and teach "our" language while maximal expectations are that the "other" adopts "our" language. Since it is possible for an outsider to master "our" language, language-based nations are more open for outsiders compared to blood-based ones. Indeed, native language teaching is of a great importance for such nations, since it assures the longevity of a nation through dissemination of its language. As a response to such threats, a language-based

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[64] Ibid, 448.

[65] In Anthony D. Smith, Theories of Nationalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 16-17; and Anthony D. Smith, "Epilogue: The Power of Ethnic Transitions in the Modern World," in Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations, ed. A. S. Leoussi and S. Grosby (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 328-329.

nation is likely to demand control over education, the media and other spheres where language plays important role. In this respect, if commands in schools are made in "other's" language or "we" cannot exchange information in "our" mother tongue, then "our" survival is threatened. Possible repressions towards the "other" are likely to take the form of insisting on the usage of "our" language to the detriment of the one of the "other." Externally, language-based nations care a lot about their sovereignty and violations of it because the control over the state guarantees the preservation of the language and hence of the nation.

Latvia provides a particularly salient example of a language-based nation. For example, Russophones with Latvian citizenship are not Latvians. In fact, strict regulations of granting citizenship are designed to assure the survival of the Latvian language and hence the Latvian nation.

The third marker of national identity is culture. Culture as identity marker was suggested, for example, by Gellner.[66] Mansbach and Rhodes use the term "culture" to indicate the patterns of behavior shared by members of a community. It is a broad term which to a varying degree encompasses other identity markers but it is largely about the visual praxis of behavior (habits, traditions, customs, and so on). Therefore, it is more difficult for the "other" to become a part of such a nation when compared to a language-based nation because it is not only about mastering "our" language but it is also about adopting wider set of patterns. However, again membership in a culture-based nation is more open than in blood-based one. Culture-based nations grow by assimilating "others," that is by convincing them to behave like "us." In fact, explicit attempts at cultural assimilation constitute the primary indicator of a culture-based nation. Consequently, the very existence of such nations is threatened if "we" or 'our" children choose to behave like the "other."

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[66] Gellner, 57-62.

The response to such a threat may assume two forms – chauvinistic or promotional. The former is about demonstrating the superiority of "our" culture over that of "other's" (and, by inference, painting other cultures as primitive and inferior) in order to prevent "our" children from adopting the alien one. The latter is aimed to encourage "others" to acquire "our" culture by demonstrating its superior attractiveness. Such nations cannot endure the existence of other cultures within them, perceiving them as corrosive, as tempting drugs for "our" children. Thus, such nations tend to be arrogant about their culture and intolerant of other cultures. In fact, if "we" begin to explore other cultures, it means that we doubt the superiority of "our" culture, which is self-destructive. Moreover, since class differences may also produce cultural differences, culture-based nations are intolerant of significant class divisions; therefore, such nations are likely to stress the importance of "fraternity" and "equality."

Externally, such nations tend to be empire-builders. However, at least now, this fact implies Gramscian hegemony rather than de jure or de facto political domination. Thus, such nations are intrinsically expansive, driven by the belief in their civilizing mission. However, this expansion is different from that of a blood-based nation. In fact, in the course of the competition for resources, a blood-based nation tends to weaken or even physically eliminate the "other" while culture-based nations tend to convert others into their culture, thus increasing their membership and expanding its influence.

A good example of a culture-based nation is the French. In fact, the adoption of the whole body of culture appears to make the Frenchmen "French." As a result, it is not surprising that the French are tolerant of immigrants but uncompromising towards those who insist in wearing head scarves which are not part of the French culture.

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The fourth national identity marker is religion. Smith notes that religion was "the most influential and intense" identity marker in the past which is experiencing revitalization now.[67] By the same token, such nations grow by increasing the number of the followers of their religion. Conversely, they are threatened if the members of such nations choose the "other's truth." Consequently, like culture-based nation, religion-based ones are in a constant need to prove the superiority of their "truth." However, unlike culture, religion may be adopted very soon or it can even be pretended. This has double-edged implications. On the one hand, out of three aforementioned types of nations, the membership in this is theoretically the easiest to be adopted if desired. On the other hand, since belief is a matter of conscience and, thus, its firmness is difficult to check, in the extreme cases, it may result in the constant suspicion towards each other among the members of the community. In such cases, these nations live in the constant fear that at any moment any member of the nation may turn out to be a pretended believer and hence a secret betrayer.

Internally, religion-based nations are likely to be hostile towards "others" and tend to be involved in extremism to prove firmness of the belief and hence membership in the nation. When it comes to the inter-ethnic relations between the two religion-based nations, then it comes to resemble the external attitudes of blood-based nation. In fact, the transcendental nature of religious beliefs makes them dogmatically uncompromising. Hence the possibility of vehement violence between the religion-based nations. In fact, there can be only one "truth" and the "true" one is "ours." Moreover, "passing" from one religion-based nation to another is hampered by the understanding that not only is it the treachery towards one's current nation, but it is also the betrayal of your God – the act for which one will be doomed to suffering for the rest of one's life and most probably after it.

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[67] Anthony D. Smith, "Epilogue: The Power of Ethnic Transitions in the Modern World," 329.

The fact that most religions insist on exclusivity leaves less space for ambiguity. In fact, others-in-transition, sects slightly different from the dominant doctrine, atheists, or secularists – all are regarded as a constant danger. Therefore, such nations are more likely to be involved into preventive or preemptive aggression towards the "other." Like language-based nations, religion-based ones also tend to be sensitive about sovereignty because control over the state may assure support for and superiority of the "true" religion. Historically, the division of the English colony in India into Pakistan and India was an attempt to create religion-based national identities.

The last national identity marker is citizenship. In citizenship-based nations, the "other" is a "foreigner," that is the one who does not serve "our" state. To serve in this context means to "ascribe primary loyalty."[68] Therefore, the term "citizenship" here does not simply mean to hold a passport of a certain state. In fact, one may be a citizen of "our" state but loyal to non-state or transnational institutions, thus, he is not one of "us" but rather one of "them." As a result, any transnational movement or ideology which may become an alternative marker of identity are perceived as dangerous for such nation. While, as noted above, a state may be instrumentally important for other types of nations to help to assert their primary identity markers through the state institutions, for citizenship-based nations a state is the very essence, sina qua non of their "nation-ness." In other words, without the state, such nation ceases to exist. On the other hand, the threats to the state are simultaneously existential threats to the nation.

Mansbach and Rhodes note that such nations are peculiarly of a legalistic nature in the sense that one is a member of the nation only if the state says so by granting its citizenship. Thus, membership in a citizenship-based nation is certainly much easier to get compared to blood-based nations. When it comes to the comparison with other three types of nations, it is

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[68] Mansbach and Rhodes, 451.

rather disputable. On the one hand, theoretically it is easier to get a certain citizenship (a document that is a mere paper) then to acquire language, culture, or religion. On the other hand, in practice, it is often very difficult to get some certain citizenship. Moreover, in some cases there maybe some conditions for granting citizenship, such as the requirement to know the language, for example. In such cases, membership in a nation becomes complicated by encompassing the traits of other types of nations (as in the example above – of a language-based nation). Internally, a citizenship-based nation welcomes "newcomers," the immigrants insofar as they arrive and/or receive citizenship legally.

The ultimate importance of civil rights and immigration/citizenship laws may serve as indicators of a citizenship-based nation. That is why such citizenship-based nations are also called "civic" ones. Moreover, voting rights as proof of citizenship are crucial in such nations. So is the permission to serve in the army since such serves is the way to prove one's loyalty to the nation.

 Externally, citizenship-based nations are not likely to conquer other states because in those cases the population of the conquered state becomes the citizens of "our" states unwillingly, hence it is not loyal to "our" state. It would amount to the creation of a strong and dangerous internal "other." Moreover, granting such people voting rights would be equal to handing control of "our" state to the "other." Consequently, such a nation does not feel threatened by another citizenship-based nation either.

A good example of a citizenship-based nation is Americans. In fact, "melting pot" as it is, the American nation is famous for the diversity of ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions. USA citizenship turns one into an American.

To conclude, all aforementioned illustrates that there are real differences regarding the ways nations are constructed and hence there are differences in how nations define "us" and "them" and, as a result, in how "we" react to the "other." Thus, this informs certain identity

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politics for each particular nation. Moreover, these five ideal types of nations are not real things but just an analytical tool while real-world nations are constructed to a varying degree around a number of identities. And inter-ethnic relations in reality depend on the interplay between these identity markers. The theoretical framework presented in this chapter is used in the last two chapters during discourse analysis to explain the influence of different national identity markers on the content of nationalist myths.

Chapter 3. Minority Myths and Georgian Nationalism

In the late 1980s – early 1990s, Georgian nationalism was striving to get political independence for its nation. Since at that time Georgia was a part of the USSR, Georgian nationalism was an inherently and openly anti-Soviet and anti-Russian movement.[69] For example, in the spring 1989, would-be first president of independent Georgia Gamsakhurdia held rally in Tbilisi under the slogans like "Down with Russian imperialism!"[70] In other words, during the collapse of the USSR, for Georgians, the "other" was Moscow.

However, in the multiethnic context of the Georgian SSR, with ethnic minorities being alienated from the Georgian majority, the identity politics through the use of potent symbols would either ameliorate those discrepancies in a unified struggle for independence or exacerbate existing ethnic divisions. In the reality, Ajara was the case of the former while Abkhazia and South Ossetia – of the latter. Indeed, although Gamsakhurdia's overarching theme was the notion of "national wholeness,"[71] some ethnic groups were called "newcomers," thus being excluded from the "nation." In other words, a boundary was drawn between them and the Georgians. Thus, it is necessary to understand the origin of those myths which were finally utilized.

In this chapter, first, I analyze nationalist myths created by Georgians about minorities; second, I assess the relative importance of different national identity markers in the construction of the Georgian nation during the dissolution of the USSR; and third, I assess the relative importance of different national identity markers in the construction of the Abkhaz, South Ossetians, and Ajars. In the end, I conclude about how the process of the

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[69] Ronald G. Suny, The Making of the Georgian Nation, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 319; and Thomas De Waal, The Caucasus: An Introduction (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 131.

[70] De Waal, 132.

[71] Suny, 324.

construction of the Georgian nation in the late 1980s-early 1990s affected the inter-ethnic relations.

Starting from the Georgian myths about their minorities, it is necessary to point out that some non-Georgians were constructed as "foreigners," "newcomers," recent arrivals on the originally Georgian lands. Emblematic in this respect was the speech by Gamsakhurdia about South Ossetians in February 1991: "they have no right to a state here in Georgia. They are a national minority. Their homeland is North Ossetia… here they are newcomers."[72] Moreover, such minorities were called traitors, Moscow's puppets.[73] Indeed, given the intrinsically anti-Russian character of Georgian nationalism, in the late 1980s-early1990s, the Georgians' enemies were generally portrayed as "agents of the Kremlin."[74] They were also described as "guests" who were living there upon sufferance.[75] And such "guests" were portrayed in press, literature, TV, and cinema as crude and deceitful and thus deserving being driven out of Georgia.[76] For example, Gamsakhurdia said "[i]f [the Ossetians] do not wish to leave peacefully with us, then let them leave Georgia."[77]

It should be noted that such myths were not a one-day creation but rather a persistent and recurring narrative. For instance, in 1940s, the Georgian academic Pavle Ingorokva wrote a book which gave birth to a theory that indigenous Abkhaz were ethnic Georgians and that present-day people who claimed to be Abkhaz arrived in the region only in the seventieth

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[72] In John F.R. Wright, S. Goldenberg, and R. Schofield, ed., Transcaucasian Boundaries (London: UCL Press, 1996), 166.
[73] Suny, 324-325.
[74] De Waal, 134.
[75] Ibid, 138.
[76] Ibid, 138; and George Hewitt, ed., The Abkhazians: A Handbook (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 133.
[77] Suny, 325.

century.[78] Similar views were also voiced on April, 1989 by Gamsakhurdia at the rally in Tbilisi: "The Abkhaz nation has never existed."[79]

In order to understand the sources for the creation of such myths, it is necessary to anatomize the construction of Georgian nationalism vis-à-vis the five markers of national identity.

The first national identity marker to be analyzed is culture. The unique geographical location of the Caucasian region has helped to mould an idiosyncratic common Caucasian identity based largely on sharing common culture. Indeed, De Waal points that there is historically documented evidence that until the early twentieth century, Abkhaz and Georgians in the places where population was intermingled used to have convivial feasts together sharing certain rituals of eating and drinking.[80] Moreover, the Soviet rule had finalized the creation of a common Caucasian identity by late 1980s.[81]

However, the extreme popularity of Georgian nationalism among the Georgian intelligentsia in the late 1980s resulted in a chauvinistic belief in the superiority of the Georgian culture vis-à-vis minority cultures.[82] In fact, Gamsakhurdia was obsessed with the idea of the "spiritual mission" of Georgia.[83] For example, among the slogans under which he came to power, there was "Georgia – God's chosen nation."[84] This is indicative of the intent to mould culture-based identity. However, the presence of the above mentioned strong cultural similarities throughout the region rendered his efforts futile. As a result, culture served as a primary identity marker neither for Georgians, nor for Abkhaz, nor for South Ossetians during the dissolution of the USSR.

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[78] De Waal, 151; and V.A. Zakharov and A.G. Areshev, The Recognition of Independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia/Priznanie Nezavisimosti Yuzhnoy Osetii i Abhazii (in Russian) (Moscow: MGIMO-University, 2008), 63.
[79] Zakharov and Areshev, 70.
[80] De Waal, 10.
[81] Ibid, 71-72.
[82] Suny, 319.
[83] De Waal, 132.
[84] Hewitt, 137.

The second national identity marker is citizenship, that is the ultimate loyalty to "our" state. Although Georgian nationalism originally started as a dissident movement,[85] it subsequently failed to develop a discourse of equal civil and human rights[86] which is essential for a citizenship-based nation. On the other hand, prima facie, it may seem that Georgians are a citizenship-based nation since their nationalist myths about Abkhaz and South Ossetians accused the two ethnic minority of treason in favor of Russia, that is of disloyalty to the Georgian state.[87] In the Georgian political discourse this accusation was an example of other-maligning myth using the idea of current malevolent intentions.

In August 1990, the Georgian Supreme Soviet adopted an election law that debarred regional parties (in other words, those of minorities) from participating in the all-Georgian elections.[88] This seems to have been a means of civic nationalism to define "us" and "them." However, those myths and related discriminatory practice targeted individuals belonging to the minorities not only in the respective autonomous entities, but throughout Georgia proper[89] where those people were already quite assimilated[90]. In other words, those myths and their application showed nationalism on an ethnic, rather than on a civic basis.

The third national identity marker is blood, that is a myth in the common descent. Because of the fact that Georgians have always been remote from the major routes of invasion and migration, present-day Georgians are autochthonal. This explains their negative attitude towards migration; hence in nationalist mythology the image of a "newcomer" bears a negative connotation. Evoking this, Gamsakhurdia paid much attention to the "ethnogeny of Georgians"[91] thereby adding exclusionary ethnic shades to Georgian nationalism. As a result,

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[85] Suny, 332.
[86] Ibid, 324.
[87] De Waal, 131.
[88] Wright et al., 167.
[89] De Waal, 140.
[90] Ibid, 137.
[91] Ibid, 132.

"Georgia for the Georgians" was a slogan used at rallies in the spring 1989.[92] Before the 1980s, Georgian nationalism was not blood-based due to the high rate of mixed marriages in Georgia especially in the minority autonomous entities. However, Gamsakhurdia claimed that mixed marriages threatened the existence of the Georgian nation.[93] The resultant two violent ethnic civil wars are indicative that Gamsakhurdia succeeded in creating a relatively blood-based dimension of the Georgian nationalism, although still not dominant one.

Going onto the fourth national identity marker – religion, it is necessary to note that Georgians who are Christians have shown tolerance towards other religions. For instance, in 1840s, German traveler Baron August von Haxthausen pointed out that more hostility existed between different sects of the same religion than between different religions.[94] Later, already in the early twentieth century, historian Aytek Namitok observed that Georgians revered common shrines together with Muslims.[95] At the same time, De Waal argues that Christianity is "central to the identity of Georgians."[96] On the other hand, this assertion does not explain the fact that some Georgian ethnic subgroups, such as Ajars, espouse Islam, which does not prevent them from being considered Georgians. Moreover, the suppression of religion during the Soviet times also silenced religious identity of Georgians.

Understanding the weakness of religious identity of Georgians, Gamsakhurdia decided to revive it. For example, he drew the public attention to the systematic plunder of Georgian religious treasures.[97] As a result, at different demonstration people were carrying banners calling the KGB to stop its interference in the Georgian church.[98] Indicative of the growing importance of the religious identity is the fact that upon becoming the head of Georgia in

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[92] Kaufman, 101.
[93] De Waal, 138.
[94] In De Waal, 14.
[95] Ibid, 13-14.
[96] Ibid, 20.
[97] Suny, 319.
[98] Ibid, 399.

1992, Shevardnadze considered it necessary to publicly declare that he had been christened.[99] Nevertheless, albeit very important, religious identity was not the dominant one. In other words, their targets were not religiously defined. Indeed, the civil wars were waged against co-Christian Abkhaz and South Ossetians but not against Muslim Ajars. Therefore, although central and, perhaps, one of the oldest, the religion was not a dominant identity of Georgians in the late 1980s-early1990s.

Finally when it comes to language as a national identity marker, the Georgian language is a member of a distinct language family. Indeed, Georgian is completely distinct from other languages, except for the three languages of Georgian subgroups – Mingrelian, Svan, and Laz. Its particularity is reinforced by its unique alphabet which was devised in the fifth century especially for religious purposes. Thus, language (unique in both spoken and written ways) and religious identities of Georgians were originally fused.

After Georgian church became a part of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1811, language became the major locus of identity among Georgian intellectuals.[100] Since the church also suffered during the Soviet times, De Waal argues that language happened to become the main unifying force for Georgians.[101] In other words, having emerged as the tool to transmit the religious identity, the Georgian language finally became the core identity marker in its own right. The strong linguistic identity was preserved even during the Soviet-time policy Russification. In fact, even in 1970, only 56% of people in Tbilisi claimed to be fully fluent in Russian.[102]

The status of the language proved to be politically a very sensitive issue. Georgian nationalism was extremely popular among the Georgian intelligentsia,[103] who claimed to

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[99] Ibid, 328.
[100] De Waal, 34.
[101] Ibid, 33.
[102] Suny, 300
[103] De Waal, 131-166.

protect the Georgian language.[104] For example, the year 1978 was marked by a big political dispute about the removal of the constitutional provision about Georgian as the official language in the republic. Later, in 1981, Gamsakhurdia protested against the restrictions on the Georgian language. In August, 1989, the "State Program for the Georgian Language" was ratified into law which, inter alia, stipulated the obligatory teaching of Georgian in all the republic's schools and that passing a test in Georgian language and literature would be a necessary qualification for entry into higher education throughout Georgia.[105]

Another example of the utmost significance of linguistic identity is the activities of the Ilia Chavchavadze Society, which was founded as a means, on the one hand, for the struggle against Russification and, on the other, for the strengthening of the sovereignty of Georgia under the slogan "Language, Religion, and Fatherland."[106] This slogan was telling evidence, on the one hand, of the interwoven character of the Georgian linguistic and religious identities and, on the other, of the link between these identities and the land. Interestingly, in the Georgian language, since the eleventh century, Georgia is called "Sakartvelo" which literally means "a place for the speakers of the language of kartuli"[107] whereas in many other languages (for example, in English) "Georgia" is related to Saint George and thus reflects religious-based identity. However, it is not self-conception and does not represent the domestic discourse. All in all, linguistic identity of Georgians was politically the most salient in the late 1980s.

Taking all aforementioned into account, it is evident that culture and citizenship as a national identity markers were politically feeble in Georgia in the late 1980s. Among the rest, the strongest and most persistent was linguistic identity, which gave birth to other

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[104] Suny, 319.
[105] Stephen F. Jones, "Revolutions in Revolutions within Revolution: Minorities in the Georgian Republic" in The Politics of Nationality and the Erosion of the USSR: selected papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990, ed. Zvi Gitelman (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 81.
[106] Suny, 320.
[107] De Waal, 32.

exclusionary identities. Religious identity started to revive but did not manage to become the dominant one. As to the blood-based identity, it became rather strong on the road to independence but it was not still a dominant one. Having analyzed the relative importance of Georgian identity markers, now it is necessary to discuss national identity markers of Georgian minorities – the Abkhaz, the South Ossetians and the Ajars.

As far as the Abkhaz are concerned, they are linked with strong ethnic ties to the Circassian ethnic groups in the North Caucasus[108] that makes them ethnically different from Georgians who are Kartvelian. However, pre-war Abkhazia was ethnically extremely diverse, with the level of intermarriages in Abkhazian cities being one of the highest in the USSR and more than a quarter of families being of mixed ethnicity.[109] Linguistically, the Abkhaz language is different from Georgian. This difference also has to do with the script because after a number of linguistic experiments during the Soviet period, since 1954, they have used Cyrillic. Moreover, knowledge of Georgian was virtually non-existent among the generation of Abkhaz of 1980s. Because of the long history of co-existence, Georgians and Abkhaz share many cultural and religious commonalities.[110] As to the religion, according to the public inquiry conducted in 2003, 60% of Abkhaz identified themselves as Christians, 16% claimed to be Muslims, 5% were pagans, and 3% were adherents of the traditional Abkhaz religion.[111] However, another survey revealed that in reality the majority of Abkhaz are actually pagans, regardless of the claims of being either Christian or Muslim because they do not really follow what is prescribed by their respective religions.[112] All religious holidays – be it Christian,

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[108] Ibid, 8.

[109] Ibid, 148.

[110] Suny, 321; and De Waal, 148.

[111] Alexander B. Krylov, "The Secret of Abkhazian Religious Toleration/Sekret Abkhazskoy Veroterpimosti," in Russian, (NG, March 17, 2004), http://religion.ng.ru/problems/2004-03-17/4_abkhazia.html (accessed on May 1, 2011).

[112] Alexandr B. Krylov, "The Religion of the Present-Day Abkhaz: The Relict of the Ancient Monotheism/Religiya Sovremennykh Abkhazov: Relikt Pramonoteizma," Central Asia and the Caucasus 4, in Russian (1999), http://www.ca-c.org/journal/cac-04-1999/st_26_krylov.shtml (accessed on May 1, 2011).

Muslim, or pagan ones – are celebrated together with the more attention being paid to the common convivial intercourse.[113] Since there is no common national identity marker of Abkhaz in term of religion, religious identity is not a dominant one in defining Abkhaz. Therefore, the most striking differences between Abkhaz and Georgian identities are those in language and descent.

As to the South Ossetians, they are also ethnically different from Georgians, being related to Iranians.[114] Nevertheless, De Waal notes that "there were always higher rates of intermarriages between Georgians and Ossetians than between Georgians and other ethnic groups"[115] with about half the families in South Ossetia being mixed in the late 1980s.[116] It was so partly because of the patchwork character of the Georgian and Ossetian settlements in South Ossetia.[117] The Ossetian language is from the Iranian family and hence completely different from Georgian. As with Abkhaz, the language of South Ossetians has also used Cyrillic since 1954[118] that is again different from the Georgian alphabet. Most Ossetians are Orthodox Christians, some are Muslims but, like the Abkhaz, they still have pre-Christian pagan practices.[119] Hence, religion does not play a critical role in South Ossetian identity. All in all, the major distinguishing features of the South Ossetians vis-à-vis the Georgians are again language and descent.

As far as the Ajars are concerned, although, for example, in the spring 1989, Gamsakhurdia called on to abolish Ajaria's autonomy,[120] there were no myths of them as "newcomers." In fact, Georgians saw no significant differences between themselves and Ajars. For example, they did not include a special census category for Ajars in 1979. Indeed,

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[113] Ibid.
[114] De Waal, 135.
[115] Ibid, 136-137.
[116] Ibid, 138.
[117] Ibid, 141.
[118] Ibid, 136.
[119] Ibid, 135-136.
[120] Zakharov and Areshev, 70.

ethnically, Ajars are subgroup of Georgians. Linguistically, Ajars speak a dialect of Georgian.[121] However, the major difference is that the former were Muslims in the late 1980s. At that time, there were frequent instances when Islam among Georgians was attacked in press as alien to Georgia.[122] Here by "Islam among Georgians" they surely meant Muslim Ajars thus naming them "Georgians." However, unlike Abkhazia and South Ossetia, this other-maligning myth was not aimed at blaming minorities but rather to denigrate the outside forces that were believed to harbor malign intentions to split Georgia.[123] Another goal of this discourse was to persuade the Ajars to become Christians in order to bring them even closer to Georgians. In fact, only Ajars and not, for example Georgian Azerbaijanis were targeted by such a discourse. In other words, while discriminatory on the surface, such mythology was inclusivist in its intent by pointing at the similarities between the two ethnic groups and by trying to eliminate existing differences.[124] At the time of writing of this thesis, these accommodative policies towards Ajars seem to have proved to be fruitful. In fact, there has been no civil war in Ajaria, its extensive self-rule was dealt with in a peaceful manner, and some Ajars have adopted Christianity.[125] In general, Ajars were similar to Georgians in such ways which were crucial for the latter as language and descent. The difference in religion showed once again that religion was not the dominant national identity marker for Georgians in the late 1980s.

To sum up, by the end of the Soviet rule, the strongest remaining identity of Georgians was linguistic one. In fact, on the one hand, linguistic identity was protected in Georgia against the central policy of Russification and, on the other, the forced Georgianisation largely in the form of forced linguistic assimilation was practiced by the Georgian authorities

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[121] De Waal, 146.
[122] Suny, 398.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid, 399.
[125] Mathijs Pelkmans, "Religion, Nation and State in Georgia: Christian Expansion in Muslim Ajaria," Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs 22 : 2 (October 2002) : 249-273.

towards their minorities. As a result, the strong linguistic identity of Georgians served as a ground for the revival of the religious identity and cultural one. As to the former, it did not manage to gain prominence compared to other national identity markers. The latter was a futile attempt to make it exclusionary identity because there were strong cultural commonalities among all ethnic groups in the region. Although the Georgian nationalist movement started as a dissident one, it failed to create strong civic nationalism associated with the Georgian state. Although high level of intermarriages between majority and minorities stood for the insignificance of the blood-based identity, Georgian ethnic entrepreneurs in the late 1980s started to construct the ideology of Georgian ethnic hegemony in the republic which resulted in the violent conflicts with non-Georgian ethnic groups (Abkhaz and Ossetians) while the relation with the diverse Georgian ethnic subgroups (most importantly with Ajars) turned to be relatively stable.

All in all, civic and cultural identities of the Georgian nation would have been more accommodative vis-à-vis minorities whereas Georgian ethnic entrepreneurs chose to rely to different degrees on the language, religion, and ethnicity (blood) as potent national identity markers which resulted in the exclusionary ethnic politics and lead to ethnic civil wars. Indeed, Suny concludes that Georgian nationalism under Gamsakhurdia was mystical as well as exclusivist and hence divisive rather than integrating.[126]

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[126] Suny, 326, 327.

Chapter 4. Minority Myths and Serbian Nationalism

Having discussed nationalist myths in Georgia in the previous chapter, now I turn to the case of Serbian nationalism to show the cross-national applicability of my argument. Unlike in Georgia, in the late 1980s – early 1990s, Serbian nationalism's ultimate goal was not Serbia's independence from the federal authorities (which was almost inevitable) but to encompass all ethnic Serbs within Serbia's borders.[127] This was determined by the mode of settlements in the SFRY where ethnic borders had strikingly mismatched administrative borders between the republics. Indeed, a large portion of ethnic Serbs were living in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the case of the SFRY's dissolution, they would live in different states. Thus, this informed the external strategy of Serbian nationalism in the above indicated period which was diaspora-annexing, according to Van Evera's classification. This was reflected in the contemporary political discourse. For example, on March 16, 1991, Serbian president Milosevic said at a meeting with Serb leaders, "We simply consider it as a legitimate right and interest of the Serb nation to live in one state… And if we have to fight, by God we are going to fight."[128]

As to the internal dimension of Serbian nationalism, Serbia inherited the same problem from the SFRY, that is the multiethnic composition of its population. At the moment of the SFRY's dissolution, there were two autonomous entities within Serbia's borders – Kosovo and Vojvodina. The former was numerically dominated by Kosovo Albanians ("Kosovars"), while the latter was a multiethnic region with Serb majority but with a significant Hungarian minority of 14%. Thus, the construction of the Serbian nation required settling the status of these minorities vis-à-vis the Serb majority, namely they needed to be

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[127] Gagnon, 88.
[128] Quoted in Neil A. Abrams, "Nationalist Mobilization and Imperial Collapse: Serbian and Russian Nationalism Compared, 1987-1991," Ab Imperio 2 (2002), 521.

either included in the nation or excluded from it. In the former case, Serbian nationalism adopted an exclusionary strategy calling Kosovars recent "newcomers" to the authentically Serbian lands – similar to what Georgians did towards Abkhaz and South Ossetians. However, in the latter case no such exclusionary mythology was developed. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the logic behind these different developments of the Serbian nationalist discourse in the two quite similar cases.

In this chapter, first, I analyze nationalist myths created by Serbs about their minorities; second, I assess the relative importance of different national identity markers in the construction of the Serbian nation during the dissolution of the SFRY; and third, I discuss the content of different national identity markers of Albanians in Kosovo and Hungarians in Vojvodina. In the end, I conclude how the process of the construction of the Serbian nation in the late 1980s-early 1990s affected the inter-ethnic relations.

When it comes to the nationalist mythology, developed by the Serbs about their minorities, a strong similarity with Georgian nationalism is evident in two ways. First, some non-Serbs were constructed as "newcomers" who has just recently arrived onto initially Serbian lands.[129] Dragović-Soso notes that the Kosovo question began to occupy the minds of Serbian intellectuals in 1985 because before that it had been a taboo due to the nationality policy under Tito.[130] But after 1985, there began the period of revisionist history, namely, as was the case with Georgia, Serbian historians conducted numerous research to prove that Serbs were the first to come to Kosovo. For example, one of those historical studies which proved to be very influential in shaping, first, intellectual, and then public discourse, was the 1985 book "Knjiga o Kosovu" ("Book about Kosovo") by a member of the Serbian Academy

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[129] Alexandar Pavkovic, "Kosovo/Kosova: A Land of Conflicting Myths," in Kosovo: The Politics of Delusion, ed. M. Waller, K. Drezov, and B. Gökay (London: Routledge, 2001), 7-8; and Noel Malcolm, "Is It True That Albanians in Kosova are not Albanians, but Descendants from Albanianized Serbs?," in The Case for Kosova: Passage to Independence, ed. Anna Di Lellio (London, NY: Anthem Press, 2006), 20.

[130] Jasna Dragović-Soso, Saviours of the Nation: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2002), 126.

of Sciences and Arts Dimitrije Bogdanovic. In his book, Bogdanovic portrayed Kosovars as "a foreign element" who "forcibly in stages infiltrated and appropriated for themselves the lands of Kosovo and western Macedonia from their Slavic inhabitants."[131]

At the same time, Duijzings argues that "it was the Serbian Orthodox church which took the lead in revitalizing the Kosovo myth after Tito's death," and only after that it garnered the support of Serbian intellectuals.[132] This assertion seems to be quite plausible taking into account the close ties between the church and intelligentsia in socialist-time Serbia. For instance, above mentioned Bogdanovic had a degree in theology and participated in the Serbian Orthodox church activities concerning Kosovo.[133] Although there were differences in opinions on Kosovo between "hard line, "moderate," and "neutral" bishops of the Serbian Orthodox church, they all contributed to the creation of nationalist discourse by criticizing Serb communists for yielding Kosovo to Albanians.[134]

However, unlike Georgia, this nationalist mythology was not explicit in the mainstream political discourse. In fact, in the late 1980s – early 1990s, political speeches mostly did not contain the outward idea that Albanians were newcomers, but this was stated rather implicitly among the concerns about equal citizenship rights.[135] For example, in his speech at Kosovo Polje on April 24, 1987, Milosevic said, "I want to tell you, comrades, that you should stay here. This is your country, these are your houses,...your memories. You are not going to abandon your lands… You should stay here, both for your ancestors and your descendants... Yugoslavia does not exist without Kosovo! Yugoslavia and Serbia are not

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[131] Ibid, 127.
[132] Duijzings, 196.
[133] Dragović-Soso, 127.
[134] Duijzings, 196.
[135] Milosevic on Military Intervention, Kosovo, Macedonia, Confederation with Greece (Interview), Belgrade TV 1835 gmt (June 27, 1992), http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/news/milosevic062792.htm (accessed on May 1, 2011).

going to give up Kosovo!"[136] In this extract, Milosevic constructed "them" (Albanians) as newcomers in an indirect way by claiming that Kosovo is "our" (Serb) home.

Another, even more subtle example was Milosevic's speech on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje on June 28, 1989: "[T]he Serbs have never in the whole of their history conquered and exploited others."[137] On the face of it, one is unlikely to find nationalist elements in this speech, which seems to have been all about unity and cooperation among nations. But if one considers the context in which the speech was delivered, that is during heated debates about who came first to Kosovo, and then the denial of the conquest is equal to the assertion that Kosovo has been a Serb land from the onset.

One of the rare instances when Milosevic directly compared the historical rights of Serbs to Kosovo with those of Albanians is the following: "… Kosovo has never belonged, not even as an autonomous region, to the Albanian ethnic minority and it never in history belonged to Albania."[138] But in general, Milosevic tended to use the "hidden" image of Albanians as newcomers to Kosovo as in the following sentence: "we are not giving up our country,"[139] where "our" should be read as "not their." [140]

However, the fact that Milosevic did not use explicit mythology about Albanians being newcomers does not mean that this mythology was not the part of the Serbian political discourse at that time and that it did not influence political developments in the country. On the contrary, exclusionary nationalist mythology dominated marginal, ultra-nationalist

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[136] Speech of Slobodan Milosevic at Kosovo Polje (April 24-25, 1987), http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/news/milosevic-1987-3-eng.htm (accessed on May 1, 2011).
[137] Slobodan Milosevic's 1989 St. Vitus Day Speech, Gazimestan (June 28, 1989), http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/spch-kosovo1989.htm (accessed on May 1, 2011).
[138] Milosevic Interviewed on Pressures Facing Fry and Good Prospects for New State (Interview), Radio Television Serbia in Belgrade (May 28, 1992), http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/news/milosevic052892.htm (accessed on May 1, 2011).
[139] Milosevic Questioned by Belgrade Media Chiefs on All Aspects of Policy (Interview), Radio Television Serbia (November 3, 1993), http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/news/milosevic110393.htm (accessed on May 1, 2011).
[140] Hugo Roth, Kosovo Origins (Belgrade: IKP "Nikola Pasic," 1996), http://www.kosovo.net/history/kosovo_origins/ko_chapter1.html (accessed on May 1, 2011).

discourse. In this regard, Gagnon argues that Milosevic's decision not to "play the ethnic card" was a well-calculated political step to address economic and social security instead, which led his party SPS to win an overwhelming majority of parliamentary seats while more nationalist parties were lagging far behind.[141]

The second similarity with the Georgian case was that Serb nationalism also tried to find outside factors to justify its claim about the unreliability of the "other." In the case of Kosovo, Albania was portrayed as an outside force which aimed to disrupt the territory of Serbia.

Having described "hidden" exclusionary nationalist mythology in Serbian political discourse, now it is necessary to discuss the relative importance of different national identity markers in the construction of Serb identity.

As to citizenship-based identity, it was not a dominant one for Serbs who, conversely, tried to incorporate all Serbs living beyond Serbia's borders into one nation. This was reflected in the discourse, for example, through the 1986 Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts which, inter alia, stated the necessity to create the national and cultural unity of Serbs regardless of the place of their settlement.[142] Therefore, citizenship was not a dominant Serb identity.

When it comes to language, unlike for Georgians, it did not serve as a dominant identity marker for three reasons. First, before the dissolution of SFRY almost all Yugoslavia spoke the single Serbo-Croatian language. Therefore, language seems to have not been an effective criterion to distinguish between Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians. Second, Serbian nationalism accepted the right of Hungarians in Vojvodina to use their own language. Third, although Albanians mainly used their own language, there was a number of "ethnic and

[141] Gagnon, 99.
[142] Memorandum by Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia (September 24, 1986), http://www.trepca.net/english/2006/serbian_memorandum_1986/serbia_memorandum_1986.html (accessed on May 1, 2011).

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religious anomalies,"[143] that is, for example, ethnic clans of Serbs speaking Albanian as their mother tongue or, visa versa, Albanians speaking Serbian natively. Moreover, there was a certain level of multilinguism in Kosovo.[144] Although such communities were small and politically marginal, this made it rather difficult to distinguish on the linguistic basis.

As for blood-based identity, it was a rather disputable issue in the case of Serbia. Although a number of scholars and even more journalists and politicians call the Kosovo problem an ethnic conflict in the narrow sense, this allegation faces three problems. First, at some point Serbian nationalism employed the idea that Croats are not a separate nation, but rather were Serbs who adopted Catholicism. Similarly, there was so-called "arnautas" thesis, according to which Kosovars were not ethnic Albanians but rather Albanianized Serbs who adopted both Islam and the Albanian language.[145] Thus, Croats and Kosovars at some point were claimed to be ethnic Serbs. Second, if blood had been a dominant identity marker for Serbs, they would have experienced serious problems with incorporating the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. Third, although especially at the village level ethnic groups were quite separate,[146] sometimes it was very difficult to distinguish who were Serbs and who – Albanians, inter alia, because of the above mentioned "ethnic and religious anomalies." Thus, blood did not serve as a primary identity marker for Serbs.

However, this fallacious assumption about the alleged purely ethnic nature of the tensions in Kosovo is based on the prominence of another identity marker – religion. Historically, religion served as a politically important identity marker in the Ottoman empire which had dominated the Balkans for quite a while. The religion-based millet system was established there to organize the internal life of non-Muslim minorities and their communication with central (Muslim) authorities. As a result, Duijzings notes that Orthodox

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[143] Duijzings, 24.
[144] Ibid, 20.
[145] Malcolm, 20; and Duijzings, 15-16.
[146] Duijzings, 10.

religion and Serb national identity fused in the beginning of the nineteenth century.[147] With the liberation of the Balkans from the Ottoman rule, the previous millet system served as the basis for identity construction during nation-building. By the same token, Malcolm argues that it was between 1878 and 1914, when divisions between Christians and Muslims in Kosovo were turned into Serbo-Albanian ethnic divide.[148] Thus, it was the time when Orthodox church became an integral part of the Balkan nationalist movements. Another sign of the merger between national and religious identities of Serbs was the establishment of "national" Orthodox churches in some Balkan states which gained independence from the Ottoman empire.[149]

On the other hand, there is a diffused opinion that during the socialist period in Yugoslavia, religion was suppressed so much that it would not be able to serve as the basis for national re-construction in the post-socialist period.[150] However, there is documented evidence that at least since the 1980s, religion steadily began to revive.[151] Indeed, since the early 1980s, the Serbian Orthodox church started to re-enter the political scene exploiting the overarching theme of the suffering Serbian nation with the emphasis on the problems in Kosovo.

The religion-laden myth about the Serbian national suffering at Kosovo Polje was used as a cornerstone of Serbian nationalist discourse. Kosovo was not a random choice by the Serb clergy. A lot of historical Orthodox shrines are located there, as well as the former residents of the Serbian Orthodox leaders. In other words, Kosovo used to be the center of Serb Orthodoxy. Moreover, Duijzings argues that the Kosovo myth implies inherent

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[147] Ibid, 176.

[148] Noel Malcolm, Kosovo: A Short History (London: Macmillan, 1998), xxix.

[149] Duijzings, 177

[150] Christos Mylonas, Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals: The Quest for an Eternal Identity (Budapest, NY: CEU Press, 2003), 58.

[151] Slobodan Stankovic, League of Communists of Yugoslavia (November 14, 1986), Open Society Archieves 87-8-3, http://www.osaarchivum.org/files/holdings/300/8/3/text/87-8-3.shtml (accessed on May 1, 2011).

incompatibility between Christianity and Islam.[152] Emblematic is the full historical, and at the time of writing, the official Serbian administrative name for Kosovo – Kosovo and Metohija which means in Serbian "the field of blackbirds" and "the land of (Eastern Orthodox) monasteries" respectively.[153]

Not only intellectuals as stated above, but also hard line communists soon adopted religion-driven nationalist ideology. For example, Milosevic devoted the whole of his 1989 Vitus Day speech to the Kosovo myth and constantly equated the notions of state and national and spiritual integrity.[154] A more radical example can be found in a later speech where Milosevic showed that the center of Serb Orthodoxy coincided with the center of the Serbian nation: "Kosovo is not just any simple territory of Yugoslavia or Serbia. Kosovo is the very heart of Serbia."[155]

Religious identity turned out to be the best defining marker for Serbs for two reasons. First, religion in itself is an exclusionary ideology. In other words, even if there were problems with distinguishing the population along ethnic or linguistic lines, there were no such problems with religion since one cannot espouse several at once. Second, Serbs' Orthodoxy distinguished them even from their nearest, in both geographical and kinship terms, Slavic neighbors, who with the exception of Montenegrins were largely Catholics. The distinction between Orthodox Serbs and Muslim Albanians became even more prominent. All in all, unlike Georgia, where religion did not manage to regain its ultimate importance, religion seems to have been a dominant identity for the Serbs which frequently determined other identities.

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[152] Duijzings, 8-9.
[153] Pavkovic, 3.
[154] Slobodan Milosevic's 1989 St. Vitus Day Speech, Gazimestan (June 28, 1989).
[155] Milosevic on Military Intervention, Kosovo, Macedonia, Confederation with Greece (Interview), Belgrade TV 1835 gmt (June 27, 1992).

Finally, culture does not seem to have played any crucial role in defining what it is to be a "Serb." In fact, all the inhabitants of the Balkans share certain cultural similarities. And it was even more so among ethnic groups of Slavic descent. Moreover, these commonalities were standardized throughout most of the region during two important periods – the Ottoman domination and socialist times. The only shades in culture of different groups may be again religiously-driven. In fact, ceteris paribus, rare differences in cultural practices may be explained by difference in religion. Therefore, culture as a marker of identity was only a derivative of religion.

Having determined the relative relevance of national identity markers of Serbs, now it is necessary to discuss the content of such markers for Albanians in Kosovo and Hungarians in Vojvodina to understand the sources of exclusionary nationalist mythology in the first case and the lack of it in the second.

Starting with Kosovars, ethnically they are Albanians. Although there is heated discussion about the origin of Albanians, in particular whether they are descendants of the Illyrian tribes or not, they are obviously ethnically unrelated to Slavic Serbs. Linguistically, they speak Albanian which might also be of Illyrian origin, but in general it is a distinct Indo-European language again unrelated to Serbian. The scripts of the two languages also differ, since Albanians use the Latin script with some additions. In terms of religion, most Albanians are Sunni Muslims. However, there are also Catholic, Orthodox, Shiah and other Albanians. Thus, religious identity is not definitive in the case of Albanians because it seems rather as dividing than uniting them.[156] As far as culture is concerned, Albanian culture, as stated above, is a part of a broad Balkan culture, but it also differs from Serbian. However, Kosovo is a special case, first, because a distinct Kosovo culture has developed there that shares

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[156] Duijzings, 176.

commonalities with both Serbian and Albanian ones[157] and, second, because of striking cultural differences even within the region from one locality to another. So culture does not determine national identity for Kosovars. All in all, Serbs and Kosovars differ in every national identity marker partly except for culture, with religion being a decisive difference which determined the development of exclusionary Serbian mythology about Kosovars.

Finally, Vojvodina was as ethnically heterogeneous as Bosnia, that is much more than Kosovo. However, there, the largest minority were Hungarians, who are definitely ethnically and linguistically different from Slavic Serbs being descendants of Uralic ethnic groups. Moreover, Hungarians use the Latin alphabet which complicated communication with Serbs. When it comes to religion, Hungarians are Catholics. Although they are not Orthodox, the common Christian foundation seems to play major role in ensuring peaceful co-existence between the two groups. As far as culture is concerned, Hungarians in Hungary are culturally different from Slavic people, which can be explained through religious and linguistic differences. However, there has developed a distinct identity in Vojvodina which defines a special local culture. Not only did this distinct culture affect Hungarians in Vojvodina but also local Serbs. Such phenomenon was, for example, mentioned in the 1986 Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts.[158] All in all, Hungarians in Vojvodina were different from Serbs almost in all national identity markers partly except for one, which is religion. Despite all other differences, this commonality proved to have been crucial and seems to explain the lack of exclusionary Serbian mythology about Hungarians in Vojvodina.

To sum up, after the dissolution of the SFRY, Serbian nation was constructed around Orthodox religion as a primary identity marker because other markers either could not often help distinguish Serbs from their neighbors (language, descent, culture) or did not reflect the

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[157] Ibid, 1, 11.
[158] Memorandum by Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia (September 24, 1986).

reality of dispersed settlement modes (citizenship). However, since religious identity most often coincided with ethic identity, as it was largely the case in Kosovo, then prima facie, ethnicity was perceived as the source of conflict – albeit wrongly.

All in all, civic and cultural nationalism would have been most accommodative in the case of Serbia because these identity markers were most shared among the citizens of Serbia. However, religion gained the upper hand having disguised itself as ethnicity. Linguistic nationalism seems to have had a similar detrimental effect since Serbian minorities spoke different languages but luckily it was not employed.

Conclusion

Nationalism as a political principle has persisted to be ubiquitous in the domestic as well as in the world politics. State collapse like it was the case with the SFRY and USSR produces the need for nation-(re-)building in which nationalism plays a leading role since it concerns the issue of where ethnic and political boundaries should lie. Since the strategy of state-building is determined by nationalism, it is necessary to analyze nationalism to grasp the logic behind state-building. Nationalism is reflected in political discourse where it exists in the form of stories called nationalist myths. In the context of nation-building, these myths can be classified either as inclusivist or as exclusionary vis-à-vis minorities. By the same token, it signifies of the inclusivist or exclusionary nationalism in the course of nation-building. This thesis has discussed the causes of exclusionary myths about minorities to help understand the causes of exclusionary nationalism.

My argument has departed from constructivist approach with its emphasis on the fluidity of identity and concerns the way identity is constructed. Since nation-building is the process of construction of national identity, I have proposed to deconstruct national identities of "discourse-creating-majority" and "target-minority" in order to comprehend what is a dominant identity marker around which national identity of majority group is constructed – be it blood, language, culture, religion, or citizenship. As a result, I have argued that if dominant national identity marker of majority does not coincide in content with that of minority, majority cannot "imagine," in Anderson's words, minority as a part of a single nation. This discrepancy leads to majority creating exclusionary myths about minority.

In the course of the research, my argument has been applied to the two case studies – Georgia and Serbia. In the former case, Georgian nationalism in the late 1980s – early 1990s

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created exclusionary myths about Abkhaz and South Ossetians minorities that they were recent "newcomers" to initially Georgian lands and thus not the parts of the Georgian nation. Deconstruction of the Georgian identity of that period has led me the conclusion that linguistic identity was a dominant identity for Georgians with descent becoming also increasingly prominent. In other words, for Georgians, the "other" becomes "us" if the "other" shares with "us" common language and descent. However, Abkhaz and South Ossetians speak languages different from Georgian, moreover using different script, and are ethnically unrelated to Georgians. For these reasons, Georgians did not perceive them as parts of the Georgian nation that was reflected in Georgian nationalist discourse. On the contrary, Ajars share common language and descent with Georgians so the latter perceived the former as a part of the Georgian nation. This was also embedded in nationalist discourse in the form of inclusivist myths which were stressing common belonging of the two groups.

When it comes to Serbia in the late 1980s – early 1990s, similar exclusionary myths were developed about Albanian minority in Kosovo who were claimed to have come to Kosovo only after Serbs. So through the claims that "they" (Albanians) came to originally "our" (Serbian) lands, Albanians in Kosovo were constructed as not the members of the Serbian nation. Having analyzed the elements which constituted the Serbian identity, I have arrived at the conclusion that religion was a dominant identity marker for Serbs. In other words, in order to be a Serb, one essentially needed to be a Christian which served as the primary ground for Serbs to distinguish between "us" and "them." In case of Albanians in Kosovo, they are largely Muslims which made them the "other" in the eyes of Serbs, thus excluding them from the Serbian nation which was reflected in Serbian nationalist discourse. However, when it comes to Hungarians in Vojvodina, they are Christians – albeit Catholics. Regardless of the long historical record of animosities between Catholic and Orthodox Christians in different parts of the world, it was not decisive in the case of Serbian

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nationalism. In fact, the religious-laden myth of Kosovo which served as the basis of the Serb nationalism implies, inter alia, the binary opposition particularly between Christians and Muslims. Thus, in the context of Serbian nationalism, it did not matter that Hungarians in Vojvodina were Catholics, what really mattered was that they were Christians. As a result, Hungarians in Vojvodina, despite the fact of being linguistically, ethnically, and culturally different from Serbs, were perceived as a part of the Serbian nation. This was reflected in the Serbian nationalist discourse not in the form of inclusivist myths but through the absence of exclusionary ones.

In general, the salience of nationalist myths differs from country to country which can be explained by structural differences in of the respective socio-political fields. For example, Serbian nationalist discourse differed from that of Georgians in the way that the former had exclusionary myths about the minority in the "hidden," indirect form, while the latter explicitly differentiated between "us" and "them."

In terms of practical applicability of the findings, the concept devised by my argument can be used in two fields. And not only is it the management of the relations between majority and minority within multiethnic states but also the problem of the incorporation of immigrants into the society. In fact, this concept is multi-functional. Firstly, as an explanatory device, it can help understand the trajectory of development of nationalist political discourse. This would help us to adequately respond to the existing ethnic antagonism by changing the rhetoric onto more inclusivist identity marker. Secondly, as a predictive tool, it can be utilize to forecast which particular minorities (immigrants) are likely to be antagonized at some particular time. This would help to work out unique, case-sensitive preventive strategy to deal with ethnic hostilities. Thirdly, it may serve as policy elaborating tool for the practitioners in the field of inter-ethnic relations when devising the strategy of nation-building. All in all, this concept enables non-violent management of identity politics.

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Thus, my argument has been successfully applied to the two cases – one is from the former USSR space and the other is from Eastern Europe. This shows the applicability of the described concept at least to this area. And I do not claim its universal applicability. For example, as to Western Europe, starting with Hans Kohn, a number of scholars have stressed the profound difference between "Western" and "Eastern" concepts of nationalism with the former being more civic and the latter, by contrast, being more ethnic.[159] The likelihood of manipulation of ethnic identity is much less in Western Europe compared to Eastern Europe. When it comes to other parts of the world, such as Africa, some other, for instance, post-colonial dynamics may influence the trajectory of the discourse development. However, I do not contend that the concept is of limited applicability. On the contrary, it means that the concept needs further operationalization.

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[159] Smith, Nationalism and Modernism, 16.

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