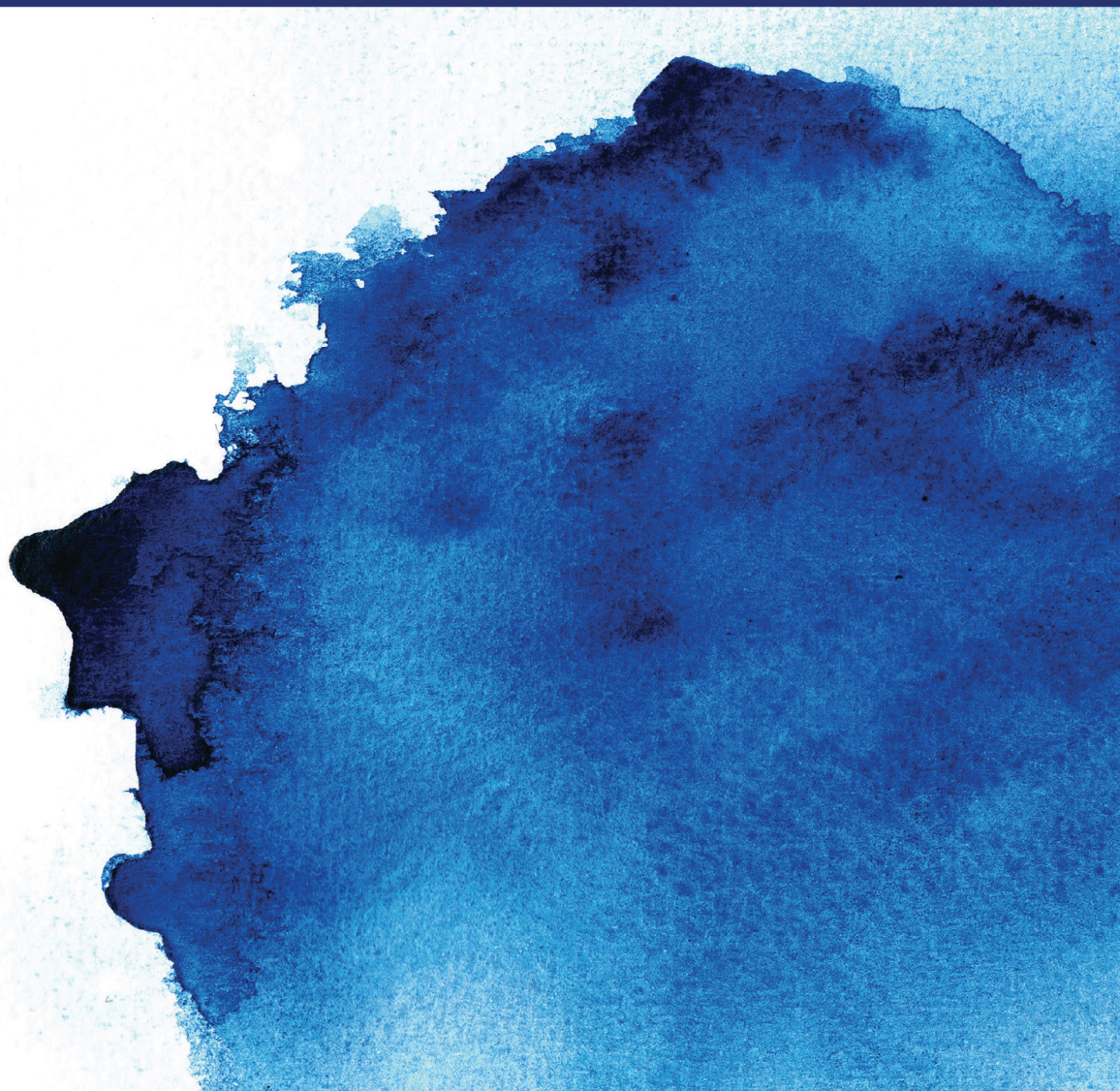


THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO-ROUTLEDGE GLOBAL STUDIES SERIES



# A NEW APPROACH TO GLOBAL STUDIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SMALL NATIONS

Edited by KIYONOBU DATE AND JEAN-FRANÇOIS LANIEL



# A NEW APPROACH TO GLOBAL STUDIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SMALL NATIONS

With emphasis on East Asian and North American examples – notably Japan and Quebec – Date, Laniel and their contributors take a new approach to the understanding of small nations and their role in the international system.

Small nations, by their very nature, raise significant questions about what a nation is. Some small nations are sovereign states with relatively small populations and limited territory, others are nations within larger sovereign states, with distinctive cultures, governance structures or other features that differentiate them from their “parent” state. By focussing on non-European nations in particular, the contributors to this volume challenge our conceptions of what a small nation is and how it operates within the international system. They focus in particular on the nation-within-a-nation-state of Quebec and on Japan, supplemented by further examples from East Asia. By interrogating what these examples have to show us about the typology and character of small nations, they offer a critique of superpower and draw out the potential of small nation studies.

A valuable resource for students and scholars of international relations and theories of the nation and nation state.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Kiyonobu Date and Jean-François Laniel*

Generally, major trends in world history, international relations and processes of modernisation have been perceived from the perspective of the powers that shaped the politico-economic orders then prevalent – the so-called “great nations.” For instance, modern Western Europe’s position of political, economic and military hegemony over the world influenced the academic perspectives it developed (Foucault 1969; Said 1978). In the contemporary world that has grown out of the fall of colonial Empires and the end of the Cold War, processes of state modernisation and returning hegemonies have accelerated multipolar interdependence, competition and knowledge such that even great powers now find themselves limited in their ability to unilaterally act on many issues. In the context of the 21st century, we see a new opportunity to rethink the canons of world history, international relations and modernity. And within these emerging conceptions, the experiences of small nations will be more relevant than ever.

Small nations are peripheral and non-hegemonic. They are usually defined by their size and power, and above all by a political culture characterised by collective insecurity and nonconformity (Abulof 2009, 2015). Small nations raise new questions in international politics (Fox 1969; Amstrup 1976; Steinmetz and Wivel 2010), global market opportunities (Katzenstein 1985; Alesina and Spolaore 2003; Van Den Bulcke, Verbeke and Yuan, 2009), democratic and state standards (Keating and Harvey 2014) and models of nationalism (Bibò 1993; Hroch 2000). Small nations also pose epistemological and methodological challenges for social science researchers: what social realities do “small nations” lead us to consider and reflect on? What do we see and experience from the “other side of the spyglass” – that is, on the receiving end of the gaze that large nations cast on the world? And could this viewpoint be fashioned into a heuristic tool for understanding the issues faced by our contemporary societies?

Each of these questions would warrant multiple academic studies and books, and even then their scope would be incomplete. This may explain why the size of nations has been a serious question in the social sciences since Plato, Aristotle, Montesquieu and Rousseau (Dahl and Tufte 1973). Forty years ago, Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt identified a strong bias towards large and medium nations in the field of sociology and the broader social sciences (Eisenstadt 1976–1977, p. 36). Around the same time, that bias was discussed by Norwegian political scientist Stein Rokkan (1971, pp. 10–11):

Most comparisons, whether within the West or with developing countries, have limited themselves to the larger and more influential social units and have tended to neglect the rich and varied experiences of the smaller polities, particularly the many European ‘secession states’ after 1814, 1830 and 1918, and their histories of nation-building: these are, after all, the units most immediately comparable to the recently formed states of the Third World.

Is the bias observed by these scholars forty years ago – a tendency to favour large nations over small ones as models for global trends and theories – still present today? This book will argue that the answer, for the most part, is *yes*. It will build on the “multiples modernities paradigm” (Eisenstadt 2000) that has perceived the plight of being peripheral as one of the reasons for the positive attention given to small nations (Arjomand 2010; Laniel 2018).

This volume takes an innovative approach to current scholarship by choosing Quebec and Japan as focal areas for a study of small nations. Until now, the experiences of Eastern European nations have been privileged in the study of small nations. We may recall Milan Kundera’s (1983) definition of the small nation as “one whose very existence may be put in question at any moment; a small nation can disappear and it knows it” (p. 11). For Marx and Engels, the nationalist struggle of small, non-sovereign nations was regressive since the future belonged to a post-national proletariat whose vanguard would be found in the most highly industrialised societies (Haupt, Löwy, and Weill 1974). Fascist European imperialist thought propounded a hierarchy of races and cultures based on neo-Darwinian biological and cultural progress, which consigned the small nations of Central and Eastern Europe to conquest, and the Jewish people to extermination (Arendt 2002, pp. 179–250). And, arguing from a “threshold principle,” European liberal and progressive elites considered some nations not large enough to aspire to nation-state status (Hobsbawm 1992, pp. 25–62). But if Eastern Europe, on the immediate periphery of Western Europe, was the case upon which pioneering studies of small nations were based, the concept has since proven fruitful in the study of a wider range of nations. Even though Quebec’s and Japan’s historical contexts are different, they share a common ground, including their position relative to the United States (US), the superpower with which they both have long maintained political ties and tensions.

In the first two parts of the book, we theorise the attributes of small nations from social, political and historical perspectives. Naturally, small nations share some common characteristics related to such factors as their size, economies, militaries and political cultures marked by insecurity. However, for each nation, the concrete experience and centrality of smallness are determined by its context, that is, by specificities of their relations with their neighbours. Quebec, a small nation that is not a sovereign state, boasts of a long tradition of small nations scholarship, and the field has only recently grown in popularity (Laniel and Thériault 2020). This tendency can be attributed to Quebec's colonial history and minority status in North America: in the 18th century, Britain captured the province of Quebec from the defeated French, and French-speaking, Roman Catholic inhabitants were subjected to British rule. In 1840, the English reformer Lord Durham advocated for the “beneficial” assimilation of French Canadians, whom he called “a people with no literature and no history,” to English mores of material and cultural progress (Thériault 1994). Still today, Quebec exists under constant pressure from Anglo-American culture and institutions.

Unlike Quebec, whose status as a small nation is rarely contested, it would be controversial to unequivocally call Japan a small nation since the small nation paradigm has rarely been applied to its study. From its beginnings as a small nation, Japan gradually grew into a major power as it emerged from isolation and engaged with global history beginning in the mid-19th century. By taking Quebec and Japan as its prototypes, this volume explores notions of ideal or typical small nations and a set of diverse and varied experiences of smallness.

While differences between Japan and Quebec provide a fertile ground for study, an examination of their political situations generally and the push–pull of their evolving relationships with the US specifically, reveals a significant common trait that merits closer study. For a long time, Western Europe exerted political, economic, military and intellectual hegemony over the world, and discussions of colonial rule over Indigenous populations were based on structural domination and violence to achieve the rapid transformation of economy and society to serve European interests. At the end of the Second World War, however, the US emerged as the new global superpower. Today, the term *colonialism* is applied mainly to describing US foreign policy *vis-à-vis* other countries, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa (Wesseling 2001). The history of Quebec can thus be understood within both North American and Canadian socio-historical contexts because multiple political/colonial powers have shaped the Quebec society. Similarly, Japan's dependence on the US under the 1951 security treaty yielded results in line with Japan's security expectations. On the other hand, postwar Japan has enjoyed limited autonomy.

Part III of this book deals with other parts of the world: small nations in their relationship with the Commonwealth, the US, China and Russia. In many cases, these discussions will open new perspectives that show “smallness” and “small nations” in a different light.

The book grew out of a new challenge – gathering research undertaken largely as a collaboration between Quebec and Japanese scholars from diverse fields – an approach that elucidates how studies of small nations can enrich our understanding of not only these two nations but also other geopolitical arenas. We explore the traits of “small nations” and “smallness,” while carefully examining the various historical experiences of these nations. It is, then, also a reflection on what it means to be “universal,” especially in terms of size, power and human experiences. Often, our notions of the “universal” reflect concepts and institutions adopted by great nations and empires to manipulate people in ways that cause distortion, contradiction and suffering. This interpretation of the term “universal” has been taken up and turned on its head by Korean historian Yong-Seo Baik, who conceptualises the “universal” as a sharing of painful experiences. In other words, the term “universal” can suggest feelings of compassion of the people of “small” nations or communities that have resisted the domination of great powers. Baik calls the space where this type of friction emerges between the centre and the peripheries, with a possible surge in compassion, a “core location” (Baik 2016). These “core locations” and the lived experience of those dwelling therein are intertwined with a sentiment of opposition to great powers.

Another significant feature of small nations is their multilayeredness. For example, Japan is home to a number of local communities that resist government control. In this sense, the word “nation” can often be replaced by related terms in this book, such as “societies,” “states,” “provinces,” or “countries,” or even smaller entities such as “groups” or “collectivities” (including social movements). In some cases, it can even be replaced by “people.” Okinawan people, for example, bear a substantial burden in hosting US military bases; Indigenous communities in Quebec and Japan are also considered small nations.

### **Part I: Quebec society through the lens of the small nation**

Jean-François Laniel’s contribution shows that the small nation is the most recurrent concept used by Quebec intellectuals to characterise Quebec society. We find it as early as the 19th century, in comparisons between Quebec, Ireland and Poland. Since the 1960s and the Quiet Revolution, other concepts have come into use, including the “colonised society” and “new world society.” While they have proven less compelling on their own, they do identify particularities of Quebec as a small nation, emphasising its minority status, modern qualities, or aspirations to greatness.

These characteristics are also reflected in the experiences and reflections of Quebec intellectuals who studied in France and the US during the 1940s and 1950s. François-Olivier Dorais in Chapter 2 examines how these intellectuals were impressed and amazed by the prestige, resources and quality of American and French universities. Many lamented the state of Quebec’s culture, knowledge and society, which they wished to transform by imitating the models experienced

in larger nations. But small nations are not condemned to reproduce large-nation models. They can also develop their own institutions, policies and strategies to address their own issues, means and objectives.

Félix Mathieu in Chapter 3 argues that Quebec has developed an original model of immigrant integration, “interculturalism,” which differs from both the multiculturalism prevalent in the English-speaking world and the French assimilationist model. Like the former, interculturalism stresses the importance of recognising the ethnocultural pluralism of globalised societies; from the latter, it retains the importance of a common public culture serving as a common point of reference to all. Concretely, interculturalism stresses the importance of French as a common language, while promoting cultural diversity and accommodating its practices in the hope of bringing people together.

Moreover, as X. Hubert Rioux explains (Chapter 4), Quebec has developed a *sui generis* economic model that shares attributes with other smaller nations. Characterised by neo-corporatism, state interventionism and economic nationalism, this model allows Quebec to thrive in a globalised world, as Rioux illustrates in a study of the entrepreneurial finance sector. Through concerted corporate efforts and strategic state support, Quebec protects national ownership of key enterprises while channelling capital to strategic sectors and enterprises and, more recently, promoting industrial autonomy.

## Part II: Re-examining Japan from a small-nation perspective

Historically, in its relations with China and the West, Japan has perceived itself as a small nation in the Far East. But after winning the Russo-Japanese War in the early 20th century, Japan recognised itself as one of the world’s great powers. Despite the rapid economic growth that followed its defeat in the Second World War, Japan has recently suffered from a severe and prolonged economic downturn following the recession. The fact that this has not punctured the illusion that Japan remains one of the world’s great powers has often caused friction among people creating “core locations” domestically and abroad.

Kiyonobu Date’s article (Chapter 5) provides a historical overview of this contradictory situation in Japan and how it has developed. While pointing out that the great majority of people in Japan have aspired to maintain its status as a great power, Date shows that a handful of people have challenged this mainstream notion, contending that Japan should know its place as a small nation.

Hiroki Tanaka in Chapter 6 focuses on Koutoku Shusui, who advocated anti-war policies during the Russo-Japanese War. Tanaka re-evaluates the long-held view of Koutoku as primarily a socialist and pacifist, portraying him as a small-nation theorist inspired by the writings and ideals of the Chinese philosopher Mencius and the Swiss democratic model. Koutoku’s critical attitude towards imperialism and capitalism in the Meiji era deserves more attention, particularly today as similar problems come to the fore.

Katsuya Hirano's article (Chapter 7) on Hokkaido and Sana Sakihama's article (Chapter 8) on Okinawa describe how the process of becoming a major power simultaneously gave rise to "small nations" within Japan. Hirano also explores the role of sovereignty in imperial Japan, which made it possible for colonialists to expropriate the land of the indigenous Ainu people in Hokkaido.

Sakihama's contribution discusses the situation in Okinawa under the US military regime, from Japan's defeat in 1945 to Okinawa's 1972 reversion to Japan. She finds that while Okinawans largely desired to return to the mainland, a trend of anti-reversionist sentiment was also present. She also discusses how, in the 1980s, drafts of a Constitution of the Republic of the Ryukyus and one of the Constitution of the Republican Society of Ryukyus were proposed for furthering world peace.

### **Part III: Diversity: Small nations in subnational contexts**

While parts I and II of the book examine concrete historical and political aspects of small nations through two specific cases, Quebec in North America and Japan in East Asia, Part III shifts the focus to the unique experiences of people struggling to maintain their group identity against the pressures of larger powers at both national and subnational levels. When "small nations" are interpreted as a subnational group or region within a larger nation, "diversity" becomes central to maintaining identity and crucial to avoiding being subsumed by the mainstream culture. Diversity serves as a central unifying concept tying together the four chapters in Part III: each examines the experiences of one or more marginalised groups with a history of resisting the influence of national or supranational entities.

Hiroyuki Ogawa in Chapter 9 situates small nations in a post-colonial context by comparing Newfoundland, French-speaking Quebec, and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, a French island territory off the coast of Canada. A scholar of Commonwealth studies, Ogawa analyses these small nations from the dual perspectives of post-colonial United Kingdom and that of their inhabitants. By focusing on the diverse experiences of Newfoundlanders and the people of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, he challenges the existing framework based on great-power-centred perspective of the world.

Cheung Ching Yean's article (Chapter 10) focuses on three philosophers – Tang Chun-i, Lao Sze-kwang and Cheung Chan-fai – whose experiences align with that of "small nations" due to Hong Kong's legacy of British colonialism and its relation with another great power, China. The chapter examines the works of these three philosophers whose ideas can be traced back to both their Eastern lineage and Western traditions. By affording an alternative perspective on the history of Hong Kong as a small nation, Cheung's case study makes a significant contribution to the field.

Kazuyo Tsuchiya's article (Chapter 11) explores the experience of Black communities, focusing on the experience of a "small nation" at a subnational level. She traces the history of Black struggles more broadly, and specifically the

challenges faced by Black women to attain freedom in the US – a context in which Black America might be seen as an “other America.” This movement can also be considered as a small nation that has appealed its differences and inequalities to the great power represented by a much larger entity, the US. But the “small nation versus superpower” dichotomy can obscure the reality of the experiences of the former, since the reality on the ground is much more complex than what these concepts may suggest. To guard against reductionism, Tsuchiya observes the intersectionality and multilayeredness of diverse social groups, focusing mainly on a particular small community, welfare activists.

In Chapter 12, Taro Tsurumi explores the idea of “nation” as held by Jews in the Russian Empire, a people who could be defined as a small nation, while interrogating the idea of “peoplehood” by examining Jewish history and self-consciousness. As they emerged in the Russian Empire, Tsurumi argues, Zionists emulated “great” nations such as Germany and Russia. He identifies factors behind such an emulation, springing from minority status. However, as critics of Zionism have shown, a national existence could be seen as contradictory to traditional conceptions of Jewish identity. For small nations, the very concept of nation became the focus of controversy over their identity because it has traditionally been, for them, a given. Like Tsuchiya’s focus on “small people,” Tsurumi’s focus on Jews as a “people” interrogates the idea of “small nation” and also enriches our conceptualisation of a people in a “core location.”

This volume is significant for bringing together research and contributions made by Western and Asian scholars (from Japan and Hong Kong). Scholars whose works have different perspectives based on their understanding of and sensitivity towards their own colonial histories. A collaboration of scholars from diverse backgrounds has brought about a broader and in-depth understanding of the socio-historical contexts in these areas. It re-evaluates not only the position of small nations but also the process whereby these nations have cultivated – or in some cases, repressed – their consciousness of themselves as “small,” a quality that has been unduly disparaged far too long.

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## **PART I**

# Quebec society through the lens of the small nation



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# 1

## A SMALL NATION IN SEARCH OF NORMALCY

Modern Quebec and its significant others<sup>1</sup>

*Jean-François Lanier*

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes a preliminary reflection on the main comparatist characterisations of Quebec society in sociology, history and political science since the 1960s. My hope here is to deepen our understanding of the *significant others* in recent comparative studies of Quebec, the contexts they emerged in and the challenges and hopes they embody (Mead 2006). More specifically, I discuss the significance of these contributions to the relatively recent tradition of comparatist research in Quebec studies. In a nutshell: which concepts have been frequently invoked to describe the fundamental expressions of Quebec's historical and contemporary situation as a “global society” (in Gurvitch's sense of a total or complete society) (Gurvitch 1958)? Clearly, this is not a zero-sum game where new concepts “replace” previous characterisations. Rather, the heuristic lens of each concept affords a distinct view of Quebec society, accentuating certain facets. And each lens is framed by a given knowledge interest; together, the result is a fertile plurality of perspectives.

That being said, scholars have overwhelmingly settled on a single totalising concept from among the few that have achieved great momentum in academia. The choice of a significant or comparative other (a model of global society) is generally indicative of a paradigm of thought, framework of analysis, locus of research, or cluster of concerns and questions motivated by the possibility of developing a more exact and germane understanding of the society under study (Fourot, Sarrasin and Holly 2011). In this respect, not all concepts of a “typical” global society are equal in synthetic scope, heuristic power, or comparative range – and indeed, not all have enjoyed equal popularity or longevity.

In approximate chronological order, I will examine four concepts applied to Quebec at four historical moments: the “small nation,” the “colonised society,” the “new society” and the more recently embraced “new nationalism” exercised by nations that are not sovereign states. My argument is that, of these four concepts, the “small nation” is the most powerful heuristic for understanding Quebec society. As such, it is unsurprising that it has been used most frequently, over a long period of time, and by a wide range of scholars, including adherents of other conceptual frameworks. I would even go further: the “small nation” concept is key to understanding the interest in three other concepts – “colonised society,” “new society” and “new nationalism” – that have become popular since the Quiet Revolution with its ambitions to modernise Quebec society. Each of these concepts sheds light on a facet of the small nation, including its fundamental fragility and, more significantly, its aspirations to normality and even greatness, aspirations explicitly or implicitly modelled on the modernity of the “great” hegemonic nations (Rudin 1995; Thériault 2005a). In these models, the nationalist impulse finds fulfilment in either a sweeping restructuring of Quebec society or in the liberation of French–Canadian society from Anglo-Canadian structures, and often in both at once.<sup>2</sup> With the onset of the Quiet Revolution, French Canada (later Quebec) undertook a process of self-discovery and redefinition as a global society (Bourque 1993). This process raised questions around measures to take and models to adopt for Quebec to develop into modernity fully and completely, or at least normally, and it entailed strident criticisms of the “smallness” of the French-Canadian, and later the Quebec, nation.

### 1.2 Small nation – The singular other<sup>3</sup>

Before turning our attention to Quebec’s usual others, we will explore the concept of the small nation, whose enduring popularity makes it a solid foundation for understanding the history of ideas in Quebec and comparatist analyses more generally. To the best of my knowledge, the small nation is the only societal model that has occupied thinkers in French Canada and Quebec without interruption. We can follow its thread through the twists and turns of Quebec thought, and also into popular conceptions of history, as Jocelyn Létourneau has shown in his work on the historical consciousness of young Quebecers marked by the narrative of a nation that has always had to fight for its existence and has continually seen its aspirations thwarted (Létourneau, 2014).

Lionel Groulx, an eminent early historian of Quebec, was fond of referring to French Canadians as a “*petit peuple*”<sup>4</sup> (a small or humble people), and even as a “*petite civilization*” (Groulx 1970 cited in Beaudreau 2002), a concept he defined in 1937:

We belong to that small group of peoples on earth—How many in number? Four or five, perhaps?—whose fate is of a particular, tragic nature. The source

of their unease is not whether tomorrow will be prosperous or unfortunate, great or small; their concern is rather whether tomorrow they will exist at all; whether they will rise to greet a new day or return to nothingness. Each day of our lives leads toward one of these ultimate choices: to resist, braced by a heroic determination, or to slip down the fatal slope to be captured by the American Moloch.

(Groulx 1937b: 10–11)

Jumping ahead to 1982, we find Lionel Groulx's view of the small nation of Quebec as a people possessed of a tragic fate, a national culture requiring self-conscious and voluntary affirmation, restated in an article by Fernand Dumont in the daily newspaper *Le Devoir*.

We are one of those peoples in the world who, as Lionel Groulx liked to say, wake up every morning to ask themselves whether they will see the sun set... along with Poland, Ireland, and so many others. By affirming their difference, they, like us, defy the uniformity of empires...<sup>5</sup>

This call to develop self-awareness of the singular and fragile nature of Quebec society infuses Dumont's other writings including *La vigile du Québec*,<sup>6</sup> published in 1971; his cogent 1976 essay, "Le projet d'une histoire de la pensée québécoise;" and his 1989 survey "Y a-t-il une tradition intellectuelle au Québec?" (Dumont 1971; Dumont 1976; Dumont 1989). In each of these texts, Dumont argues that Quebec must be understood as a concrete universal, partaking in its particular way in the forward march of the world. Dumont's work exhorts scholars to tackle the challenging task of producing knowledge adapted to the small nation of Quebec.

Writing nearly twenty years after Dumont, Joseph Yvon Thériault uses the term "small society" to mean something very similar to the "small nation" of Groulx and Dumont. This concept is particularly developed in *Petites sociétés et minorités nationales. Enjeux politiques et perspectives*, the 2005 book co-edited with Jacques L. Boucher, which collects the texts of the "Petites sociétés et construction du savoir" research group sponsored by the Association internationale des sociologues de langue française. Thériault's contribution articulates tropes of fragility, non-hegemony and differentiated participation in modernity, along with the concrete diversity of human societies:

The idea of small societies... considers the cosmopolitan project with emphasis on the "fragility" rather than the omnipotence of national-political spaces. Its focus is the preservation, not the expansion of shared worlds, and is less an assertion of a truth than an attitude of questioning before the ideal of a humanity ruled by civilizational universalism. The question of small societies is in fact nothing less than the question of cultural diversity itself, of political spaces that

allow plurality to unfold... This is what makes the question of small societies the political question *par excellence* of our time.

(Thériault 2005b: xviii–xix)<sup>7</sup>

The small nation concept has been widely discussed by thinkers in Quebec and around the world. A good starting point is François-Xavier Garneau, a 19th-century historian who was sensitive to Irish and Polish causes and who warned his compatriots against “the glitter of social or political innovations,” which were best left of for the ‘great peoples’ to experiment with” (Garneau 1852: 316–318).

The small nation concept has resonated with Central European thinkers including Milan Kundera, Miroslav Hroch, Istvan Bibò and Thomas Masaryk, the latter is rumoured to have been among those who whispered in the ear of US President Woodrow Wilson on the importance of a right to self-determination for small nations – a term explicitly used in his famous 1917 war address (Kisch 1947).

In summary, the main writings from Quebec that invoke the small nation exhibit the following features: comparisons between Quebec and Central and Eastern Europe; a more cultural, historical conception of the nation; an injunction to study Quebec from its own, singular place; and a critique of abstract, universalist, or even generalist conceptions of Quebec, which entails a critical relationship with its imperial neighbour to the south.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.3 The colonised society: The alienated other

In the “colonised society” concept, the peripheral, non-hegemonic dimensions of the small nation are emphasised and radicalised with the aim of overturning the structures of domination that define and determine its “abnormal” status. This concept rose to prominence in Quebec in the 1960s and the 1970s, buoyed by anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements in Africa, Asia and South America.

André d’Allemagne’s 1966 book, *Le colonialisme au Québec*, is a landmark result of Marxist decolonial thought in Quebec. Sociologist Marcel Rioux calls it “the most lucid and comprehensive indictment of Confederation ever written” and notes that it “summarizes... most arguments for independence” when he discusses the work in his 1980 book *La question du Québec* (Rioux 1980: 116). For both d’Allemagne and Rioux, Quebec is a colonised society in four respects: politically, socially, culturally and economically.

Politically, Quebec is colonised because the members of its National Assembly and civil servants are required to swear an oath to the British Crown, while the power of the Canadian federal system, concentrated in English Canada, in Toronto and in Ottawa,

enjoys exclusive jurisdiction over the minting of money, banking, credit, international customs, “national” defence, transportation and communications... criminal law, and citizenship. It has predominant powers in the areas of

immigration, taxation, and foreign trade. It also exercises partial powers in the fields of natural resources, culture and education, and social security.

*(d'Allemagne 1966 cited in Rioux 1980: 116–117)*

Socially, D'Allemagne believes that “the Quebec nation has seen its development hampered by its colonized condition” (Rioux 1980: 118–119). Nationalist political and trade union elites, and the institutions and social movements they lead, have divided instead of uniting, with the former fearing social conflicts that would divide the people of Quebec and the latter associating nationalism with the provincial bourgeoisie instead of the liberation of workers around the world. Together, both elements contribute to maintaining “the double alienation of Quebec workers: national alienation and socio-economic alienation” (Rioux 1980: 119).

Culturally, “the French language in Canada enjoys the same status as those who speak it: that of a poor, dominated, and colonized people” (Rioux 1980: 116). For Rioux, this French is recognisable for its poor level of mastery and bloated with the informal language of daily life instead of being elevated and energised by the great issues of citizenship. In short, “colonialism reduces the culture of the colonized to the dimensions of folklore and propaganda” (Rioux 1980: 119).

Economically,

it is well known that Canada is under the economic domination of the United States, while Quebec is dominated not only by the United States but also by English Canada itself. If Canadian companies live off the crumbs of American industry, French-speaking companies in Quebec live off the crumbs of the crumbs.

*(Rioux 1980: 123–124)*

In this view, Quebec companies are outpaced on every front, from the wages they pay to the size and nature of their production. Moreover, this relative weakness of Quebec's economy can serve as an argument for keeping Quebec within Canada.

André d'Allemagne sees colonialism “not as a new development, but merely the current form of a phenomenon as old as the world, as old as peoples: the domination of one society by another” (d'Allemagne 1966: 11). While his argument draws equivalencies between the situations of the Welsh, Senegalese, Moroccans, Sikhs, Congolese, Malaysians, Danes, Poles, Algerians, Irish and Quebecers, he does express certain reservations that highlight Quebec's singularity. “The apparent liberalism of the regime, the colonizer's lack of identity and weakness, the equality of the cultures involved, and the absence of racial conflict make colonialism in Quebec a ‘gentlemen's colonialism’” (d'Allemagne 1966: 27). In essence, “Quebecers are subjected, starting in childhood and throughout their lives, to a conditioning that provokes in them, with *a few variations*, all the reflexes typical of the colonized throughout the contemporary world” (d'Allemagne 1966: 93).<sup>9</sup> Paradoxically, “Quebecers are theoretically the freest of the colonized peoples, but psychologically the most colonized of the colonized” (d'Allemagne 1966: 189).

Few years later, in 1972, famed theorist of decolonisation Albert Memmi reported being frequently asked a specific question concerning Quebec – “Can French Canadians be considered a colonized people?” – to which he replied:

Without a doubt, Quebecers share the economic, political, and cultural traits of dominated people. And also without a doubt, there are considerable differences between Quebec and the typical colony, if only in the standard of living. But, as I have noted elsewhere, oppression is relative.

(Memmi 1972: 7–8)

This reflection on the particularities of Quebec’s colonised status is pushed further by Marxist intellectuals Gilles Bourque and Anne Legaré in their 1979 book *Le Québec: La question nationale*. From the outset, the authors note that Quebec represents “a kind of anomaly, that of conquered colonists” (Bourque and Legaré 1979: 29). Their analysis distinguishes the effect of domination from that of colonisation:

Francophone Quebecers (unlike the First Nations and Inuit) have never been colonized... The problem and confusion arises from the need to account for this original situation of a colonial people forced, under military threat, to change allegiance. There is no doubt that they will be oppressed as a nation. But there is nothing in their situation equivalent to the situation of the First Nations and Inuit... [The Quebec and Acadian nations] cannot be considered colonized nations, any more than the Basques, Scots or the Bretons.

(Bourque and Legaré 1979: 39)<sup>10</sup>

Key here is the fact that Quebecers participate equally in Canadian political life and enjoy the same rights and freedoms as other citizens. In Bourque and Legaré’s analysis, Quebec’s situation is more comparable to that of “minority nations,” for whom domination and oppression lead to a process of “minorization” (Bourque and Legaré 1979). While André d’Allemagne equates colonisation with domination, Bourque and Legaré distinguish between the two, situating Quebec among conquered European nations, while placing greater emphasis on the impacts of US imperialism. In doing so, Gilles Bourque fine-tunes the “coloniser-colonised” concept he first advanced in 1970 (Bourque 1970). In other words, while Quebec’s colonised otherness emphasises its status as a dominated people, its quest for normalisation (sovereignty, the march towards socialism, a modern mentality, etc.) causes it to underestimate its own singularity, including the significant extent of its freedom.

#### 1.4 The new society – The modernist other

A third and more recent model of society that emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s describes Quebec’s situation in terms of a “new society.” This model draws on many of the features associated with the Americanist political

current in Quebec, a strand that runs through the *Patriote* rebels of 1848 and the 19th century *Rouges* (liberals) in French Canada. This model encapsulates a certain Quebec neo-nationalism that is more revolutionary than quiet (Thériault 2005c).<sup>11</sup> Gérard Bouchard, principal architect of this “new society” model, acknowledges that it was first formulated by Guy Rocher in a 1971 article in which he “draws attention to what he calls ‘an original North American *francophonie*’ to emphasize the degree to which the culture of French Canada (in the parlance of the time) was shaped by its presence on this continent” (Bouchard 1999: 145).

In many ways, the new society model is diametrically opposed to that of the small nation. Consider the historically important *Refus Global* manifesto, often seen as a foundational text of the model. Published in 1948, it reads as a *cri de coeur* to refuse the accoutrements of French Canadian conformity which are associated with smallness – the “little uniform,” “little black cap,” “little schools,” “little shops,” “little careers,” “small salaries,” “little evenings,” “small vocabularies,” “little catechism,” “little peasant,” “little histories”... and of course the “little people.” The manifesto calls on readers to instead set their sights on the “broader evolution,” the “facts of history,” “immense America, with its sprightly band of golden-hearted youth” (Borduas 1978: 45–54).<sup>12</sup> In this respect, the new society can be viewed as Quebec’s modernist other, seeking to carve out a place within the framework of modern American societies.

While the small nation emphasises the distinctness of its culture, the new society stresses its belonging in North America; while the small nation portrays a Quebec whose fragility demands caution, the new society calls for a break with the past, a clean slate, a grand new beginning; while the small nation speaks of a living tradition or a dialogue between tradition and modernity, the new society invokes modernity, even hypermodernity. And while the small nation adopts a critical perspective on the hegemony of large nations, the new society’s paradigm is critical of French-Canadian culture itself, which is deemed alien to continental universalism because it is, in Bouchard’s reading, obsessed with “difference,” “unity,” “French and Catholic origins,” and, of course, “hostility to the prevailing Americanism” (Bouchard 1993: 10–14). In this scenario, only two paths lie open for American societies: continuity with the European roots and “mother country,” or rupture from them, with the latter representing the typical destiny of nations in the Americas. Yvan Lamonde analyses this way of thinking in terms of one or more ruptures:

[It] is an essentially American approach, and the prerequisite of the formation of American identity, a sort of Monroe Doctrine necessary for each country on the road to successful or unsuccessful sovereignty... if Quebec sovereignty is to be achieved, it will have to be seen that it makes sense for this nation and this state to be built on this side of the Atlantic.

(Lamonde 1999: 98)

In 1999 Lamonde summarised his historical project as an equation –  $Q = - (F) + (GB) + USA^2 - (R)$  – which represents a vision, and revision, of Quebec identity (Lamonde 1999). In this equation, the value of English-speaking North America is multiplied, while that of Catholic France/Rome is diminished. It aligns with the conception of the history of Quebec and the West described by Gérard Bouchard in 1997: “all national communities, new or old... have at one point or another in their history, joined the movement that has pushed Western states to distance themselves from ethnicity and to base citizenship on exclusively legal parameters” (Bouchard 1997a: 347).<sup>13</sup>

Unlike the concept of the small nation, however, that of the new society yields few examples of societies with histories similar to Quebec’s, despite the many comparisons made with South American and other societies born of European colonisation. “How,” wonders Bouchard, “can it be explained that, of all the communities considered here, Quebec alone has been unable to achieve political independence?” (Bouchard 1997b: 45). He elaborates:

It is quite clear that, taken as a whole, the history of European settlement in Latin America has followed a relatively linear course... which, overall, is based on the model of differentiation and rupture, both cultural and political. In contrast, the history of Quebec has followed a broken course.

*(Bouchard 1997b: 42)*<sup>14</sup>

In this reading, Quebec is the only nation in America, with the possible exception of Puerto Rico, to have followed a “path of continuity” (versus rupture) (Lamonde and Bouchard 1997; Bouchard 1997b).<sup>15</sup> And this would make it the only new society that is not, in this sense, new.<sup>16</sup>

This is why, in a 2005 interview with Robert Comeau, Bouchard proposed looking to other small nations, specifically those in Central Europe, to find ones whose paths resemble that of Quebec (Boily 2005; Boucher and Thériault 2005).<sup>17</sup> In two 2013 articles, Bouchard began discussing small nations in the primary sense detailed above (Bouchard 2013a; Bouchard 2013b). He explores the weakening effects of modernity generally and globalisation specifically on Quebec’s culture and its political and economic model, and calls for a search within its tradition to find the resources Quebec needs to appropriate globalisation on its own terms, without neglecting the sovereigntist option. With this thesis, Bouchard opposes the strategy of pure and simple integration into neo-liberal globalisation promoted by the Quebec Liberal Party under then-Premier Jean Charest.

### 1.5 The new nationalism – The globalist other

Although the 1995 referendum on Quebec independence ushered in a shift in the most active fields of comparative studies of Quebec, the term “small nation” has remained in use, as Linda Cardinal and Martin Papillon noted in 2011, speaking

of a new flowering of comparative work on small nations (Cardinal and Papillon 2011). Following historians and sociologists, it was the turn of political scientists to take up the comparative mantle and respond to the recent publication of the most important works on the “Americanness” of Quebec. In my view, this new branch marks a revival of the term “small nation” within the new society thesis.<sup>18</sup> Rather than breaking with the concepts of small nation and new society, the “new nationalisms” paradigm has attempted to reconfigure and even combine them, placing small nations without a sovereign state at the vanguard of the very modernity identified by proponents of the new society. This identification marks a first explicit effort to define “new nationalism” in relation not only to modernity but also and explicitly to globalisation. While this body of work uses the term “small nation” with relative frequency, along with “minority nation” and “national minority,” the point of comparison is no longer the nations of Central and Eastern Europe but rather small nations that are not sovereign states, notably as Catalonia and Scotland. As Alain G. Gagnon notes, these small nations “belong to a select group of nations that can aspire to acquire a new status in the concert of nation states” (Gagnon 2011: 101).

I will briefly examine this view, which I call the “strong” version of the new nationalisms and which represents a new era for small nations without a sovereign state in search of recognition (Laniel 2020).<sup>19</sup> In the strong thesis of new nationalisms articulated in academia by the self-described “École québécoise de la diversité,” globalisation poses a challenge from all directions – above, below and laterally – to the sovereignty of nation states and, as such, to the *raison d’être* of sovereignty itself, in the classical sense, as the end goal of nationalist movements (Roulot-Ganzmann and Gagnon 2015). Like Francis Fukuyama’s famous “end of history,” globalisation represents the contemporary stage in a process of modernisation that erodes the connections between territory, state and nation down to the core of the classic desire for self-determination. The “new nationalisms,” then, are at once the result of and a functional response to this new world order. Due to globalisation, small nations without a sovereign state are now “great” because they are small – and this constitutes their “revenge,” to paraphrase a 2001 book by Stéphane Paquin (Paquin 2001).

Small nations without states have reacted to the possibilities opened up by the globalisation of markets and decline of the states they exist in. The new Quebec nationalism is, for Paquin, a sort of “free-trade.” Nations are responding in a manner adapted to the current moment by (a) no longer striving for traditional sovereignty, but rather for a devolution of powers, (b) no longer promoting their national cultural specificities, but rather an essentially legal and pluralist nationalism, out of an awareness of the multiple identities that make up their territory, (c) and, more precisely, favouring policies of good governance, that is, pragmatic adaptations to the globalised market economy. Terms coined by Canadian-Scottish scholar Michael Keating, a pioneer in this branch of inquiry, include “independence-lite,” “devolution-max,” and “national accommodation” as a policy of “managing

diversity,” that is, the right to negotiate the powers of the political community rather than the right to sovereign self-determination (Keating 2001a, 2012). This time we can speak, of a *globalist other*, which Michael Keating summarised as follows in 2001:

These new nationalisms should not be seen merely as a reversion to the past, a rejection of the state system and the international market... [They] represent attempts to come to terms with the changing constellation of power and to reconstitute politics on a territorial basis which is legitimated historically but which can be used to confront contemporary political and economic realities... [T]hose of interest here, are post-nation-state in inspiration, addressing a world in which sovereignty has ceased to be absolute and power is dispersed... [T]hey aim rather to insert themselves into the new continental and global order, again on the best terms available. The new minority nationalisms have a strong civic dimension, focusing on territorial self-government in the global market, rather than ethnic purity... They operate in societies in which citizens have abandoned exclusive notions of identity and can sustain multiple identities at the same time, giving a new meaning both to the idea of the nation and to the nationalist project. Nationalist discourse is modernist and concerned with development and adaptation rather than antiquarianism and looking to the past. It accepts the limits of sovereignty and searches for ways in which self-government may be made effective...

*(Keating 2001b: 62–64)*

Much as in the work of Anne Legaré, Gilles Bourque and Gérard Bouchard with previous paradigms, there remains hesitation to adopt this new paradigm to the study of Quebec. Stéphane Paquin in a 2016 article distinguishes between small states and small nations; the latter in his view do not have the same resources to globalise as sovereign states; this includes smaller states such as the Scandinavian countries on which his research has come to focus (Paquin 2016).

## 1.6 Conclusion

I will conclude with three observations. First, this brief survey of Quebec’s recent framing of significant and comparative others reveals a recurring desire to outgrow the nation’s “smallness” and join one of the main streams of modern normality. This desire is the common thread uniting appeals for Quebec to decolonise, or to embrace American modernity, or to celebrate its “great” potential within a context of globalisation. These three paradigms analyse Quebec from different standpoints, presenting the ideals of modernity alternately as a force to be conquered (decolonisation), or recognised and acknowledged (Americanness), or celebrated and implemented (“new nationalisms”).

Second, this brief overview reveals the persistence of the “small nation” paradigm, which all other paradigms have at one time or another incorporated to elucidate their own limitations. Thus, while Quebec can be considered a colonised society, it is probably more apt to speak of a dominated society, given the extent to which its history – and the level of agency – differs from other societies colonised by Western empires. Likewise, Quebec can be seen as a new society, but doing so overlooks its specificity as a historically conquered society within America. And while Quebec can be seen through the prism of the “new nationalism” of nations without sovereign states or the small Scandinavian states, this reading exaggerates its identification with the processes of globalisation and the resources at its disposal to prosper within them.

Third, I believe that two aspects inherent to paradigms of normality – the tension between the singularity and universality of Quebec’s situation, and the persistent recourse to the paradigm of small nations, however tangential or late – demonstrate the heuristic power of the small nation thesis for a peripheral, non-hegemonic society that nevertheless partakes, in its particular way, in the major processes of modernity.

The heightened tension between singularity and universality in non-hegemonic contexts is precisely what explains the fragility of small nations and the vital importance of a comparative historical and cultural reading of national and state forms, means and ends. This is what Shmuel N. Eisenstadt refers to as the “cultural program of modernity,” which generates “multiple modernities,” a phenomenon better apprehended through a theory of multiple pathways than one where modern societies converge. In other words, if the tension between the universal and the particular is the characteristic tension in non-hegemonic societies, the concept of the small nation, unlike its counterparts, seeks less to alleviate this tension than to problematise it by according the full consideration it deserves to the singularity of its situation – to *its* normality. This is what the American sociologist Everett C. Hughes suggested as early as 1953, in his autobiographically tinged sociological essay, “Regards sur le Québec.” He explicitly calls on “small societies” to develop their own contextualised and tailored body of sociological knowledge, at a safe remove from the modernist, universalist and teleological narratives of great nations (Hughes 1953: 224, 230).<sup>20</sup>

Taking up this challenge demands a high degree of intellectual creativity, innovation and flexibility, and in return promises to yield an original and universally valuable contribution to the knowledge of modern societies, opening up new avenues of analysis and comparison.

## Notes

- 1 This chapter is an expanded and adapted version of Laniel (2021).
- 2 These paradigms are at once the heirs to the modernising ambition of the Quiet Revolution and two of its founding historiographical currents, the “École de Laval” (reforming French-Canadian culture) and the “École de Montréal” (emancipating French-Canadian society).

- 3 For a more detailed discussion of this question, see Laniel (2013).
- 4 For example, in reference to the Acadians, in Groulx (1937a).
- 5 These conference proceedings published in *Le Devoir* led to a debate in the pages of the same newspaper between Lise Bissonnette and Fernand Dumont (September 3, 7, 14, 17, and 18, 1982). This exchange seems to indicate a turning point, as the editorialist urged Dumont to define what makes Quebec unique or stop talking. The first excerpt published was eloquently entitled “Parlons américains... si nous le sont devenus!” (“Let’s speak American, if that’s what we are now”, 1982, 17). Our translation.
- 6 See in particular the chapters “Notre culture entre le passé et l’avenir” and “Tâches prochaines du nationalisme québécois” in Dumont (1971).
- 7 Our translation.
- 8 The growing body of comparative studies of Quebec as a small nation include the work of Marcel Bellavance, Jacques L. Boucher and Joseph Yvon Thériault, Uriel Abulof, Geneviève Zubrzycki, Linda Cardinal and Martin Papillon, Jean-François Laniel, and Joseph Yvon Thériault.
- 9 Emphasis added.
- 10 Our translation.
- 11 On the broader paradigm (“Americanness”) into which the “new societies” paradigm fits, see Thériault (2005c).
- 12 The English translation quoted here is available online at [www.conseildesarts.org/documents/Manifeste/manifeste\\_refus-english.htm](http://www.conseildesarts.org/documents/Manifeste/manifeste_refus-english.htm), and taken from Borduas (1978).
- 13 Our translation.
- 14 Our translation.
- 15 In fact, it is more likely that what is idealized is the United States itself, rather than “Americanness” generally (Lamonde and Bouchard 1997), since Latin America also is considered to be on an “unfinished” path to Americanness (Bouchard 1997b). One might ask, with Claude Couture, whether the conception of the United States is not itself a caricature, whereas in reality there are many different versions of the United States – racialist, and Protestant, and deeply liberal (Couture 2008). Could it not be argued that “Americanness” as a criterion results in multiple attempts to reconcile the strangeness/difference of Quebec from a modernist (sovereignist and pluralist) abstraction?
- 16 What Lionel Groulx wrote, without delving into Americanist abstraction, emphasised the exceptional nature of the British conquest, i.e., the colonisation of the descendants of the French: “alone or more or less among the great colonies of the Americas, another fact not to be forgotten, French Canada has undergone the ordeal of conquest.” (Groulx 1960: 268).
- 17 “I am convinced... that we should examine—and this is what I intend to do one day—other small nations that have lived through the experience of colonialism and suffered greatly from it. I would consider Wallonia, the small nations of Central Europe, the small nations of Latin America, which, though they have achieved political sovereignty, are not truly free of their national malaise.” (Boily 2005: 163, 164–165). These are the same societies that appear in Boucher and Thériault (2005).
- 18 The distinction between large and small nations, rather than old and new societies, is rehabilitated, but in a different light. It is distinguished from the cultural concern of small nations and the sovereignty concern of new societies.
- 19 For further developments, refer to our chapter “Remarques sur le ‘nouveau nationalisme’ des petites nations en contexte de mondialisation néo-libérale: Québec/Écosse” in Laniel (2020).
- 20 “What is important above all is that observers of Quebec’s economic, social and political life should forget, in their research, what they have learned from analyses and interpretations of societies that were pioneers of modern industrialization. Let them start afresh, free of all preconceived ideas and bookish assumptions, to try to see and understand lucidly what is happening around them, in *their* society.” (Hughes 1953: 230) Original italics, our translation.

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# 2

## THE *RETURN* FROM EUROPE AND THE *RETURN* FROM AMERICA AS HEURISTIC FIGURES OF THE SMALL NATION IN QUEBEC

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### 2.1 Introduction

The expressions “return from Europe” and “return from America” embody a symbolic importance particular to Quebec’s cultural history. Resulting from the consolidation of university relations between Quebec and the rest of the world during the first half of the 20th century, they refer, in concrete terms, to the French-speaking Canadian students who, having resided in Europe, particularly in Paris, or the United States, on university campuses, as part of study tours, subsequently returned home. At that time, in French Canada, the study trip in Europe or in America was the promise – if not the condition – of an “expanded life<sup>1</sup>.” For any young French-Canadian who had artistic or intellectual ambitions, temporary exile was an obligatory step in the learning path about the world and culture. In other words, if they were inscribed in space, these literate travellers were simultaneously inscribed in culture and social hierarchy. To use the words of André Laurendeau, their journeys defined “a species of man” – “une espèce d’homme” – (1963, p. 3) who, once immersed in the intensity, abundance and power – symbolic, cultural and intellectual – of “great nations,” found himself experiencing a form of vertigo. Staying in Paris in 1920 or in New York in 1950 is indeed nothing trivial when one comes from the “little” French Quebec. The experience is even confronting for the most affected among them. Projected in a more vivid and intense world, striking for the beauty of its ancient monuments, the modernity of its major thoroughfares, the exuberance of its cultural circles and the liveliness of its debates, the visiting Quebecer is subject to a deep reflection on himself. This reflection is sometimes experienced as a form of negative exile where he becomes aware of his shortcomings and incompleteness. Sometimes, it is also felt as a meliorative exile, which calls for surpassing oneself and opening up the possibilities. The shock, doubly felt on the

way out and on the way back, is refracted differently in the trajectories, sometimes leading to a feeling of cultural inferiority and shame, and sometimes leading to a desire for change and improvement.

In this chapter, we propose to explore the figures – comparable but not assimilable – of the return from Europe and the return from America insofar as they have crystallised, in Quebec, a condition that is emblematic of the so-called “small nations,” that is to say, nations whose condition implies “a certain awareness of being on the margin, not the margin of exclusion, but rather that of being integrated into a process whose main spring is felt to be exogenous to one’s own reality” (Boucher and Thériault, 2005, p. 3). Indeed, the foreign stay for those who come from the periphery is likely to be experienced in a tragic way because “one can only leave oneself, surpass oneself, by way of comparison with what is greater than oneself” (Major 1996, p. 21). Beyond the singular trajectories of the “returns,” and of which we will give some examples, they embody subjective and concrete experiences of the margin and eccentricity. They express the reality of an often difficult, if not conflicting, docking of the small nation with a model of the universal which is external to it and which postulates the challenge of adaptation and adequation.

## 2.2 The “return from Europe”

Often described as the first “native” literary figure created in Quebec (Lacroix 2014), the return from Europe was perhaps best captured by Berthio’s famous cartoon published in June 1963 in the pages of *MacLean Magazine* (see Figure 2.1). The image shows a Quebecer returning from a trip to France, wearing a French beret and proudly descending the stairs of a plane on which we can read “Retour d’Europe” (“Return from Europe”). A group of somewhat bemused people, who we guess are fellow citizens or members of his own family, face him. “Salut, bande de caves!” (“Hi, you bunch of bastards!”) says the legend. Among the privileged few who have been able to taste the great culture of the Old Continent, the Quebec traveller, reinvigorated by his discoveries, returns to his family looking down on them, a bit like the provincial returning from the capital. This cartoon is emblematic of the tensions that the European stay of many French Canadians could generate in the past. These tensions play on a variety of oppositions, first between America and Europe, and also, in the background, between the centre and the periphery, the universal and the particular and also between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. They also reflect the distance that is established between the one who returns, and has been transformed by his stay abroad, and those who, never tempted by exile or never having had the opportunity to consent to it, may feel a form of imposture, if not betrayal.

The return from Europe describes a malaise whose nature is, to say the least, complex to define. Philosopher Daniel Tanguay (1999) defines it as “a kind of homesickness in reverse or nostalgia whose poles have been reversed”. It applies

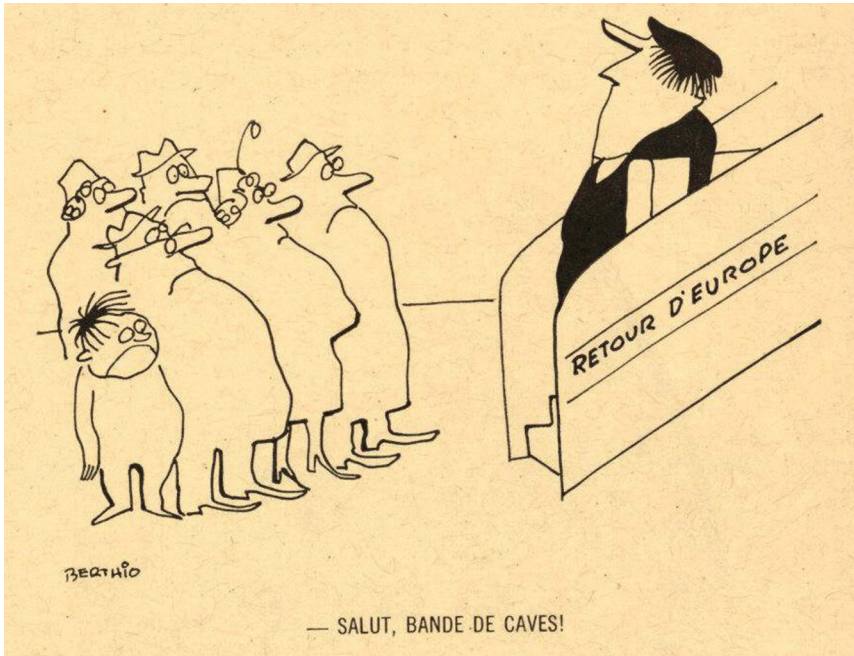


FIGURE 2.1 *Le Maclean*, 1963, volume 3, number 6, p. 3.

to a specific category of Quebecers living abroad, for whom the experience of Europe, far from being a relief, was rather experienced as a sort of “test” that profoundly questioned the relationship to individual and collective identity. This uneasiness does not affect all those who make a long stay in Europe, even less for those who visit as tourists. “The old countries do not stick to the skin of some people, underlines Tanguay. For the malaise to seep into the soul, one must first be touched or bitten by its contact with Europe” (Tanguay 1999). For those concerned, the intellectual scenario of the return from Europe takes the form of a double cultural shock. The first shock occurs upon arrival in Paris, where the expectation of a fraternal communion with the old mother country, mythologised by the novels, the songs and the historical accounts of their youth, is facing the challenge of an integration more difficult than expected. An unsuspected cultural gap suddenly appears, where the visitor is always sent back to his status of foreigner.

Trying to impose himself in France, [the Quebec traveler] is constantly referred to his provincialism (to his Canadian accent, to his archaisms, to his cultural folklore, to his poor mastery of the art of distinction), and he suffers from inhabiting a society where he cannot be recognized, he who never shines brightly enough in the eyes of Parisians.

(Lacroix and Warren 2012, p. 56)

The second shock takes place upon return to Quebec, which now appears even poorer, limited and small in comparison to the superiorly possessed culture of France, whose nostalgic memory becomes like a kind of mental refuge, so much so that he would like to see again at home what he admired abroad. Thus, experienced as a double shock, the return from Europe is also experienced as a “double defeat” which, according to Élisabeth Nardout-Lafarge, “takes note of a first impossibility, that of becoming European [...]. And with the return coincides a second impossibility, that of implanting Europe in Quebec” (2002, pp. 136–137).

The expression “return from Europe” describes a phenomenon that goes back a long way in the history of French Canada. Michel Lacroix, who has analysed its genesis in detail, situates its emergence at the turn of the 20th century, in the context of transformations in the educational trajectories of Quebec’s bourgeois elites, more specifically those who were associated with the “exotics,” a literary group formed by René Chopin, Guy Delahaye, Adrien Hébert, Olivier Maurault, Robert de Roquebrune, Léo-Pol Morin, Marcel Dugas and others (Lacroix 2014). It is through their trajectories that the expression “return from Europe” will pass from a simple “denotation” – someone who physically returned from Europe – to its first “connotation” (Lacroix and Warren 2012). Critics of the regionalist current, then dominant in the world of culture and ideas in Quebec, and promoters of a free and universal literature, the exotics embodied, during the 1910s and 1920s, a new figure of the critical and autonomous intellectual, engaged in a fight against the traditional figure of the catholic and nationalist intellectual (Lamonde, Bergeron, Lacroix and Livernois 2015). Their discourse was developed in reaction to the French-Canadian nationalist fervour of the turn of the century, signalled by calls for the nationalisation of literature (Camille Roy) and the formulation of a new doctrine of national action (Lionel Groulx). It was also developed in conjunction with an early iteration of the ideology of modernisation, linked to the economic and intellectual liberalism of the early 20th century Quebec (Lacroix 2014). For the exotics, the experience of staying in Europe, and more specifically in Paris, became a constitutive dimension of their intellectual and artistic identity. At the time, Paris had acquired the status of the most renowned international literary capital and was considered as a place of inscription in the great universal literature. Encouraged by the revival of university and diplomatic relations between France and Quebec at the beginning of the century,<sup>2</sup> then facilitated by the institution of European scholarships in 1922 (Gagnon and Goulet 2020) and the progress of maritime transport, the Parisian stay became, for the exotics, the means by which the writer could acquire a legitimacy, place himself at the centre of the world, consent to a form of cultural modernity and, incidentally, turn his back on the chauvinism of national literature. More prosaically, the Parisian stay was also a way for this group to integrate a more dynamic and stable francophone literary market, in a context where the French-Canadian literary field was still weakly institutionalised and mostly tied to the development of schools and religious congregations. Of course, the exotics were not the first to travel to France, a destination that was already

widely favoured by the clerical elite. However, they took a different route, which earned them the opprobrium of a part of the established cultural elite. Far from the ancient corridors of the Sorbonne and Catholic France, they were instead found in the bohemian Latin Quarter and its social circles, salons, cafés and conferences (Côté-Fournier 2010).

Among the exotics, the acuteness of the malaise associated with the European relay is to be relativised. Their experience abroad remains globally positive and exhilarating to the point that it sharpened their elitist and radical critique of French-Canadian “parochial” culture. In the pages of their magazine, *Le Nigog*, the first Quebec’s modernist publication founded (and ended) in 1918, the exotics called for the birth of a cultured and “free” elite, detached from the exclusively nationalistic and territorial concerns of French Canada, capable of appreciating the aesthetic foundations of art independently of the subject matter (Grivel 2014). To that end, they addressed a universalist critique to the French-Canadian literature of the soil, more specifically to its insistence on Canadian subjects and Catholic morality and its tendency to judge the quality of a work according to utilitarian considerations, external to art. This criticism also widened to the bad taste of Canadian architects, the mediocrity of certain painters and the cultural incompetence of the French-Canadian social elite (Hayward 2006). In other words, the inferiority complex that the exotics could experience in Paris was refracted into a superiority complex once they returned to Quebec, a double shift that betrays, to some extent, the existence of an atavism of shame, of an uncertainty in the relationship to oneself.

Thus, in its original meaning, the expression “return from Europe” emerged in the discursive complex of the polemic between regionalists and exoticists at the beginning of the century. It first took on the appearance of an insult, a disqualifying label, used by those who, like Jean-Charles Harvey and Alfred DesRochers, criticised “the snobbery of imitating Parisians<sup>3</sup>,” like Camille Roy who presented them as “Frenchmen lost on the shores of the St. Lawrence,” or again, like Léo-Paul Desrosiers, for whom these “returnees from Paris” brought “only new pretensions, tics of language, and crooked diplomas.<sup>4</sup>” The returnees from Europe will be portrayed as a misaligned and uprooted elite from Quebec culture, as annoying aesthetes less inclined to make the foreign sojourn an opportunity for enhancement and enrichment than a way out, if not a denial, of their culture of belonging (Lacroix 2014).

At first signalled as a negative label, as a symbol of an elitist and mimetic relationship to France, the expression “return from Europe” will take on more melancholic, ambivalent and uneasy, if not existential, contours in other trajectories. This was the case of Édouard Montpetit, the first university scholarship holder officially delegated by the province of Quebec to Paris, where he stayed for three years at the beginning of the 20th century to study at the *École libre des sciences politiques* and the *Collège des sciences sociales*. The memories of his stay in the former metropolis exemplify the identity tensions associated with the Parisian relay, which is inevitably accompanied by a “long reflection on ourselves”

(Montpetit 1928). On arrival, the ecstasy of discovering the Paris idealised by his youthful readings gives way to a real acculturation challenge. Therefore, the return from Europe is, at first, the one who, while wanting “to take possession of Paris, of its light and its shadows” (Montpetit 1944, p. 73), notices that he must, to achieve it, silence his origins and erase himself:

We are in France and no longer far from France, we live the life we have known through books, we read the magazine and the newspaper the day they appear and not ten or fifteen days old; all this is exhilarating and very beautiful, but it also forces us to make an effort not to seem too foreign and to assimilate as quickly as possible to the new world.

[...]

In order to avoid the trouble that the obvious foreigner fears, I gave myself the appearance of an old Parisian—without succeeding, of course.

*(Montpetit 1944, pp. 66–67, 71)*

The memory of a visit to the buzzing Latin Quarter inspires a conquered Montpetit with this allegorical impression: “I participate in the universal nervousness and I learn, rebuffed, to return the favor”. While observing people to “live for a minute as if I were one of them” (Montpetit 1944, p. 74), he becomes infatuated, but the worried lucidity of the return does not wait to strike:

After three years of absence and sweet habits, the return to Canada provokes complex impressions. Some contacts are disappointing. The inelegance of the architecture and the poverty of the language are more striking than before. One experiences joy in returning to the country, its horizons, the gushing of the waters, the endless plains crenellated with mountains—a kind of slow joy that would be an awakening. All this is accompanied by nostalgia that lies dormant in the depths of the being, with sometimes acute returns. The remedy is to surround oneself with the things one has brought back, which evoke each of the memories, to constitute a refuge. It is especially in the work, in the hope to be useful and the satisfaction to undertake a task.

*(Montpetit 1949, p. 7)*

In Montpetit’s double consent to, first, renounce to European greatness and, second, to accomplish a “task” among his own people, the journalist André Laurendeau perceived an attitude characteristic of “the best ‘returns from Europe’” (1963). Laurendeau himself returned from a long initiatory stay in Paris in the 1930s, where he met with intellectuals such as André Siegfried and Jacques Maritain (Lamonde 2007). Immersed in the intensity of the French capital, he too had compared Paris and Montreal and could not help but “measure the shortcomings of [his] own

preparation.” As he would write, the visiting French Canadian “knows there, or at least he comes close, he glimpses the great intellectual adventure. It’s an alcohol that goes to his head. It is very strong for him. His defenses cracked on all sides” (Laurendeau 1963, p. 3). The gap between the idealised France of books and the real France had been a shock for him too. In his *Impressions sur la France* (1936), Laurendeau emphasised how much his expectations of sympathy and solidarity with the mother country had been dashed by the indifference and anonymity that its presence aroused:

The French do not know us very well in general and do not show any desire to know us. However, we must understand that if they are not very interested in us, it is because we are not always interesting.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, the French people who questioned him already had preconceived ideas about the French Canadians, whom they saw above all as apostles of survival and conservatism. “Some congratulate us on this, others laugh at us,<sup>6</sup>” he says, lamenting on the difficulty of engaging in a real dialogue beyond these generalities. At the same time, the contact with the new French anti-fascist thought, in particular that of the Christian left, opened new intellectual horizons for the young Laurendeau on social and national questions. And although he easily fell in love with the intellectual density of Paris as a dilettante, it was not without difficulty that he returned to Quebec. “Over there [in France], it took me a few weeks to adapt superficially. And it took me 4 or 5 years to readjust when I returned” (1963, p. 3).

Unlike the exotics, whose “revolt,” “sterility,” and “perpetual nostalgia” (1963, p. 3) he repudiated, Laurendeau would plead, in a way, for a successful return to Europe,<sup>7</sup> a demand that consisted in making Europe no longer a missing part of the collective self, even less an alienating tropism, but rather an inner part, which one had to assume with the flexibility of heart and mind. Therefore, for Laurendeau, rather than “indulging in [their] anguish,” the “best returnees from Europe” were rather those who were ready to “adjust [...] to the milieu where [...] their roots remain,” to reconcile themselves to it. They were those who “by accepting to return home” knew that they were “amputating part of themselves,” if not sacrificing the dream of a richer and more rewarding career elsewhere (1963). In other words, to the necessary *aesthetic dissidence* of the returns from Europe, Laurendeau recalled the importance of not giving in to *civic dissidence*. The greatness to which the “returnees” allowed themselves to aspire should not border on self-rejection, an inclination that only a real attachment to the country could temper. According to Jean Larose, who meditated at length on Laurendeau’s thought, it was a matter of knowing how to reconcile the “love of France” and the “love of the poor,” to have “the strength to recognize oneself as small and to be admiring.” Through this acquiescence to admiration, whose motives are too often lacking, the French-Canadian in exile could not only discover greatness but perhaps also “a dream of greatness for himself and for his people.” Assuming the smallness of his culture

in this way made Laurendeau “the French-Canadian intellectual par excellence” according to Larose (1998, p. 140).

Laurendeau’s lesson on Europe could be compared to the lesson that Fernand Dumont, also back from Europe in 1955, would deliver to his student Serge Cantin in 1983. A few days before his departure for a study period in France, Cantin had received a letter from the Laval sociologist who, in response to a disillusioned remark he had made about the state of Quebec, that “country without common sense,” had reminded him of the heavy responsibility that his return from exile in Paris would entail:

This country, which is not “without sense”, Dumont write, you will have to carry it as one carries a child in his arms, holding his head high. Know that, despite the miseries that surround us, you are not the only one (...). Perhaps you all lack a certain complicity. Creating this complicity, this solidarity, will be one of your tasks when you return...

(Cantin, 1997, p. 36)

This warning was in line with Dumont’s vision of culture and its duplication. However necessary it may be, the distance or “uprooting” from what he called the “first culture” (*culture première*) should not lead to its denial. On the contrary, the detour by the “second culture” (*culture seconde*) – here, referring to Europe as a *horizon* – alleges a healthy distance only if it implies, by constructed mediations, a return on the culture of belonging, not with the intention to break with it but to improve and enrich it. Aligned with Dumont’s thought, sociologist Joseph Yvon Thériault, who admits that he does not recognise himself in the bad conscience of the returnees from Europe (Dorais, Laniel and Thériault 2020), also believes that it is a mistake to consider the distance from the primary culture as a form of alienation:

The capacity to leave the culture that is immediate to us in order to modify it, to organize it differently, without however breaking with it, is our capacity, as a society, to act on ourselves. If the relationship with Europe has been an opportunity to distance ourselves from the determinations of this continent, why call it alienation? (Thériault quoted in Robitaille, 2002)

And yet, it is necessary to recognise that this call for cultural mediation is not easy to implement. For Jean-François Laniel, the modern problem of the mediation and the synthesis between first culture and second culture “is perhaps never so felt as among the intellectuals of small societies” (2013, p. 411). This is because the *splitting of culture* is experienced there as a *splitting of society* itself, between the inherited and secure meanings of the traditional community, on the one hand, and the free and indeterminate explorations engaged by the escape to the outside, on the other hand (Warren, 2012). Moreover, to return to Dumont’s warning to

Cantin, it is also in a relationship to the solidarity of the intellectual towards his own community of belonging that the whole existential problem of the return from Europe can be understood.

### 2.3 The “return from America”

In the transnational imaginary of Quebec, the “return from Europe” is better known than the “return from America,” which has never formally established itself as a symbolic figure in Quebec’s cultural history. The expression finds its origin under the pen of economist Albert Faucher who, in reference to his own education at the University of Toronto, first mentioned it in his induction speech to the Royal Society of Canada in 1972:

When we returned, we found ourselves in a break with tradition. In fact, while most of our predecessors had been “returnees from Europe” who were traumatized by the need to work, we were “returnees from America” who were excited by the opportunity to work. To temper our ardor, we had the ebullient Father G.-H. Lévesque who had synthesized the two returns: returns from Europe and returns from America, since he had studied in Lille and in Ottawa. I think that this innovation “returns from America” represents a characteristic to be retained for the history of the Social Sciences at Laval University: a characteristic of fidelity to the ancestors. Our fathers had gone to the factories of New England, to make wheat in the West or to the mines of the Klondike; we had gone to English-speaking universities. The result was that Laval University was a faculty that was very conscious and very concerned about its North American parameters.

*(Faucher 1972, p. 13)*

The returnees from America refer to the Quebec students who, in the years surrounding the Second World War, decided to complete their postsecondary education in the United States, often with the encouragement of a provincial scholarship or one of the great philanthropic foundations such as Carnegie and Rockefeller. Between 1940 and 1950, dozens of students left for American campuses, particularly Harvard, Chicago and Cornell, and most of them returned to Quebec after staying for several years (Gagnon and Goulet 2011). It is common to attribute this realignment of routes to the United States to the exogenous circumstances of the war, which forced a temporary pause in university relations with France. However, it is important to know that the new infatuation for the American relay is also the result of factors endogenous to the Quebec cultural and intellectual milieu.

First, this inclination towards the United States can be related to the expression of a new “consent” to America in post-war Quebec, where the global conflict encouraged a military, economic and political rapprochement with the neighbours to the south (Lamonde 1996). For a long time held in suspicion by traditional

French-Canadian nationalism, America acquired a new referential and strategic value. “From being a threat, America gradually becomes evidence, a test and finally a risk to be taken”, writes Pierre Popovic (1991, p. 92). This resignification of America in the cultural landscape is no stranger to the French defeat of 1940, which, experienced as an “intimate upheaval” (Gallichan 2005), accentuated the feeling of a metropolitan disengagement. The taste for America in Quebec is, at the time, expressed in various ways. It can be found in the famous painter Paul-Émile Borduas who, having moved to New York in 1953, saw in the United States the condition for a universal and post-national political view in phase with the post-war climate (Beaulieu 2019). We also find it in the literature, in figures like Robert Charbonneau (1947) and Jean Le Moyne (1961), for whom the American reference allowed both to think the distance from France and the North American autonomy of Quebec literature. An eloquent example can also be found in the book *Reflets d’Amérique*, by Édouard Montpetit, whose growing Americanophilia (Fabre 2017) led him to see in the United States a nation of progress which, in the face of European totalitarianisms, was on the way to embody the new figure of the universal in the 20th century, likely to inspire the development of a modern Quebec society. It was necessary, he wrote, to learn to “use American progress” while retaining the right to “fortify French attitude” (1941, p. 253), in other words, to know how to “hang the chariot on the star” (1949, p. 155).

This desire for a more open affirmation of Quebec’s American destiny was also felt in Quebec universities, which sought to adapt to North American conditions of higher education in the 1940s and the 1950s. Anxious to mitigate the effects of the Great depression, university authorities also came to consider that American science, insofar as it would accommodate the catholic faith, could contribute to the social and industrial well-being of Quebec society. It must be said that the increased reputation of American universities was in line with their internationalisation, particularly following the favourable reception they had given to several scholars and intellectuals exiled from Europe during the Second World War (Loyer, 2005). This alignment with American knowledge encouraged several faculties in Quebec to send students to train in the United States before formally hiring them as professors in Quebec. This was the case, for example, of historian Guy Frégault, who went to Loyola University in Chicago from 1940 to 1942 to complete his doctorate; of sociologist Jean-Charles Falardeau, who, during the same period, completed a doctorate in sociology under the supervision of Everett Hughes at the University of Chicago; of historian Marcel Trudel, who went to Harvard from 1945 to 1947 as a visiting professor; of historian Michel Brunet, who went to Clark University in the late 1940s to complete a thesis in American history; of sociologist Guy Rocher, who moved to Harvard in 1950 to complete a doctorate in sociology under the supervision of Talcott Parson; or of anthropologist Marc-Adélar Tremblay who, from 1950 to 1956, studied anthropology at Cornell University under the supervision of Alec Leighton, where he became the director of an anthropological team and carried out a research internship among the Navahos.

All of these students returned to Quebec to be hired in the first cohorts of lay professors and to work on the development of Quebec universities.

Michel Lacroix and Jean-Philippe Warren rightly point out that, unlike the return from Europe, the return from America most often refers to an experience conceived essentially as “an intellectual project [...] of an individual nature,” and “in the perspective of university specializations” (Lacroix and Warren 2012, p. 61). This experience would also be lived primarily in a positive mode, under the sign of an “optimism of knowledge” (1972) to use Faucher’s words again. The comments, almost always enthusiastic, of the protagonists testify to this. In his correspondence with Albert Tessier from the United States, Marcel Trudel describes Harvard as “a paradise,” whose size and prestige are a constant source of wonder: “the library contains more French books than Laval [University]. Business there is American style. Cambridge is a charming university town. You don’t have time to go to all the free concerts.<sup>8</sup>” This stay not only provided him with the “technical training<sup>9</sup>” in history that he lacked, but also formalised his identification with this discipline after having long aspired to make a career as a writer. To Trudel, Guy Frégault will present their common training stay in the United States as one of the main sources of their generational identity. Indeed, their American stay had “[opened] their eyes to the intellectual wealth that lay at our own doors” and made them aware of “what our moral colonialism had hitherto concealed from us,” namely “that one nation does not possess a monopoly on the life of the mind and that it is no longer essential that our food for the mind be first assimilated by a metropolitan organism”. Thanks to the United States, they had “deposited [their] blinkers” and “made, amazed, a tour of horizon<sup>10</sup>”. For his part, Guy Rocher does not hesitate to speak of his stay at Harvard as a “revelation” or an “adventure” which, while distancing himself from his vocation as a social and Catholic activist, “anchored him in [his] vocation as an academic.” He “left with prejudices” about the cheerfully mundane climate of American universities, but “returned with an ideal,” that of “disciplinary intellectual orientation in fundamental sociology” and, second, of “raising the level of Quebec universities.<sup>11</sup>” Rocher also insists on recalling how, unlike the returns from Europe at the beginning of the century, this stay had increased his symbolic capital in the Quebec university milieu: “Harvard had given me a kind of halo [...] It had a prestige, as if we had passed through a rite of passage.<sup>12</sup>” Michel Brunet shared this feeling, as his stay at Clark University from 1947 to 1949 opened the doors to a professorship at the University of Montreal, a goal of which he himself was aware, so much so that he orchestrated the staging of his own return by soliciting the media. The publication of the following caricature in the June 18th 1949 edition of *La Presse* (see Figure 2.2), depicting Brunet returning home in a three-piece suit reminiscent of the aesthetics of American tailoring, clearly indicates this element of distinction of the return from America in the still relatively limited symbolic market of the Quebec academic world. Somewhat like Rocher’s, Brunet’s experience on American campuses had also contributed to raising the status of the university – and of the professor – in the modernisation project of French Canada. Moreover, after



**FIGURE 2.2** Caricature of Michel Brunet returning from his stay in the United States, *La Presse*, June 18, 1949. National Library and Archives of Quebec (BANQ).

his American stay, Brunet did not hesitate to compare the university professor in contemporary society to the figure of the bourgeois in the 19th century.<sup>13</sup> The United States had sharpened his character. There, he was able to experience many of the characteristics that he valued elsewhere: voluntarism, entrepreneurial spirit, self-assertion and a taste for risk, using English among other things (Dorais and Poitras 2021). Brunet even went so far as to write his own doctoral thesis in English,<sup>14</sup> thus consenting to a form of American acculturation. Although it represents a significant linguistic barrier, English remains a “gain” here: whereas the returnees from Europe were caught between two accents, suspected of arrogance or inauthenticity, the returnees from America gain on all fronts: they acquire English without losing their French (Brunet 1949: XXII).

For his part, Marc-Adélarde Tremblay describes his six years at Cornell as “a learning experience but also a confirmation of the feeling of having acquired a

certain mastery of anthropological practice.” The experience was, he says, equally rich on the human level, through his immersion in the multi-faith campus climate: “We lived in an international community in the anthropology department. There were students from seven or eight different countries. The baptism of our oldest daughter, Geneviève, was an interfaith baptism” (Tremblay 1995, pp. 176, 132). The same signal was given by Gérard Bergeron who, in reporting on his experience at Columbia University in 1946 in the pages of the newspaper *Notre temps*, recounted with great admiration “this multiple, multicoloured, omnipresent [New York] people,” whose diversity and audacity had made the city “the capital [of] peaceful organization” (Bergeron 1946: p. 1). As for Armand Frappier, he remembers his stay at the Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester, New York, as “an escape from [his] shell, in the physical sense as well as in the psychological and intellectual sense. I was delighted by everything,” he adds, “by the number of researchers, physicians and non-physicians, interested in diagnosis and experimental sciences, by the diversity of diagnostic and research work, ordered for the care of patients in the hospital” (Frappier 2009, p. 64).

These few testimonies attest the largely positive experience of the American stay, which was experienced above all as a personal enrichment. This attitude can be understood insofar as the returnees from America knew that their stay prepared them to become the future intellectual elites of Quebec in a more autonomous and institutionalised university environments than those of the exotic students of the beginning of the 20th century trained in Paris, who hardly integrated the universities upon their return. Moreover, according to Lacroix and Warren, the return from America did not really involve an “identity shock” or a collective “questioning” in the manner of the returns from Europe. This dissimilarity would reveal Quebec’s different relationships with the two destinations; if “the United States is an image of what Quebec *could be*, [...] France, voluntarily or unconsciously, embodies what Quebec *should be*.” In other words, unlike France, the United States offers to “the Quebec intellectual a less contemptible mirror of himself” (Lacroix and Warren 2012, pp. 60–61), which favours, to a certain extent, his plasticity and his openness to otherness. Daniel Tanguay makes a similar observation: “as paradoxical as it may seem, our relationship with France is more problematic than our relationship with the United States.” This is because

[F]rance reminds us by its very existence of what our Francophone being could be if it were in full expansion. It is our bad conscience, since it prevents us from holding our linguistic and intellectual poverty completely as a virtue.

(Tanguay 1999)

On the other hand, the American otherness has something reassuring as it tends to confirm the cultural difference of the Francophone being, without denying his North American anchoring. In that regard, Michel Brunet’s account of his trip to the United States is instructive. On several occasions, he denotes its own distance from

the American culture, often by despising it. For example, reacting to a woman he met in New York who remarked that French Canadians were reactionary because of their stubbornly desire to remain French in a modernity that was inevitably moving towards English, Brunet noted the abyss that separates him from the American “conception of life”: “[J]ust as the Romans called other peoples barbarians, they cannot accept the idea of a dual civilization in America. A bilingual Canada is for them an impossibility if not an absurdity.<sup>15</sup>” Elsewhere, in his diary, Brunet does not hesitate to criticise the very loose way Americans dress; the overdemocratisation of its university system; the material and symbolic hubris of its large industrial cities; or the ugliness of American women compared to those in Quebec (Dorais and Poitras, 2021).

Nevertheless, many accounts of the American stays presented above were written retrospectively, several years after the fact. These *a posteriori* reconstructions are not exempt from a strategic purpose: that of inscribing the value of a higher education and the enriching experience of a foreign country in the trajectory of a successful career.<sup>16</sup> And yet, a closer and deeper analysis of the actual experiences of America shows that the sojourn of these students, too, may have challenged their relationship to place, culture, status and identity.<sup>17</sup> Testimonies also abound on the shocks of otherness that Quebec students experienced on American campuses. In this regard, as Jules Racine St-Jacques has shown by studying the unpublished correspondence between the first graduates of the School of Social Sciences of Laval University and Father Georges-Henri Lévesque, during their study periods in the United States in the early 1940s, the disciplinary acculturation of the returnees from America was far from easy (2015). Their immersion in American disciplinary culture confronted them with a completely different intellectual environment, which conflicted with their attachment to the dualistic (Catholic and positive) tradition of Quebec social sciences. This is the case, for example, of Maurice Lamontagne who, while studying at Harvard, perceived in the economics department “an essential emptiness, a lack of soul” where “[t]he capitalist mentality replaces the social mentality: we study, not to improve or reform an abnormal situation, but to make as much money as possible.<sup>18</sup>” For Jean-Charles Falardeau, who was at the University of Chicago at the same time, integration into the American academic milieu required “an incredible psychological readjustment.”

Father, he wrote to G-H Lévesque, it is as if I were on a new planet, in the presence of beings who, instead of a human mind, had a very precise but mechanical microscope, and for whom notions of value and philosophical or ethical principles were labels on fossils from an unknown universe.<sup>19</sup>

The excessively mechanistic, mathematical, micrometric, empirical and rational character of American social science appears fundamentally antithetical to the double finality – normative and positive – of French-Canadian social sciences, rooted in Catholic culture (Warren, 2003).<sup>20</sup> This is why when he returned to

Quebec, profoundly influenced as he was by the ethnic and modernist sociology of Chicago, Falardeau was aware of the importance of adapting its analytical framework by continuing to back it up with a catholic ethic concerned with the higher ends of Man. This is illustrated, for example, by his sociology of the French-Canadian parish, which he studied under the perspective of the “folk society,” but with the concern to prevent its disappearance while adapting itself to the realities of the modern urban world (Laniel 2021).

In the same way, Guy Rocher mentions having experienced an “intellectual crisis” on his arrival at Harvard, a crisis that he links to the cultural relativism of the Department of Social Relations, whose teachings contrasted with the Catholic epistemology of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval University. The very interdisciplinary atmosphere of his training led him to take courses in psychoanalysis, which introduced him to the internal powers of the unconscious in man. Similarly, social anthropology, especially the one taught by Clyde Kluckhohn, showed the great variability of cultures and the historically and culturally determined character of rules of conduct and values. “I came back from Harvard quite shaken intellectually and spiritually” (1974, pp. 244–245), Rocher points out, and he confided to us that he traces the beginning of his religious doubts in the United States.<sup>21</sup>

I had the feeling that the truths on which I had relied up to that point had literally crumbled. In five years, I had traveled a path that seemed to me to be quite long, from the certainties of Catholic Action to the almost systematic doubt of generalized relativism, passing through Comtian and Durkheimian positivism.

*(Rocher 1974, p. 245)*

We can see, here, how much the return from America, although experienced positively, does not completely escape the torments of the “negative exile.” This difficult acclimatisation also goes hand in hand with the tendency to make cultural comparisons, often unfavourable, with the Quebec “small nation.” These comparisons are most often prompted by the differences in form and scope of American campuses, which, especially in the aftermath of the war, were highlighting a profound gap with Quebec. For Rocher, “this is where our inferiority became apparent to me, an enormous backlog in our university higher education.<sup>22</sup>” Rubbing shoulders with more mature and experienced students, often from the cohort of demobilised soldiers, Rocher became aware of his own limitations: “I discovered that not only was I ignorant, but that I didn’t even know how to work!” The force of the culture shock is so powerful that it instils deep doubts about returning. For Rocher, finding himself in a “small university” like the Université de Montréal was “a cause of great sadness,” so much so that he was really tempted to stay in the United States (Rocher 1989). The same observation was made by Frappier: “I had before me work opportunities whose contrast with the misery and poverty of the University of Montreal, from which I had just arrived, overwhelmed

me” (2009, pp. 64–65). On Brunet’s side, the visit to university campuses arouses amazement and envy. Following a visit to the University of Illinois, he wrote in his travel journal: “Another superb place. So much richness! And of all kinds! It is enough to make one jealous. And jealous I am.<sup>23</sup>” About the University of Ann Arbor, Michigan: “Always the same impression: richness, strength, series of buildings, each richer than the other.” Here too, the extraordinary perception finds its counterpart in the insufficiency and the shortcomings of French Canada, which Brunet does not hesitate, in his diary, to qualify regularly as a “country that lacks ambition,” a country full of “*canayens*” where one does not know how to “make oneself known and appreciated.<sup>24</sup>” Perhaps the most emblematic case is that of the future Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who went to Harvard in the mid-1940s. “As soon as I arrived, I realized that in intellectual terms I was barely coming out of childhood,” he wrote in his memoirs (Trudeau 1993, p. 38). According to his biographers, Max and Monique Nemni, it was at Harvard that Trudeau formalised his conversion to anti-nationalism. The discovery of the great America, where he was taught by Heinrich Brüning, Wassily Leontief and Joseph Schumpeter, among others, encouraged him to embark on a quest for the universal (Nemni 2011). Harvard challenged the Quebec modernity and highlighted its deficiencies. Still in his memoirs, he adds:

I also realized that the Quebec of the time was away from the action, that it was living outside modern times. I was struck by the contrast between my home province and the United States, this frenetic country brimming with energy and vitality. Harvard was an extraordinary window on the world. I found myself surrounded by intellectuals who throughout their lives had been eyewitnesses to change in the four corners of the world. It felt like being in symbiosis with the five continents.

(Trudeau 1993, p. 39)

From these testimonies, it appears that the return from America is not impervious to the torments experienced by the returnees from Europe. We can see how these various subjective experiences of America served as a fuel to the critique of “Quebec’s backwardness” which was establishing itself as a common thread in the critique of post-war traditionalism. It is therefore clear that the return from America is also emblematic of a culture that questions itself and experiences itself in a confrontation with the distance. This distance creates a space of indecision, of questioning from which anguish and proposals, indecisions and reconstructions can emerge.

## 2.4 Conclusion

Thus placed back to back, the returns from Europe and America appear in their similarities and differences. But in the final analysis, one must see that these

figures of the French-Canadian imaginary are two sides of the same coin, on which we can read certain characteristics specific to small nation. First of all, both figures exemplify an uneasy relationship with greatness, personified here by a universal (and dominant) model of knowledge – French or American – in which the pioneers of Quebec’s literature and science have found justification, authority and legitimacy. There is here a typical condition relating to cultures of the margin, whose aspiration to the universal often implies a confrontation to a centre always bigger than oneself and through which an “authoritative recall of the origins” can occur (Nardout-Lafarge, 2002). Thus, the “returns” appear in the history as prime examples of this process where the difficult adequacy between the particular of the smallness and the greatness of the universal is played. This difficulty implies an untiring search for reconciliation and mediation, for those who choose to return to their country, to work there, to readapt there by assuming their fragilities and incompleteness. In this ever-tensive intertwining of the large and the small, sociologist Jacques Beauchemin perceives a fundamental part of the small French-Canadian nation’s identity. Taken up in various ways in the culture, this tension plays out a constitutive ambivalence of the Quebecois being, between its claim to greatness – which was associated, in the past, with the dream of a messianic grandeur of French Canadian Catholicism or, more recently, with the image of a modern Quebec, emancipated from its traditional past – and the realisation of its unsurpassable smallness (Beauchemin 2015). One of the great challenges of the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s and, by extension, of the nationalist movement, was precisely to attempt to reconcile the poles of this tension by setting up Quebec’s particularity as a figure of the universal – in other words, that Quebec accesses, in its own way and on its own terms, to North American modernity. Thus, as Quebec recovered a certain autonomy in relation to itself, both in the scientific and literary fields, the figure of “returns” gradually faded in the cultural discourse, the latter being more associated with the imaginary of the incompleteness and ambivalence of traditional French Canada, which appeared more or less compatible with the aspirations of plenitude and globality of the contemporary Quebec Subject. But then, does this mean that modern Quebec would no longer experience abroad the symptoms of the small nation? It seems to us that what was perhaps once a rule is now becoming an exception, insofar as the malaise of the “returns” presupposes the prior acquiescence of a form of fragility constitutive of the collective being. However, the rallying of a growing part of contemporary Quebec youth to a “serene post-nationalization,” to use the words of Jocelyn Létourneau (2020), responds to a modality that is undoubtedly more flexible, and certainly less anxious, of the process of opening up to the world. It would also be necessary to point out, in this context, the profound changes in the relationship of Quebecers to French and American references. While the former suffers from increasingly strong criticism for its model of republican secularism that is progressively seen as incompatible with the North American pluralist discourse (Bédard 2016), the latter seems to gain in importance to the point of

becoming more and more attractive today and establish itself at the centre of our existence (Bélisle 2020).

Second, it seems to us that the figure of the “returnees” questions more broadly the relationship to education in the context of small nations. In Quebec, the access to higher knowledge was for a long time experienced as an escape, often painful, from the culture of belonging. “To be educated was to speak at last and to break the silence like an ice that one splits to drink the water of the river; it was at the same time to expatriate oneself in the abstraction of theoretical thoughts and to chase oneself further and further away from the ‘real country’. The duty of instruction was at odds with the duty of solidarity,” underlines Jean-Philippe Warren (2012) to qualify what education could represent for French-Canadian intellectuals before 1960. The experience of the foreign relays, from Paris to Chicago, where the feeling of exile was exacerbated by both cultural and geographical distance, necessarily accentuated this impression. Of course, there is an experience common to many educational paths, and perhaps especially in the context of societies with a colonial past. For these societies, the stay in the metropolis and the high places of knowledge of the great world centres of culture was “an obligatory stage” of colonial education as well as an “important factor of social mobility” (Nardout-Lafarge 2002).

In the case of Quebec, we can see how the rupture induced by education has been translated into a collective issue. In this regard, the “interior exile” of the returns from Europe and, to a certain extent, from America, could be related to other educational paths that, together, would draw something like a cultural diagonal of the small nation. The example of Fernand Dumont’s “emigration story” comes to mind, a formula that he would use in the title of his autobiography and that designates this long journey from his culture of origin, in the working class milieu of Montmorency, to the “high culture” of the scholarly community. This mobility, Dumont will have experienced it as a “radical experience of exile” (Dumont 1974) which he associates with the uprooting of human migrations:

Those who have abandoned their country to integrate in another land never forget the tearing apart of the identity that followed; leaving the culture of the people for another entails an analogous tragedy [...] always it seemed to me that I was abandoning on the way some essential questions, that my duty was not to let forget what knowledge wants to leave in the shade under the pretext of enlightening the world.

(1997, pp. 11–12)

This original wound and this remorse, Dumont will transmute them into a theory of culture, which lodges in the heart of his work. This theory is based, precisely, on the idea of a caesura between a relation to the world made of relations of proximity and a sense of perspective and distance from this world operated by the means of cultural representations. As Serge Cantin underlines it again, after Micheline

Cambron, there is indeed a specific feature of the Quebec cultural discourse in this inclination to transmute the intimate experience of exile in a universal knowledge about modern culture:

Whereas, neither in French nor in American cultural discourse, the disjunction of speech, “the access of a singular discourse to the order of distance” would represent [...] a collective issue, Quebec cultural discourse [...] would have, for its part, found its anchorage in this very disjunction, in the pain of the word, a pain that constitutes both the object and the motor of writing.

(Cambron 1989 quoted in Cantin 2008, p. XXVI)

This work of explicit transmutation of the personal pain of emigration into the purposes of intellectual research is not trivial. It is in itself exemplary, it seems to us, of the existential and axial dimension that ennoblement through education could represent for a young French-Canadian intellectual of the 1950s.

Through these narratives of education, those of the “returns” and of the Dumontian “emigration narrative,” we can perhaps see a pattern specific to Quebec’s cultural history, which gives an account of the difficult elevation to dignity of culture and history in small nations. The path to knowledge is often posed as an existential problem, where culture is in the grip of a divorce from itself (and confronted to the consequent task of reconciliation).

## Notes

- 1 The expression is translated from french –“vie agrandie” – which was originally used by the author Gabrielle Roy in her famous autobiographical novel *La Détesse et l’Enchantement* (Ricard 1996). It should also be noted that all the quotations included in this chapter are the result of a translation by the author.
- 2 Various events contributed to an intensification of these relations at the turn of the century: the presence of Quebec at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900; the Combes laws of 1903 and 1904; the International Eucharistic Congress of Montreal in 1910; the activism of Hector Fabre, who had been the representative of Quebec and Canada in France since 1882; and the First World War, whose conscription crisis undermined the dual British-French allegiance of the French Canadians (Lamonde 2004).
- 3 Jean-Charles Harvey quoted in Simone Routier, “La ferveur d’une débutante en poésie. Correspondance 1929 à 1941”, *Écrits du Canada français*, 44–45, 1982, p. 252, quoted in Rajotte (2004, p. 32).
- 4 Léo-Paul DesRosiers, *Âmes et paysages*, 1922, p. 178 quoted in Rajotte (2004, p. 32).
- 5 André Laurendeau’s collection, “Impressions sur la France”, talk given in 1936. P2B4d29, quoted in Denis Monière, *André Laurendeau et le destin d’un peuple*, Montréal, Québec/Amérique, 1983, pp. 82–83 (book available online, on *Les classiques des sciences sociales*).
- 6 André Laurendeau’s collection, Letter to his parents, May 8th 1936. P2B228, quoted in Denis Monière, *André Laurendeau et le destin d’un peuple*, p. 66 (book available online, on *Les classiques des sciences sociales*).
- 7 We use here the formula of sociologist Joseph Yvon Thériault (2003).
- 8 “Letter from Marcel Trudel to Albert Tessier, December 17, 1945”, Archives from the Séminaire de Trois-Rivières/Albert Tessier fonds/0014-P2-149.

- 9 “Letter from Marcel Trudel to Lilianne Frégault, October 20, 1988” University of Ottawa Archives, P305/box 42376, “Frégault, Lilianne: correspondance, 1988-1991”.
- 10 Guy Frégault, “Discours d’intrônisation de Marcel Trudel à l’Académie canadienne-française”, 1953, University of Ottawa, Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française, Guy-Frégault fonds P168, 52, 15.
- 11 Quotes from Rocher (1989, chap. 2) and from an interview we conducted with Guy Rocher on March 5, 2020.
- 12 Interview with Guy Rocher, March 5, 2020.
- 13 Handwritten notes of Michel Brunet quoted in Jean Lamarre, *Le devenir de la nation québécoise selon Maurice Séguin, Guy Frégault et Michel Brunet. 1944-1969*, Québec, Septentrion, 1993, p. 399.
- 14 His thesis was a fairly classic political history dissertation on the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1853, whose archives were stored near Clark University (Brunet, 1949: XXII).
- 15 University of Montreal Archives (hereinafter UMA), Michel Brunet Fonds, P136/J2.22, “Journal de tournée américaine—du 24 avril au 16 mai 1949”.
- 16 On the strategic dimension of the narration of French Canadians’ intellectual excursions abroad, see in particular (Rajotte, 2004).
- 17 Indeed, Laurendeau himself pointed out, in his famous 1963 article, that American campuses could potentially generate a phenomenon akin to returning from Europe: “In these great cities of high culture - and I imagine that a stay at some American universities provokes the same reactions - you feel at first a small provincial. The requirements and standards change. When you are up against the wall, you realize the shortcomings of your own preparation” (Laurendeau 1963, p. 3).
- 18 Direction de la gestion des documents administratifs et des archives de l’Université Laval (hereinafter DGDAUL), Georges-Henri Lévesque fonds, P151/D/11 “Correspondance générale - Lamontagne, Maurice”, Letter from Maurice Lamontagne to Georges-Henri Lévesque, January 10, 1942, quoted in Racine St-Jacques (2015, p. 294).
- 19 DGDAUL, GHL fonds, Letter from Jean-Charles Falardeau to Georges-Henri Lévesque, October 17, 1941, quoted in Racine St-Jacques (2015, p. 294).
- 20 On the scientific dualism of Quebec sociology, see Warren (2003).
- 21 Interview with Guy Rocher, March 5, 2020.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 UMA, Michel Brunet fonds P136/J 2,22, Journal de tournée américaine de Michel Brunet - du 24 avril au 16 mai 1949.
- 24 UMA, Michel Brunet fonds P136/J 1,5, Letter from Michel Brunet to Berthe Brunet, May 12, 1949.

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# 3

## THE VALUE OF AN INTERCULTURAL CITIZENSHIP REGIME FOR SMALL NATIONS

The case of Quebec

*Félix Mathieu*

### 3.1 Introduction

In the midst of federal election campaigns in Canada, it has now become customary for the premier of one of the ten provinces, Quebec, to organise a special press conference with the media.<sup>1</sup> The objective is to influence political debates between aspiring tenants of 24 Sussex Drive, by ensuring that Quebec's ongoing demands are being heard in Ottawa. During the 2021 federal election campaign, the Premier of Quebec, François Legault, made no exception and submitted various requests to federal political leaders. In particular, Legault drew the public's attention to the delicate issue of immigration and the integration of diversity in Quebec. After recalling that, *ceteris paribus*, Quebec is one of the host societies in the West that welcomes the most immigrants in proportion to its population, and that immigration remains a "crucial" variable for the demographic and economic development of the Quebec nation, he said:

Quebec cannot function in a system of multiculturalism like the rest of Canada. We must absolutely integrate immigrants into the French-speaking majority [of Quebec]. It is an existential question for the Quebec nation. [...] there is no greater duty for a premier of Quebec than to ensure the future of French.

*(Quebec 2021)*

In a nutshell, Legault summarised the "dual challenge" that most small nations today ought to deal with. On the one hand, for all sorts of socio-economic and humanitarian reasons, they seek to welcome newcomers within their borders. On the other hand, they fear that doing so contributes to minimising what makes them "distinct societies" and that they may soon be destined to a quiet, yet inevitable

disintegration. While immigration is obviously not the only factor contributing to this feeling of collective insecurity, it is nonetheless central to the minds of many (see Bouchard and Taylor 2008). More accurately, the (perceived) mismanagement of newcomers' integration within the host society fuels this "identity *malaise*."<sup>2</sup> As a result, many small nations have rejected the paradigm and narrative of multiculturalism for another model of integration and *vivre-ensemble*, in order to reflect and act upon the desired dynamics to be established between members of the historical and cultural majority and those who come from a more or less recent immigration.

In contrast to those political communities that enjoy unquestionable influence on the course of political modernity – those "dominant" or "powerful" nations that generally do not fear for their future as such or for the vitality of their language and culture – small nations are dealing typically with a "symbolic foundation" of a different nature (Bouchard 2013). As novelist Milan Kundera wrote, "small nations do not know the happy feeling of having been there forever and ever; they have all passed, at some point in their history, through the antechamber of death; [...] they see their existence perpetually threatened or called into question" (1993, 223). In another book, but still on the same theme, Kundera (2005) had recourse to the symbols and myths that the populations give themselves, to compare the ethos of small nations to that of hegemonic ones. After pointing out that the national anthem of the latter generally refers to an eternal memory and infinite greatness, he recalls that Dombrowski's Mazurka, which became the national anthem of the Poles in 1927, opens with: "Poland is not yet lost." The symbolic register of the small nation is indeed often composed of the myth of "fragility" (Bouchard 2013).

Since they seemingly cannot avoid dealing with the first part of the aforementioned "dual challenge" (renewing the socio-demographic base of society via immigration) and focus solely on the second (perpetuating the identity and cultural foundations of the historical or dominant cultural community), if small nations wish to distance themselves from multiculturalism and still hold onto the principle of pluralism, they must draw inspiration from another model. As a corollary, they need to rely on a different meta-narrative – or sociopolitical myth – and series of practices than the ones associated with multiculturalism. Could those alternative practices and narrative take inspiration in what has come to be known in Quebec as the model of "interculturalism"? In particular, can Quebec's "intercultural citizenship regime" be of any help to other small nations in their quest to cope with the "dual challenge" discussed above?

Drawing from Quebec's particular sociopolitical and institutional path within the Canadian federal system, this chapter offers an affirmative answer to these two questions. While the lessons drawn from the second section are potentially generalisable to all cases of small nations, the third section is more specific to such cases that are also *minority nations*. By *minority nations*, we refer to national communities that do not represent the demographic majority within the sovereign state in which they evolve.

In this chapter, we shall discuss first the theoretical connection between the experience of small nations and interculturalism as a specific model (and narrative) of pluralism destined to offer some guidelines as to how to deal with the said “dual challenge”. Second, from the theory we will move the discussion to a more concrete and institutional perspective. In doing so, we will discuss how Quebec’s “intercultural citizenship regime” has been designed by public authorities and how this institutional network could be replicated for other small nations.

### 3.2 What is interculturalism? Small nations and theories of pluralism

Far from being marginal, the “question of small nations is nothing less than the question of cultural diversity and of the political spaces that allow for the deployment of this plurality,” writes political sociologist Joseph Yvon Thériault (2005, vxiii [translation]). One should also bear in mind that more than half of humanity today lives in the context of such small societies<sup>3</sup> (cf. Colomer 2007; Laniel and Thériault 2020). Concretely, by small nations we refer to these relatively populous and territorially concentrated human groupings that claim some kind of common belonging, fuelled in particular by certain factors such as a common language and culture, control of their own institutions (from school systems to representative bodies), a shared collective memory, founding myths and shared aspirations for the future of their collective political existence. Unlike other types of communities, they are characterised by the fact that they claim the legitimate right to exercise political power to a certain extent by developing their own institutional framework so as to facilitate self-government and political self-determination. In the wake of the work of sociologists Jean-François Laniel and Joseph Yvon Thériault (2020), it is also important to note that what qualifies these communities as “small” has very little to do with a finite list of objective criteria, for example, their demography or Gross Domestic Product. Nor is a nation or society “small” solely by reference to its political status as a sovereign or non-sovereign entity. And finally, “small” doesn’t mean that they are insignificant and doomed to a mediocre fate.

In concrete terms, the concept of small nation refers to an *attitude*, a perspective vis-à-vis the surrounding world and political environment. While large nations typically claim they contribute directly to the definition of “the universal,” small nations are confronted with the experience of their uncertain existence and often subjected to these “universal norms” defined by the majority (see Mathieu and Elmerich 2022, 229). This feeling of collective insecurity is at least partially fuelled by the fact that many small nations today are experiencing a demographic decline that worries for their survival as singular political communities or *demos*. This is particularly true of Quebec, a minority nation within the Canadian federation. But it is also the case for many other small nations.

Quebec, like many of its “significant others” (see Laniel and Thériault 2021) has undertaken to renew its demographic base in implementing a sustained immigration

programme. In turn, the ethnocultural complexity of the changing society and the demands for recognition made by agents of this internal ethnocultural diversity sometimes provoke waves of identity *malaise*, as the historical and cultural majority comes to fear for its capacity to “make society” (Thériault 2007) relying on its own preferred organisational parameters. In order to deal with this dual challenge (demographic on the one hand and identity-related on the other hand), many Quebec intellectuals and politicians have come to defend the value of interculturalism (see Lamy and Mathieu 2020; Couture and St-Louis 2022).

Interculturalism refers to a model of diversity management<sup>4</sup> that aims at finding the right balance between the openness to diversity and primacy given to individual freedoms associated with multiculturalism and the Anglo-Saxon world, and an emphasis on a collective conception of the citizenry that is more closely connected to the normative rationale of republicanism and the French intellectual universe (Gagnon and Iacovino 2007; 2016; Bouchard 2011; Lampron 2013; Seymour and Gosselin-Tapp 2018). But what does interculturalism actually stand for?

First of all, it should be noted that, just like multiculturalism, interculturalism represents a specific “model of pluralism,” that is, various relatively context-dependent, consistent normative theories about how to manage and recognise diversity. That being said, it should be noted also that what we refer to in this chapter as “interculturalism” must be distinguished from “interculturality,” a theory that has been promoted notably by the Council of Europe (cf. Council of Europe 2015; Ted Cattle 2012, 2016; Zapata-Barrero 2016; see also White 2016). The latter focuses mostly on “intercultural dialogue” within large urban cities. Interculturalism and interculturality are not necessarily opposed to one another; yet the former is more encompassing as it embraces a societal – not local – perspective.

In this chapter, I refer to the theoretical model of interculturalism that has emerged out of political and scholarly circles in Quebec. Its originality is to advance a pluralist alternative to Canadian multiculturalism. Promoters of this model of pluralism argue that it is more hospitable towards the protection of Quebec’s francophone majority – a small nation that presents itself as being in need of some kind of cultural protection and linguistic guarantees – without conflicting with ethnocultural minorities’ expressed need and legitimate claim to be formally recognised as such and accommodated so that its members are not discriminated by state apparatuses or private companies (Gagnon 2000; Gagnon and Iacovino 2007; Bouchard 2011, 2015; Rocher 2015; Mathieu 2022). It is also important to note that the majority group does not represent a monolithic “cultural bloc”: while there is an intention to stress a connection between today’s cultural majority and the historic French-Catholic population that goes back to *La Nouvelle-France*, the “common culture” it promotes has been transformed and dynamised throughout the centuries as it included various waves of immigration.

That being said, intellectual honesty requires not to raise an imagined false schism between interculturalism and multiculturalism: while there exist differences between them, inter- and multiculturalism are both models of pluralism that rest

on a similar set of three key principles (Weinstock 2013, 107; Modood 2020). They both (a) reject assimilationism or “anglo-conformity” (Kymlicka 1995), (b) stand up in favour of politics of recognition (Taylor 1992) and (c) promote the fair integration of ethnocultural minorities within a given host society (Modood 2013). As Charles Taylor (2012) puts it, their differences are very much a matter of differences in storytelling.

To avoid any conceptual ambiguity, let us clarify that assimilationism can be understood by comparing it with a biological mechanism: “assimilation consists in the *modus operandi* according to which a state should behave like a biological entity and absorb exogenous bodies within its spaces” (Mathieu 2022, 6). As a result of a politics of assimilation, ethnocultural minorities should become indistinguishable from the core, historical cultural majority, in which they would merge. Their distinctiveness would have completely disappeared. On the contrary, politics of recognition refer to various state-related actions that take stock at recognising “the unique identity” of ethnocultural minorities, “their distinctness from everyone else” (Taylor 1992, 38). The rationale behind politics of recognition is that “the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles” towards everyone in a society “is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture” (Taylor 1992, 43). Therefore, to avoid reproducing social injustices towards newcomers and members of ethnocultural minorities, the idea is that the state implements diverse forms of “reasonable accommodations”<sup>5</sup> to fight against discriminatory practices (usually unconsciously) directed at specific individuals that happen to be of more or less recent immigration. Integration is also a two-way street: the newcomer has a duty to work on his own integration and to observe the host society’s laws, just as the host community also has a duty to be welcoming and provide newcomers with the tools they need to be able to fully participate in common institutions. Finally, integration must not be thought of as being single-faceted. It concerns various spheres (political, economic, moral, social, etc.), and an individual may very well be economically integrated while remaining less so on the cultural or moral level (Modood 2013, 46). Integration is also a *process*: it is not something that happens overnight, which is why it requires time, hospitable action, formal institutions dedicated to assist in this process and consequent public policies. Contrary to assimilation, (interculturalism’s conception of) integration recognises and celebrates diversity within the host society, promotes cultural reciprocity and advocates for the flourishing of a common political culture emerging from the dialogical interaction between minorities and the cultural majority.

In the end, interculturalism and multiculturalism are models of pluralism that share these three key principles. Echoing the ongoing debates in Quebec–Canada politics, what fundamentally distinguishes the former from the latter is the dominant narrative they both end up promoting (see Taylor 2012). Of course, not all political actors and thinkers invested in the theory and/or practice of interculturalism or multiculturalism will agree with the following. As a general rule, it is important to

recall that theoretical endeavours must always make room for the Clausewitzian principle of friction. Empirical conditions are necessarily more complex than our capacity to theoretically abstract from them. But that does not mean any efforts to theorise such issues are in vain.

Depending on whether one interprets it is most urgent to deal in priority with *principle b* – the moral duty to implement politics of recognition – or *principle c* – the political responsibility to ensure the active integration of ethnocultural minorities into the host society – one will be promoting either interculturalism or multiculturalism. If integration appears as the most urgent priority to focus on, the social and political narrative will embrace the logic of interculturalism. But if implementing politics of recognition trumps the duty to integrate, a multiculturalism narrative will prevail.

While at first glance this symbolic and discursive distinction between both models might appear as being of little relevancy, it is of great importance after all. The reason is that, for any public policy to create a lasting impact and instil popular support, its *raison d'être* must be understood not only by the public, but also shared among public agents responsible for its implementation. Hence, the narrative is very important. This is even more so as we are dealing here with *identity policies*: since these are connected to a strong collective emotional chord, it is fundamental that people relate to what it tries to accomplish.

Coming back to the three core principles that are typical of most theories of pluralism, one could say that interculturalism and multiculturalism organise these using a different symbolic hierarchy. First, as a stepping stone, they share similarly the logic that (a) they must reject assimilationism. But then, they will identify one or the other principles (b or c) as the guiding *normative finality* and the other as being more of a *means* that should answer to the said guiding rationale. As such, multiculturalism tends to promote *principle (b)* – recognition of diversity – as its normative finality and *principle (c)* – integration into the host society – as a (mildly) desirable and side effect that is acceptable if and only if it is derived from the politics of recognition. On the other hand, interculturalism tends to promote *principle (c)* as its normative finality, and *principle (b)* as a pragmatic if not morally desirable philosophy to promote that is acceptable if and only if it is derived from the collective duty to integrate newcomers.

Using the analytical categories of Gérard Bouchard, *principle (b)* is to be associated with the sociopolitical myth of *diversity*, and *principle (c)* with that of *duality*; both act as a discursive frame to structure “discussion and debates over diversity” (Bouchard 2011, 443; see also Karmis 2003). Closely associated with the Canadian politics of multiculturalism, Bouchard suggests the guiding premise of the myth of diversity is that society “is composed of a collection of individuals and ethnocultural groups placed on an equal footing and protected by the same laws—there is no recognition of a majority culture” (Bouchard 2011, 441). As for the paradigm of duality, it rather suggests that the (small) nation is composed of a core, dominant cultural community that interacts with other cultural groups, and

that those interactions are what create a *common* public culture. The myth is not creating the said duality, it simply acknowledges its existence.

In more concrete terms, interculturalism is designed to be mostly appropriate for small nations that are experiencing some kind of cultural insecurity. On the other hand, multiculturalism works best with majority and “powerful” nations that typically do not fear for their capacity to continue to exist in the future as singular political communities, as they possess the demographic numbers and the institutional completeness to ensure their continuity. Henceforth, interculturalism will take more seriously than multiculturalism the argument that host societies may be themselves in need of cultural and linguistic protections; that is why it emphasises more straightforwardly than multiculturalism the importance of newcomers to integrate – but not to assimilate – into a given host society.

Reflecting on Quebec’s brand of pluralism, Alain-G. Gagnon and Raffaele Iacovino (2007, 130) further connect interculturalism to the idea of a “moral contract” between the host society and its internal growing diversity. This is indeed an important aspect of interculturalism’s core narrative:

The moral contract is summed up as follows: a society in which French is the common language of public life; a democratic society where participation and the contribution of everyone is expected and encouraged; and a pluralist society open to multiple contributions within the limits imposed by the respect of fundamental democratic values; and the necessity of intercommunity exchange.  
(Gagnon and Iacovino 2007, 98)

They go on by stressing the idea that interculturalism promotes active citizenship participation and public deliberation as preferred ways to manage conflicts, hence favouring “mediation, compromise and negotiation” over legal proceedings, even though these might be necessary as an option of last resort (Gagnon and Iacovino 2007, 133).

Another key principle that scholars from Quebec connect to interculturalism is related to what Gérard Bouchard (2011, 2015) coined as the “elements of *ad hoc* precedence for the majority culture.” To sum up, the idea is to acknowledge that host societies are the bearer of specific “societal cultures” (cf. Kymlicka 1995), that is, the necessary set of significant legal, political, cultural and economic institutions for any political community to offer its members “a ‘context of choice’ in order for them to enjoy individual autonomy and liberty” (Mathieu and Guénette 2018, 217). In other words, this principle simply stresses that “while seeking an equitable interaction between continuity and diversity, interculturalism allows for the recognition of certain elements of *ad hoc* (or contextual) precedence for the majority culture” (Bouchard 2011, 451). The historian and sociologist then adds:

I say *ad hoc* because it is out of the question to formalize or establish this idea as a general legal principle, which would lead to the creation of two classes

of citizens. In this way, interculturalism distinguishes itself from radical republicanism that, whether directly or not, use the pretext of universalism to bestow a systematic, *a priori* precedence on what I term the majority or foundational culture. This kind of arrangement, which established a formal hierarchy, opens the door to abuses of power. That said, I think that as long as the nature and the reach of *ad hoc* precedence are carefully circumscribed it can avoid the excesses of ethnicism while giving some advantages (or the needed protections) to the majority culture.

(Bouchard 2011, 451)

Therefore, in Quebec, this *ad hoc* preference principle has legitimised, *inter alia*, the special protection of the French language – for example, by requiring immigrants and members of ethnocultural minorities to send their children to the Francophone (public or semiprivate) educational system, or by requiring businesses to put forward a predominant French appellation when advertising – “which was necessary for the survival of francophone culture” (Bouchard 2011, 452).

In a nutshell, then, one can summarise what interculturalism stands for by pointing out to a few key characteristics:

- 1 Interculturalism is similar to multiculturalism, since both models of pluralism (a) reject assimilationism, (b) advocate for politics of recognition and (c) promote fair integration of immigrants into a given host society.
- 2 While interculturalism’s narrative prioritises *principle (c)* and makes it its normative finality, multiculturalism reverses the narrative and prioritises *principle (b)* as its guiding principle.
- 3 As a matter of consequence, interculturalism is designed and mostly appropriate for small nations that are experiencing some kind of cultural insecurity. This is why this model of pluralism, derived from Quebec–Canada dynamics, appears to offer a valuable narrative for small nations in need of an alternative to multiculturalism for thinking about the relationship between the host society and newcomers.
- 4 Philosophically speaking, interculturalism promotes a “moral contract” based on active citizenship participation and public deliberation for all, as a way to nurture a common political culture inspired by a perpetual intercultural dialogue.
- 5 Institutionally speaking, interculturalism legitimates the establishment of an *ad hoc* preference principle, that is, a form of “reasonable accommodation”, but directed at the cultural majority, not the ethnocultural minorities.

While Quebec–Canada dynamics are not representative of the many ways in which every small nation evolves, this chapter suggests that interculturalism could be the most appropriate model for other similar host societies that are also experiencing some kind of cultural insecurity, as a result of that “dual challenge” they are facing. That being said, the next section will bring the discussion to a more

concrete, institutional level and discuss the value of an “intercultural citizenship regime” for those small nations that, like Quebec, do not represent the demographic majority in the sovereign state in which they evolve – that is, “minority nations.”

### 3.3 An intercultural citizenship regime

Unlike the Canadian parliament, which adopted a formal multiculturalism policy in 1971, the National Assembly of Quebec has yet to formalise its intercultural model into a specific piece of legislation. Nevertheless, a certain “intercultural citizenship regime” has been at the heart of the integration policies in *La Belle Province* since the 1980s.

A “citizenship regime” refers broadly to “the institutional arrangements, rules and understandings that guide and shape” the sociopolitical environment of a given polity (Jenson 2007, 55). Following Jenson (2007, 55–56; see also Jenson and Phillips 1996), one can identify four key dimensions to a citizenship regime:

- 1 Promoting the (dynamic) expression of a basic *set of values and principles*: it involves “defining the boundaries of state responsibilities and differentiating them from those of markets [or] families” (Jenson 2007, 55);
- 2 Upholding an ensemble of *rights and duties*: it “establishes the [legal] boundaries as well as the borders of inclusion and exclusion of a political community” (Jenson 2007, 56);
- 3 Prescribing the *governance arrangements* of a polity: it defines the various “institutional mechanisms giving access to the state, the modes of participation in civic life and public debates, and the legitimacy of specific types of claim-making” (Jenson 2007, 56); and
- 4 Defining the boundaries of *membership*: in both the “narrow passport-holding sense of nationality and the more complicated notion of identity,” it “contributes to maintaining the borders of the regime but also its boundaries, identifying those who consider themselves on the inside and those for whom the regime is alien” (Jenson 2007, 56).

The normative proposition this chapter advances consists in advocating for small nations that are dealing with the aforementioned “dual challenge” to develop their own version of an intercultural citizenship regime by taking inspiration into Quebec’s institutional experience. In particular, then, the key characteristics of interculturalism identified in the previous section should inform the spirit and practices of the citizenship regime.

Quite straightforwardly, for the first dimension of the citizenship regime – which relates to the promotion of a basic set of values and principles – interculturalism would inform it by promoting practices such as those of active integration, anti-discrimination measures, politics of recognition, cultural dialogue and reciprocity. Then, the second and third dimensions would be informed by the logic of a “moral

contract” and *ad hoc* preference principle, encouraging and asking for active participation within common institutions in the forging of a dynamic, joint culture that acknowledges both the contributions of internal ethnocultural minorities and that of the cultural majority.

That being said, the last dimension – boundaries of membership – leads to a whole other layer of complexity since it relates notably to the selection and integration of newcomers. That is why, what follows is of particular relevance to small nations that are also *minority* nations that must negotiate with a majority national “partner” to exercise such a power within the sovereign state. The question, then, is how can an intercultural citizenship regime be translated into concrete institutional practices? Regarding the definition of membership, how would this principle work in practice? Again, the institutional experience of interculturalism in the case of Quebec–Canada dynamics may be of great value to imagine how this idea could be arranged elsewhere.

Even though one could go back as far as the *Constitution Act, 1867*, it is important to recall that on 5 November 1965, the Legislative Assembly of Quebec, with the consent of the Legislative Council, passed the Act to create the Quebec Ministry of Immigration. This law, which came into effect on 20 November 1968, states that the new ministry “has the function of promoting the settlement in Quebec of immigrants who are likely to contribute to its development and participate in its progress; it also has the function of promoting the adaptation of immigrants to the Quebec environment” (Assemblée législative du Québec 1968 [Translation]). It announced the desire for Quebec to use to its full potential its constitutional powers (considering that immigration is a shared jurisdiction between the two orders of government in the Canadian federal system) to implement its own internal citizenship regime, distinct from that of Canada as a whole.

In the spirit of establishing this new ministry within the provincial institutional apparatus, Quebec has then rejected the Canadian multiculturalism policy that Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau presented to the House of Commons on 8 October 1971. In fact, on 11 November of the same year, Robert Bourassa, then Premier of Quebec, sent a letter to his federal counterpart announcing that Quebec would not endorse the Canadian multiculturalism policy. Bourassa wrote that “[t]his notion [multiculturalism] seems difficult to reconcile with Quebec’s reality where there is a dominant presence of a French-speaking and French-cultured population [...]” (Bourassa quoted in *Le Devoir* 1971 [Translation]). The problem, in Bourassa’s view, is precisely that Canadian multiculturalism is founded on the narrative of *diversity*, which dissociates culture and language; and that Quebec rather requires its diversity management model to rest on the political myth of *duality* (*Le Devoir* 1971). Without exception, all successive governments in the Quebec National Assembly maintained the concerns expressed by Robert Bourassa with respect to Canadian multiculturalism.

A series of bilateral intergovernmental administrative agreements between Quebec and Ottawa on immigration and diversity management followed, which extended Quebec's responsibilities on the matter: Cloutier-Lang Agreement (1971), Bienvenue-Andras Agreement (1975) and Couture-Cullen Agreement (1978). As such, these agreements constitute a major turning point in the process of institutionalising interculturalism in Quebec. In the wake of the creation of the Quebec Ministry of Immigration, and Robert Bourassa's position on the Canadian multiculturalism policy, the Government of Quebec formalised in 1981 the adoption of a policy for the management of its own internal diversity. Inspired by the aforementioned idea of a "moral contract," the policy document entitled *Autant de façons d'être Québécois* ("So many ways of being Quebecer") is the most significant political milestone from which interculturalism will be incrementally institutionalised in Quebec. A decade later, the Quebec government refined the 1981 policy with the 1990 Policy Statement on Immigration and Integration, *Au Québec pour bâtir ensemble* ("In Québec to build together"). This policy insisted on the "broad outlines" of the moral contract:

the sharing of French as the common language of public life in Quebec society; the right and duty of all citizens, regardless of their origin, to participate in and contribute fully to the economic, social, cultural and political life of Quebec; the commitment to build together a pluralist Quebec where citizens of all cultures and origins can identify and be recognized as full-fledged Quebecers.

*(Quebec 1990, 50 [Translation])*

This policy, which also emphasises the need for the Government of Quebec to work to preserve a unique francophone culture in North America for the majority of French-Canadian descent, will be the cornerstone from which the integration of newcomers will be managed in Quebec for the next few decades. In practical terms, the general rules for the coexistence of two citizenship regimes in the Canadian federation are to be found in the Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall Accord of 1991 (officially the Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens).

*Inter alia*, the Gagnon-Tremblay-McDougall Accord's preamble recognises the importance of maintaining "Quebec's demographic weight within Canada and to ensure the integration of immigrants into the province in a manner that respects its distinct character." It also reiterates the "mobility rights and equality" of all inhabitants of Canada. As for this last principle concerning mobility rights, it is important to stress that once newcomers have established in Quebec, based on the following mechanisms, they are, of course, free to move elsewhere in Canada, just as any other citizen would be. This is guaranteed by Section 6 of Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom.

Then, three sections of the 1991 Accord are of particular relevance to the present discussion. Every time it speaks of “Canada,” one could imagine replacing it with the central government of another sovereign state, and similarly imagine replacing “Quebec” with another (minority) small nation to be found in this polity. First, it concerns the criteria for admission and selection of immigrants:

- Canada is responsible for the admission of immigrants in the country (Art. 10) – which means granting visas and permanent residency – while Quebec is responsible for the selection of those immigrants destined to establish in Quebec (Art. 11);
- With the exception of humanitarian and family reunification categories of immigration under Canada’s jurisdiction, Quebec “has sole responsibility for the selection of immigrants destined to that province and Canada has sole responsibility for the admission of immigrants to that province” (Art. 12 (a); note that this article is subject to Articles 13 to 20);
- Canada “shall admit any immigrant destined to Québec who meets Québec’s selection criteria, if the immigrant is not in an inadmissible class under the law of Canada” (Art. 12 (b));
- Canada “shall not admit any immigrant into Québec who does not meet Québec’s selection criteria” (Art. 12 (c)).

Second, it concerns the share of responsibilities concerning the reception and integration of newcomers:

- Quebec provides “for the reception and the linguistic and cultural integration of permanent residents in Québec” (Art. 24);
- Canada withdraws from “services to be provided by Québec” (Art. 24; see also Art. 25);
- Canada provides “reasonable compensation for the services [...] provided by Québec” (Art. 26; see also Annex B);
- Canada “alone shall have responsibility for services related to citizenship” (Art. 28).

Thirdly, the Accord discusses the levels of immigration:

- Canada “shall establish annually the total of immigrants for the country as a whole, taking into consideration Québec’s advice on the number of immigrants that it wishes to receive” (Art. 5);
- Both Canada and Québec “undertake to pursue a policy” that shall allow Quebec to receive a percentage of the total equal to the percentage of Quebec’s population compared with the population of Canada (Art. 6 and 7);
- Quebec shall undertake “to receive [...] a percentage [of refugees and persons in similar situations] at least equal to the percentage of immigrants it accepts” (Art. 8).

Finally, there are also general principles attached to this Accord to ensure its sustainability:

- The principle of mutual consultation: “Canada and Québec agree to consult each other before making any amendments to their statutes and regulations affecting the operation of this Accord” (Art. 31);
- The principle of fair play: The Accord may be re-opened if and only if a “prior notice of six months” was given to the other party and that each party agrees to open it (Art. 33);
- The principle of continuity: It is also stated that failing to reach a new agreement, “the Accord continues into force” (Art. 33; see also Annex A) and that compensation paid to Quebec will be automatically indexed (see Annex B).

In light of the Canada–Quebec Accord, one may imagine the outlines of similar “pacts” to inform the functioning of an “intercultural citizenship regime” for other small nations that do not possess a sovereign state of their own.

While the specific contours were presented through the experience of Quebec–Canada dynamics, here are the main outlines such accords that inform the content of an internal intercultural citizenship regime may contain:

- 1 The sovereign state shall hold the power of admitting immigrants to the country, while the (minority) small nation shall have the capacity to advance its own selection criteria for the newcomers they wish to integrate.
- 2 While the (minority) small nation can select immigrants, it cannot, once said immigrants have settled, limit their mobility or constrain them in coerced isolation from other parts of the sovereign state.
- 3 The (minority) small nation shall have access to a percentage of the welcomed immigrants that matches proportionally its demographic weight within the sovereign state while also taking into account the nation’s capacity of integration.
- 4 The (minority) small nation shall be responsible for the cultural and broad integration of newcomers, while the sovereign state shall finance and compensate it accordingly.
- 5 Finally, the “pact” should rest on the principles of mutual consultation, fair play and continuity. In other words, to achieve its full positive effect on the “cultural security” of minority nations, this “pact” must have a certain permanence and not be subject to unilateral modification or revocation by the majority group.

### 3.4 Conclusion

Small nations are not the only political communities today that are experiencing a more or less pronounced degree of “existential” or “cultural” insecurity. Perhaps this is something that most human groupings face at some point in their sociopolitical trajectory. Perhaps those cases we call “small nations” are modestly more

transparent about them experiencing this identity *malaise* than the so-called “great” or “powerful” nations. Perhaps it is simply that small nations have no choice but to accept more straightforwardly the evidence that they represent “particular” and not “universal” perspectives on the world, which makes it easier for them to accept the idea that the world might just continue its course regardless of whether they survive or not as singular political communities. Be that as it may, this ethos of smallness seems to be amplified by the need to cope with the “dual challenge” discussed previously: first, for all sorts of reasons, small nations seek to welcome newcomers within their borders; second, they fear that doing so contributes to minimizing what makes them “distinct societies” and that they may soon be destined for a quiet, yet inevitable disintegration.

In this chapter, we first advanced an efficient way to distinguish between the theory and narratives associated with multiculturalism and interculturalism. Then, we argued that interculturalism is indeed the bearer of an alternative narrative to that of multiculturalism for thinking about the desired relationship to be established and nurtured between the host society and newcomers. In doing so, we suggested that interculturalism has great potential to guide small nations in their complex journey to cope with the challenges resulting from the said “dual challenge.” Finally, applying this theoretical and abstract discussion to a more concrete perspective, we provided an overview of the institutional network that has been deployed under Quebec–Canada dynamics, which led to the development of an “intercultural citizenship regime” in Quebec – one that is distinct from the Canadian multicultural citizenship regime. Taking stock in Quebec’s particular institutional experience, we advocated for this model to be of great value for similar cases of (minority) small nations that are in search of a satisfactory model of pluralism to manage fairly both its growing internal diversity and the existential insecurity that the majority culture faces.

Of course, were other cases of small nations looking to develop their own intercultural citizenship regime, this would require from them resilience and imagination. Not only will there be a need to adapt this institutional structure for it to fit within the constitutional architecture of the sovereign state in which they evolve, but they might as well face strong resistance from the majority group at the level of the whole polity. Nonetheless, this appears as a challenge that small nations might need to accept.

## Notes

- 1 The author would like to thank David Sanschagrin, Sana Sakihama, Jean-François Laniel and Kiyonobu Date for their generous comments and insights. He would also like to disclose that parts of Section 1 expand on some of his previously published work (see Mathieu 2022; 2023).
- 2 To avoid any confusion, by “identity *malaise*” I refer broadly to the phenomenon described by Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor in their 2008 Report *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation*: the practice and politics of “reasonable accommodations” in Quebec “clearly touched a number of emotional chords among French-Canadian Quebecers in

such a way that requests for religious adjustments have spawned fears about the most valuable heritage of the Quiet Revolution, in particular gender equality and secularism. The result has been an identity counter-reaction movement that has expressed itself through the rejection of harmonization practices. Among some Quebecers, this counter-reaction targets immigrants, who have become, to some extent, scapegoats. What has just happened in Quebec gives the impression of a face-off between two minority groups, each of which is asking the other to accommodate it. The members of the ethnocultural majority are afraid of being swamped by fragile minorities that are worried about their future. The conjunction of these two anxieties is obviously not likely to foster integration in a spirit of equality and reciprocity. We can conclude that Quebecers of French-Canadian ancestry are still not at ease with their twofold status as a majority in Quebec and a minority in Canada and North America” (Bouchard and Taylor 2008, 18).

- 3 In this chapter, the concepts of “small nation” and “small society” are understood as relative synonyms.
- 4 Employing the concept of “diversity management” means that cultural diversity in a community can generate tension and distrust, and this needs to be addressed by proper public policies that promote openness and inclusion, remove discriminatory barriers to integration, and help newcomers to participate in the society’s common public institutions (cf. Putnam 2007).
- 5 What we mean by accommodation is “the adaptation of a legal rule, in particular in order to attenuate or eliminate the impact that the norm can have on a constitutionally protected right or freedom, for example, freedom of conscience” (Bosset 2009, 6 [translation]). In Canada, those accommodations are granted to members of groups protected by the equality rights (section 15) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as long as they don’t constrain others’ individual rights (of conscience, expression, and so on), overburden an institution (considering the costs associated with a demand for accommodation), or raise questions of security (such as wearing a headscarf instead of a protective helmet for motorcyclists) or identification (such as covering one’s face for a passport picture) (see also Lampron 2022).

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# 4

## BETWEEN VULNERABILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

### Rethinking financial interventionism in Quebec as a “small nation”

*X. Hubert Rioux*

#### 4.1 Introduction

More than 35 years ago, as the forces of economic liberalisation and globalisation accelerated their deployment across the industrialised states, the American political scientist Peter J. Katzenstein brilliantly pointed out in his now classic political economy book *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe* (1985) that because of their inability to resist and control these forces in the manner of major economic powers such as the United States or Japan, “small states”—in the case of his 1985 study, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland—tended to adopt “neo-corporatist” industrial strategies and policies<sup>1</sup>, allowing a certain flexibility in industrial relations and a relatively high level of social and economic protection, due to the organisation of extensive consultation between economic (including and even especially trade unions), political and civil society actors. As Katzenstein (1985, p. 24) wrote at the time,

for the small European states, economic change is a fact of life. They have not chosen it; it is thrust upon them. These states, because of their small size, are very dependent on world markets, and protectionism is therefore not an option for them.

It is generally accepted, as Katzenstein pointed out and as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, that a major cause of this phenomenon is that these small states are indeed highly dependent on international trade and as such they have to “compensate” for their openness through a number of practices and policies that allow for the development of competitive advantages for their industries, as well as high levels of fiscal and financial redistribution, in order to better distribute

the benefits and disadvantages of this same openness to international trade (Keating, 2015). However, another aspect of the phenomenon, clearly identified by Katzenstein but often neglected, also refers to the perception of economic “vulnerability” specific to small nations and which, as we also argue below, is also shared by Quebec. Thus, as Katzenstein (2003, p. 11) himself reminded us almost 20 years after the publication of his seminal work,

I eventually convinced myself that an analysis that focused only on the objective data of economic openness missed the crux of the matter. Small size was a code for something more important. I learned from my interviews, readings and reflection that it was concealing an underlying and politically consequential causal connection. What really mattered politically was the perception of vulnerability, economic and otherwise. Perceived vulnerability generated an ideology of social partnership that had acted like a glue for the corporatist politics of the small European states. This was the first and most important explanatory variable.

Katzenstein’s work on this subject, especially from the 1990s onwards, fuelled the emergence of a substantial body of literature on “varieties of capitalism” (Hall and Soskice, 2003), which in turn distinguished between the small economies of Western and Central Europe and the dirigiste “Asian Tigers,” such as South Korea and Taiwan, as “coordinated” market economies as opposed in particular to the “liberal” market economies represented by the Anglo-Saxon countries and in particular the United States, and also Canada. This body of literature, however, left two major gaps that have never really been filled since. First, these studies tended to neglect sub-state jurisdictions, such as provinces or federated states, and second, they generally adopted a macroeconomic perspective, focusing on international trade, industrial relations, or levels of fiscal redistribution, neglecting the analysis of specific economic and industrial sectors.

In this chapter, we aim to fill this gap by focusing on the interesting case of Quebec, through the prism of a particularly strategic intervention sector: that of entrepreneurial finance. By focusing on Quebec’s unique ecosystem in this sector, often referred to as the “Quebec model” of development (Paquin and Rioux, 2022), we hope to explain how this model’s heavy reliance on state intervention is related to Quebec’s vulnerabilities as a “small nation,” whose influence on international economic and political dynamics is peripheral, even marginal, but whose adaptation and integration to them is maximal. Our thesis is that this interventionism is underpinned by a characteristic economic nationalism, inducing strong preferences for the state-led orientation of public and private capital towards strategic sectors and initiatives, for the long-term safeguarding of national ownership of key firms and industrial sectors, through a particularly large contribution of “patient capital,” and more recently, in the wake of the imbalances generated notably by the

COVID crisis and the Ukrainian conflict, for a return to a more reasonable level of manufacturing autonomy.

In the first section of this chapter, however, we must first discuss in a more general way the resurgence of “economic nationalism” observed at the level of industrialised countries (de Bolle and Zettelmeyer, 2019), and which affects Quebec and its policies not only through the rise of protectionism among its American and European trading partners, but more broadly through the profound transformations that this resurgence is instituting within the international economic, commercial and financial systems. This will allow us to better understand, in a second step, what characterises economic nationalism in Quebec, which obviously does not have the levers – nor the constitutional competences – necessary to adopt “protectionist” policies in the common sense of the term, but which nevertheless positions itself, due to its particular financial ecosystem, as an interventionist state of the neo-corporatist type, in line with the logics identified by Katzenstein more than a generation ago.

#### **4.2 Small nation, big changes: An overview of the international context**

The return of protectionism, interventionism and, more broadly, economic nationalism has been much talked about on a global scale since at least the 2016 presidential election in the United States, and on a Quebec scale since the election of François Legault’s “nationalist” government in 2018 (de Bolle and Zettelmeyer, 2019; Graefe and Rioux, 2020). There is no doubt that these phenomena will continue to attract attention because of all the issues of agri-food, medical and, more generally, industrial self-sufficiency raised by the destabilisation of global value chains due to the global pandemic since the spring of 2020 and recently due to the rise of geopolitical tensions and the outbreak of a major war in Europe. The fact is, however, that the “resurgence” of economic nationalism and protectionism, particularly on a Western scale, is a much broader phenomenon and preceded both this pandemic and this war by more than a decade, actually dating back to the international financial crisis of 2008 (Rioux, 2022b, 2021).

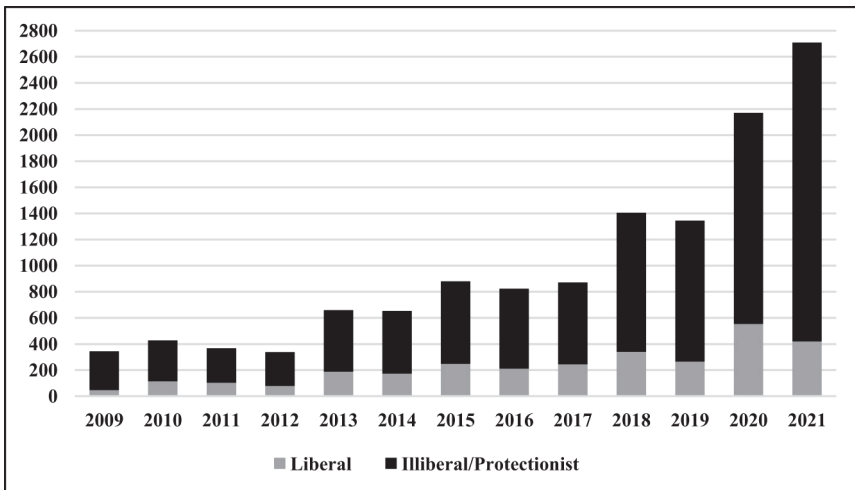
It is particularly interesting, in this respect, to assess the position of Quebec and, in particular, the “Quebec model” of development in the face of this resurgence of economic nationalism, both among small and large nations, in the context of the economic and trade instability that characterises the current situation. Referring to the rapid deepening of European integration processes – particularly monetary integration – during the 1990s, as well as the resurgence of neo-corporatist and interventionist policies in small European states in this context, Katzenstein (2003: 24) pertinently remarked at the beginning of the 2000s, in a reflection that could also be applied to the present conjuncture, that

the resurgence of corporatism may also be a manifestation of how random, exogenous shocks and historical crises activate deeply seated institutional

memories and practices in small states with an indigenous tradition of corporatist politics or encourage processes of imitation in states lacking such a tradition.

From this perspective, the questions this chapter proposes to answer are: first, why speak of a “resurgence” of economic nationalism and interventionism over the past decade and a half? Second, can we still speak of a Quebec “economic model,” combining neo-corporatism and nationalism and, if so, what are its main forms and how do they compare to the forms that the phenomenon has taken in the industrialised countries since 2008? With regard to the first question, it is clear that economic nationalism can be said to be a seriously growing phenomenon worldwide. As Figure 4.1 shows, protectionist measures implemented worldwide since the financial crisis have far outnumbered trade liberalisation measures.

The years 2020 and 2021 have obviously been special in this respect, with economic support and stimulus measures, industrial subsidies, import substitution strategies, industrial reshoring policies and export restrictions – particularly on pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, but also on critical metals and advanced technologies – being added to the tariffs and preferential government procurement strategies that have been in place for several years (Evenett and Fritz, 2021). Yet, not all states are in a position to respond to these changes in the same way: all other things being equal, smaller nations are often much more dependent on international trade in goods and services than larger ones. For this reason, they simply cannot resort to the same protectionist strategies, or to the same extent, as the big powers.



**FIGURE 4.1** New liberal vs. protectionist/illiberal trade measures, all countries of the world.

*Source:* Global Trade Alert (Center for Economic Policy Research), online: [www.globaltradealert.org/global\\_dynamics/day-to\\_1117](http://www.globaltradealert.org/global_dynamics/day-to_1117)

If we measure trade openness, for example, in terms of the simple volume of exports as a proportion of national gross domestic product (GDP), it is clear that the small countries of Scandinavia, the Baltic States and Central Europe are indeed more open *to* and dependent *on* international trade than the large states. The same disproportion also applies to central states and federated or regional states: total exports – international and interprovincial – of Quebec, for example, represent about 48% of its GDP, compared to about 32% for exports from Canada as a whole (*Institut de la statistique du Québec*, 2022). A slightly more precise measure of trade openness can be attained by calculating the percentage of GDP represented by half the sum of a jurisdiction's total exports and imports: for the year 2020, at 48.5%, Quebec was in sixth place among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, far ahead of large economies such as the United States (11.7%), Japan (15.5%), Australia (22%), the United Kingdom (27.8%), France (28.9%), Canada (29.9%), South Korea (34.6%) or Germany (40.5%), but at a level comparable to, or lower than, that of small states such as Sweden (42.3%), Austria (50%), Denmark (51.7%), Switzerland (57.9%), the Czech Republic (67.6%), Estonia (70.9%), the Netherlands (72.7%), Belgium (79.3%), Slovakia (85%), or Ireland (120%)<sup>2</sup>.

These observations raise an important point, because when we refer to economic nationalism, we spontaneously tend to think of protectionism and, in particular, import tariffs which, because of this particularly important economic openness, would be highly deleterious to the economy of small nations. However, the dominant aspect of this resurgence of economic nationalism for a little over a decade is to be found elsewhere, namely in the increase in state interventionism and in particular the use of public financial resources to influence industrial dynamics. Indeed, if it is true that trade and investment barriers have exploded since 2008, this is even more true of the use of industrial subsidies of all kinds, including export subsidies. Thus, subsidies are indeed the most widely used category of protectionist or, more precisely, nationalist measures, well beyond traditional tariff or non-tariff trade barriers.<sup>3</sup>

Industrial subsidies, export subsidies, trade-related public investment and preferential government procurement policies, which also represent a form of subsidy, thus account for more than 63% of the new nationalist measures implemented worldwide since 2009, compared to around 37% for protective tariff or non-tariff measures and foreign investment restrictions, for example, which find more favour in medium and large economies – or integrated policy groupings such as the European Union – for the reasons outlined above. The case of Europe is particularly instructive: measured as a percentage of national GDP, industrial subsidies or “state aid” offered by European states have almost doubled since the 2008 financial crisis (European Commission, 2021)<sup>4</sup>. At the level of the 28 EU member states (including the pre-Brexit UK), this ratio rose between 2008 and 2019 from an average of 0.52% to 0.84%, an increase of 62% (32 percentage points).

This substantial growth in state aid over the past decade has been confirmed for both the big powers and the small nations. Although they are inclined, unlike the smaller states, to introduce protectionist measures such as import tariffs or restrictions on foreign investment – at the level of the European Union as a whole, the carbon pricing policy at the borders announced as part of the “Green Deal (European Commission, 2019) and the suspension of the “Comprehensive Agreement on Investment” with China as part of a wider review of the principles for assessing foreign investment (European Commission, 2020) are both good examples – large economies such as France (0.57% to 0.85%), the UK (0.21% to 0.51%) and Germany (0.59% to 1.54%) have also significantly increased their use of industrial subsidies since 2008.

However, with the exception of Germany, whose subsidy activities are particularly high among the large European economies, many of the smaller European states are now at the top of the most interventionist countries in Europe. The Czech Republic (0.7% to 1.33%), Lithuania (0.16% to 1.68%), Estonia (0.09% to 1.16%), Latvia (0.5% to 0.99%), Slovenia (0.45% to 0.83%), or even Belgium (0.41% to 0.94%) have, for example, drastically increased their state aid to various industrial sectors between 2008 and 2019. The Scandinavian countries are following the same upward trend and are also in the middle or in front of the pack. Denmark, for example, has doubled its ratio of subsidies to GDP since the financial crisis (from 0.71% to 1.40%) and is now among the most interventionist states in Europe, just behind Malta (1.8%), Lithuania (1.68%), Hungary (1.67%) and Germany (1.54%). Sweden, on the other hand, more than tripled its ratio between the early 2000s (0.26%) and 2019, reaching the EU average of 0.80%. Finally, Finland also increased its industrial subsidies from 0.44% to 0.78% of its GDP between 2008 and 2019, compared to 0.30% in 2001.

One of the main forms of this resurgence in state interventionism for industrial development, which some describe as the return of “state capitalism” or “neo-Keynesianism” (van’t Klooster, 2021; Karolyi and Liao, 2017), is the multiplication and rise in importance of financial state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and in particular sovereign wealth funds or public investment banks (Carney, 2018, *Revue Politique internationale*, 2020). The sector in which SOEs are most influential internationally is indeed the financial sector, including the corporate finance sector (Bernier, Florio and Bance, 2020). Globally, for example, total SWF assets have grown from around US\$1,000 billion in 2000 to US\$4,000 billion in 2008, and to over US\$10,500 billion in 2021, following an explosion in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and 2020–2022 pandemic.<sup>5</sup> In addition, there are now more than 500 public development banks in the world, at least a fifth of which have been created since the tech bubble burst, in the early 2000s (O’Toole, 2019). A second, very large wave of such bank capitalisation then followed in the wake of the 2008 crisis. These include, of course, a good number, and still growing, of “green” investment banks, often set up at the level of federal or regional states and specifically dedicated to the energy transition and the development of eco-infrastructure (Rioux, 2020).

These trends have, of course, accelerated again in the wake of the pandemic, and will continue to deepen as the economic and trade consequences of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, widespread inflationary pressures and accelerating climate change are felt. The resurgence of economic nationalism, protectionism and interventionism, in its various forms and among both small and large nations, is a clear symptom of the new instabilities and vulnerabilities generated by this particular historical conjuncture. In this sense, Katzenstein’s theses on the diversity of adaptations to the transformations of the international economic and commercial context still appear particularly relevant. As he himself argued some 20 years ago (Katzenstein, 2003, p. 27),

The main message of *Small States* continues to be timely. Large states are growing smaller. Each large state is experiencing the condition of vulnerability differently and is trying to cope in different ways. The era of Japan’s ascendance to the position of economic superpower, for example, lasted only a decade and is by now no more than a faint memory. Whether and how Japan will be able to pay its bills seems more important. Similarly September 11, the return to budget deficits, the growth of an enormous balance of trade deficit, a persistent macroeconomic savings gap, the discovery of crony capitalism on a wide scale in American business, and the ensuing crisis of confidence on Wall Street, illustrate the quickness with which the wheel of fortune has turned for the USA. China’s or Europe’s moment of glory, should it come, might be even briefer than that of Japan and the United States. Vulnerability in large states produces a different politics than in small ones. Whether we call it internationalisation or globalisation, the underlying condition, however, is here to stay and will force important change in how large states exercise their reconstituted sovereign powers.

Another example of a major economy responding to this new environment of instability in the global economic and trading systems can be cited. In late 2020, the Industry Strategy Council of Canada (2020), in its report to the federal government, effectively recommended an unprecedented mobilisation of Canada’s financial Crown corporations – Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), Export Development Canada, Farm Credit Canada, Infrastructure Bank of Canada – directing them to “move up the risk curve and to provide significant additional growth and scale-up capital to Canadian businesses” in all sectors, as well as (re)capitalising a multitude of specialised R&D, venture and development capital, infrastructure investments and “inclusive growth” funds (Industry Strategy Council of Canada, 2020, p. 40).

The Council’s report goes even further, recommending that the federal government adopt an interventionist industrial policy for Canada’s economic recovery, energy transition and technology progress, focusing primarily on mobilising institutional and private capital through public investment (Industry

Strategy Board of Canada, 2020). It would be difficult to overstate the unorthodox nature of this report's preferred approach in view of Canada's liberal tradition of industrial development (Normand, 2022), but for all the reasons discussed so far, this proposed interventionist turn is not very surprising. Like all Western countries, Canada faces a fourfold incentive to inject massive amounts of capital into the economy: (a) economic and geopolitical instability, (b) the fourth industrial revolution, (c) the energy transition, and (d) growing competition from Asian state capitalisms. Moreover, such a shift would be in line with another long Canadian tradition: that of using the federal "spending power" for strategies that are sometimes complementary, but often competing, with those of Quebec. For it should be remembered that Quebec has already developed, after 60 years of effort, an economic model of its own, based precisely on interventionism and neo-corporatism (Paquin and Rioux, 2022).

### 4.3 Quebec interventionism: Between consolidation and transformation

It has already been well established by several studies, which have focused on the financial policies of the Quiet Revolution and their legacy, that Quebec is more interventionist than the other provinces or Canada as a whole (Paquin and Rioux, 2022). As early as the mid-1990s, the Quebec economic model was associated with the neo-corporatism characteristic of small European states (Bourque, 1995, 2000) and to a large extent, this definition still holds true today. As Paquin (2022, pp. 31, 36–37) reminds us,<sup>6</sup>

neo-corporatism in Quebec means that there is an interconnection between the state and interest groups in the development of public policies, which sometimes goes as far as the co-construction of public policies, particularly in the case of major socio-economic summits [...] The Quebec model of economic and financial cooperation, the "Quebec Inc.," represents another originality of the Quebec model. Since the 1980s, there have been many tools in the financial sector to protect Quebec's "economic decision-making centres" [...] Thus, the most important financial players in Quebec are either government corporations (*Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, Investissement Québec*) or a cooperative enterprise (*Mouvement Desjardins*). The National Bank is the third largest financial institution, followed by union-sponsored funds.

These particularities – socio-economic cooperation, a strong state, important cooperative and union presence in the financial sector, but also and perhaps above all, close ties between the economic-financial elite and the state (Laurin-Lamothe, 2019, pp. 167–173) – are not evaporating legacies of the past but remain central to the strategies and policies characterising the Quebec model. The gap with Canada and the other provinces in this regard has been constantly widened, especially since

the 2008 financial crisis. Since this crisis, interventionism has indeed increased again in Quebec, both in the financial and industrial spheres. In 2020, the Quebec government – whose definition excludes financial Crown corporations such as the *Caisse de dépôt et placement* or *Investissement Québec* – held the equivalent of 29% of provincial GDP in direct holdings in companies or investment funds, a proportion that is growing rapidly and is now more than twice the Canadian average and more than three times the Ontario proportion (Figure 4.2). Not only does financial intervention in Quebec remain much more important than elsewhere in Canada, but the gap between the Quebec and Ontario or Canadian models in this regard has also widened.

Notably because of the financing activities of *Investissement Québec* and the *Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec* (CDPQ), and also because of the intervention of its labour-sponsored funds and its social economy institutions – *Fonds de solidarité des travailleurs et des travailleuses du Québec*, *Fondation de la Confédération des syndicats nationaux*, *Capital Régional et Coopératif Desjardins*, *Fiducie du Chantier de l'économie sociale*, etc. – year after year and with a few exceptions, Quebec's share of the Canadian development capital market is significantly higher than its relative economic weight in Canada, both in terms of the number and value of annual transactions.

In 2021, for example, 69% of the transactions and 51% of the value development capital committed to companies in Canada were in Quebec, which represents a difference of several tens of percentage points compared to the province's economic

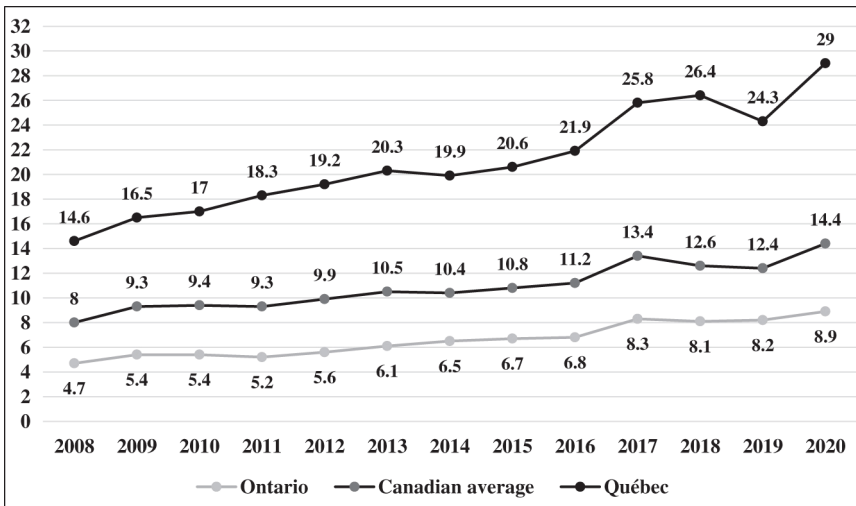


FIGURE 4.2 Provincial and municipal government holdings of corporate and investment fund shares (as a % of real GDP, chained 2012 \$ millions).

Source: Statistique Canada, Table 10-10-0147-01.

weight within Canada, which is approximately 20%. The contributions of government and tax-advantaged funds to this outperformance of the Quebec development capital industry have been and remain absolutely fundamental. Over the past six years, between 2015 and 2021, the total value of development capital transactions involving the CDPQ, *Investissement Québec*, the *Fonds de solidarité FTQ*, *Fondaction*, or *Capital Régional et Coopératif Desjardins* has been over \$60 billion, for an annual average of \$10 billion (Canadian Venture Capital Association, 2022). Year after year, moreover, these five major institutions of the Quebec development model are systematically among the ten most active investors in Canada.

A very similar observation can be made with regard to venture capital, more specifically: in fact, measured in terms of investments as a proportion of GDP, the Quebec venture capital industry is now one of the best performing in the world, far ahead of Canada as a whole or the average of OECD countries, and sometimes even approaching the levels of investment found in the United States, which remains the world's greatest power in this field, along with Israel and Singapore, in particular. Moreover, not only has Quebec consistently and substantially outperformed Canada and the OECD average in this regard for decades, but it even outperformed the United States in the late 1990s and in the years following the bursting of the technology bubble in the early 2000s, until the financial crisis of 2008 (Figure 4.3).

What partly explains the outperformance of the Quebec venture capital ecosystem and what makes it special, here again, is the intervention of the State and its public partners. Despite a few reforms that reduced the scope of intervention, such as the privatisation of the *Innovatech* funds in the 2000s or the relative reduction of the

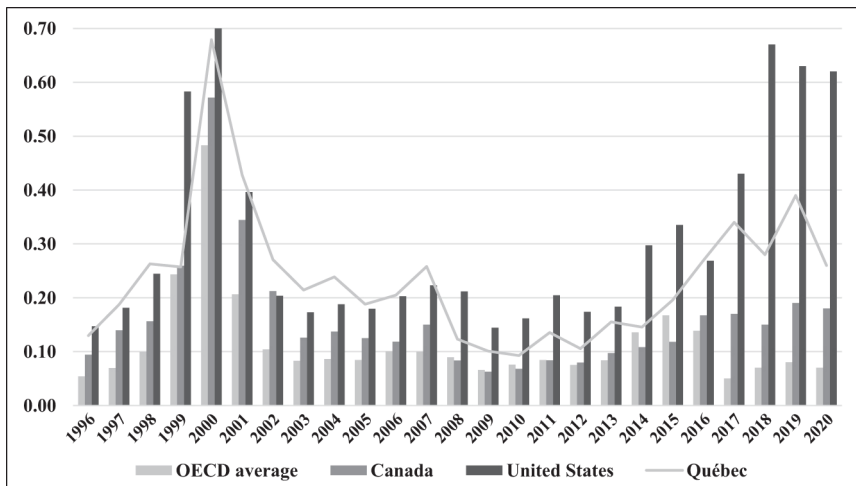


FIGURE 4.3 Venture capital investments as percentage of GDP.

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec (2017); OECD. Stat, *Venture Capital Investments*, online: [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=VC\\_INVEST](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=VC_INVEST)

*Société générale de financement*'s interventions until its merger with *Investissement Québec* in 2011, interventionism in the field of venture capital has even intensified since then, notably through the sponsorship of private funds to the tune of billions of dollars. As a result, in Quebec, almost all of these private funds are, in one form or another and to the tune of nearly 50% on average, capitalised by the State and/or its financial instruments, such as *Investissement Québec* or the CDPQ, as well as by labour-sponsored funds (Rioux, 2022). Considering, furthermore, that the vast majority of private funds operating in Quebec have been capitalised in part by the State or Quebec's tax-advantaged funds, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the State is partially involved, directly and/or indirectly, in almost all venture capital transactions carried out in Quebec each year.

How does this influence play out in practice and what difference does it make? There are many things to discuss here, but it is worth highlighting two that are somewhat encompassing of the whole phenomenon. First, according to compilations made a few years ago by the *Institut de la statistique du Québec* (which unfortunately have not been reproduced since), Quebec is by far the jurisdiction in North America with the most balanced distribution of venture capital by sector, leaving a large place (on average more than 25% of the capital invested annually) to traditional industries – notably manufacturing – rather than betting everything on “cutting edge” fields, such as information and communication technologies, life sciences, or clean technologies and energies, which account for 95% or more of venture capital deals in Ontario, Massachusetts, California, Texas, or in OECD countries on average, and nearly 90% in New York State or in Canada as a whole (Figure 4.4).

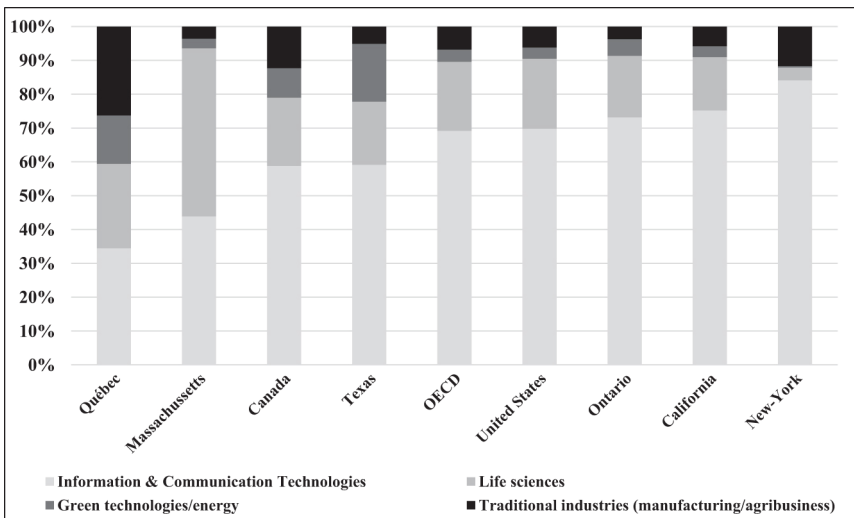


FIGURE 4.4 Venture capital investments by industrial sector (% of total, average 2012–2016).

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec (2017).

Second, again according to data compiled by the *Institut de la statistique du Québec*, Quebec is also the North American jurisdiction where the distribution of venture capital investments according to the growth stage of companies is the most diversified, leaving a very large and even predominant place (nearly 45% of annual investments on average, compared to 31% in Canada and 21% in Ontario) to “mature” companies in the later stages of diversification, consolidation, or even succession and transfer (Figure 4.5). Combined with the greater diversity of industrial sectors covered by Quebec venture capital, which will prove important as the technological modernisation of manufacturing companies accelerates, this more generous allocation of investments to mature companies allows, first and foremost and in many cases, to safeguard Quebec ownership of companies over the long term, and then, as a corollary, to maintain a level of resilience, particularly in times of crisis, that is higher than the Canadian average, as calculated in particular on the basis of company death rates (Rioux, 2022, pp. 272–273).

Over the past few years, particularly in the wake of the pandemic and the severe destabilisation of international supply chains which followed, the Quebec financial ecosystem (including government resources) has been mobilised in part to address some of the vulnerabilities of the manufacturing sector, as revealed by this crisis. Fears of food, pharmaceutical and medical equipment shortages in 2020, partly justified by protectionist measures – such as export restrictions – implemented by China, the United States and the European Union, have since given way to a much broader perception of manufacturing vulnerability, linked to the profound

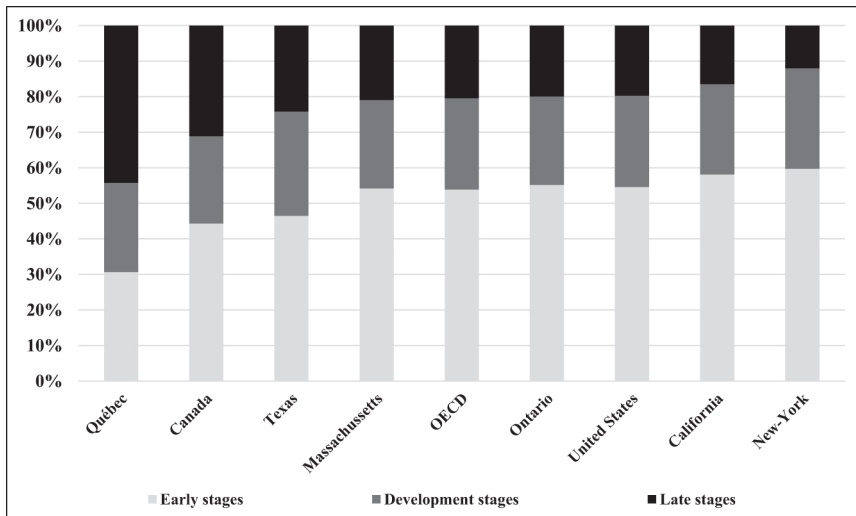


FIGURE 4.5 Venture capital investments by stage of development (% of total, average 2012–2016).

Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec (2017).

destabilisation of international supply chains caused by this health crisis, but also by the acceleration of climatic upheavals, the increase in geopolitical tensions, the outbreak of the Ukrainian conflict and finally by generalised inflation, reflected in particular in the explosion of maritime transport costs (Rioux, 2021b, 2022b).

Here, Quebec's vulnerability is twofold: it stems both from a strong perception, linked to its characteristic trade openness and thus to its significant exposure to the aforementioned imbalances, and from the very concrete reality of its relative deindustrialisation over the last few decades, which has created a major dependence on foreign companies and manufacturing imports. As of 2019, only 33% of Quebec's total domestic demand for manufacturing inputs and finished products was met by local production, leaving Quebec dependent on imports for the equivalent of 67% of its domestic manufacturing market (Rioux, 2021b, pp. 71–80).

This obviously places Quebec in a position of real economic vulnerability, as the health crisis has clearly shown. However, it must also be seen that this dependence on manufacturing imports is, in some sectors, even more problematic, as Quebec's total domestic demand is, for example, met by imports in proportions of more than 95% for pharmaceuticals and electronics, 85% for transport equipment, 80% for chemical products and industrial machinery and 70% for medical equipment. More broadly, this dependence on manufacturing imports has meant that Quebec's economic openness has resulted in a deficit of its manufacturing trade balance fluctuating, since the 2008 financial crisis, between \$3 and \$10 billion (Rioux, 2021b, p. 56). However, even in terms of its exports, Quebec's vulnerability is clear: as of 2019, foreign multinationals accounted for less than 10% of the total population of manufacturing companies active in Quebec, but represented almost 60% of the province's export volume (Rioux, 2021b, pp. 52–54).

Faced with these vulnerabilities, Quebec's response over the past two years has been twofold, representative of its interventionist and neo-corporatist tradition. First, in the wake of the reform initiated by Bill 27 (Quebec National Assembly, 2019), the government has mobilised *Investissement Québec* to encourage, through corporate financing, industrial reshoring and, above all, the substitution of manufacturing imports by a more systematic recourse to local procurement by Quebec producers. This SOE has created a new vice-presidency for "Québec purchasing and economic development," dedicated to these issues and which, through collaboration with sectoral manufacturing associations and clusters – for example, *AéroMontréal* (aerospace), *Propulsion Québec* (transport electrification), *aluQuébec* (aluminium), *Regroupement des entreprises en automatisation industrielle*, etc. – works to guide manufacturers in their efforts to relocate to Quebec or to find new, local suppliers. In addition to providing logistical and financial advice, it also provides networking services with local suppliers and, of course, financing (Investissement Québec, 2021, p. 22).

In a second phase, at the beginning of 2022, Quebec also turned to government procurement in order to give local producers an advantage in calls for tenders from various administrative levels and Crown corporations, and thus to eventually

substitute up to \$400 million annually in imports through public procurement (Government of Quebec, 2022, p. 5). As part of its new strategy *Pour des marchés publics innovants. Priorité à l'achat québécois*, and then under the related Bill 12 (“An Act to promote responsible purchasing by public bodies”), the Government of Quebec intends to implement over the next few years new bid evaluation criteria – particularly environmental criteria – as well as certain preferential margins that will directly and/or indirectly benefit Quebec businesses in terms of access to public contracts (Government of Quebec, 2022; Quebec National Assembly, 2022). As we argued earlier, such a strategy also resembles a subsidy policy or at least a government investment policy, insofar as the traditional market principle of the “lowest compliant bidder” is partially marginalised.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

It seems that, despite its constitutional status, the case of Quebec corresponds fairly well to Katzenstein’s theses on the commercial openness of small European nations, their economic vulnerability and the adaptability of their neo-corporatist intervention models to international economic transformations. While there is no doubt about the distinctive character of the Quebec model in Canada, there are five main elements that link the Quebec model to what can be described as neo-corporatism and financial nationalism. First, there is a constantly renewed political will to consolidate the Quebec corporate finance industry. We are thinking here of labour-sponsored funds, which are unique in Quebec and enjoy solid and stable support from the Quebec government, or of the entire responsible and solidarity-based finance sector, whose dynamism distinguishes Quebec’s financial ecosystem from that of North America and which is also supported, to a large extent, by the Quebec government and by these same labour-sponsored funds (Rioux, 2020b).

Second, in the case of Quebec, there is a real need for ongoing strategic coordination between public, institutional and private investors. The capitalisation of private venture capital funds is an excellent example: the Quebec government, labour-sponsored funds, *Desjardins*, the CDPQ and *Investissement Québec* pool their resources and work together on strategies and preferred investment sectors (Rioux, 2022). The third objective of the Quebec model is therefore to channel Quebecers’ savings and private investment as far as possible in the way of government industrial strategies and/or the general interest: this can be seen, for example, in the green energy sector, where the State channels a great deal of capital into the battery and electric transport sectors (Dubuc, Bergeron and Joncas, 2021), and it can also be seen in relation to the key issues of manufacturing modernisation and reshoring, where the Quebec State, particularly through the financing programmes managed by *Investissement Québec* but also through public procurement, commits large amounts of public capital to support local investment.

This last example is revealing, since this desire to channel private investment towards increasing local manufacturing production and supply is intended to

maintain and accentuate Quebec's level of productive autonomy, particularly given the vulnerabilities revealed in the wake of the pandemic. This is a fourth characteristic of the Quebec model, which is also confirmed, for example, by the significant public investments made in the entrepreneurial succession niche, in order to finance and support the local takeover of businesses, particularly family businesses. In recent years, the "*Fonds pour la croissance des entreprises québécoises*" has also been set up to safeguard the ownership of high-potential small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and national industrial champions in Quebec. This fund should serve as a sort of collective financial instrument to prevent the relocation of head offices that are "strategic" for the Quebec economy (Rioux, 2021, pp. 41–42).

Finally, this neo-corporatism and financial nationalism, which both stem in part from the perception of economic vulnerability that characterises Quebec like many other small nations, means that beyond the occasional criticism of the Quebec model, the state's capacity to intervene strategically is generally perceived positively, even as necessary. This is seen every time a major "*Quebec Inc.*" company is in difficulty or at risk of being sold abroad: even if it is not always possible to protect strategic head offices, proposals and attempts are frequently put forward to this end (Government of Quebec, 2017; *Groupe de travail sur la protection des entreprises québécoises*, 2014). This has also been observed more recently, when, in parallel to the above-mentioned initiatives on head office retention or import substitution, the major reform and strengthening of *Investissement Québec*, stemming from Bill 27, has been widely welcomed, notwithstanding some natural reservations, by both the financial ecosystem in particular and the general population (Rioux, 2019, 2020).

## Notes

- 1 Katzenstein (1985, p. 32) refers to it as "democratic corporatism" and defines it as "distinguished by three traits: an ideology of social partnership expressed at the national level; a relatively centralized and concentrated system of interest groups; and voluntary and informal coordination of conflicting objectives through continuous political bargaining between interest groups, state bureaucracies, and political parties."
- 2 The Global Economy, online: [www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/trade\\_openness/OECD/](http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/trade_openness/OECD/)
- 3 Global Trade Alert (Center for Economic Policy Research), online: [www.globaltradealert.org/global\\_dynamics/day-to\\_1117](http://www.globaltradealert.org/global_dynamics/day-to_1117)
- 4 Totals from the European Commission's "State-aid Scoreboard" exclude State aid to the railway, agriculture, and fisheries sectors as well as emergency aid to the financial sector.
- 5 Statista, online: [www.statista.com/statistics/1267499/assets-under-management-of-swfs-worldwide/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/1267499/assets-under-management-of-swfs-worldwide/)
- 6 Our translation.

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## **PART II**

# Re-examining Japan from a small-nation perspective



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# 5

## JAPAN, A SMALL NATION FEIGNING TO BE SOMETHING GREATER

Redefining universality with special reference to the religious and the secular and a counter intellectual history<sup>1</sup>

*Kiyonobu Date*

### 5.1 Introduction: Reconsidering Japan as a small nation to redefine universality

Japan's national novelist, Shiba Ryōtarō, begins one of his masterpieces, *Sakano ueno kumo* (*Clouds Above the Hill*, 1968–1972) with the following sentence: “A small nation is now about to enter a blooming period.” This is a symbolic statement which shows that the writer was seeing modernising Japan as a “small nation.” He positively assesses the growth of this nation up to the Russo-Japanese War, but he criticises the militarised Japan that has acquired a mentality of a large nation.

After seeing a post-war period of rapid economic growth, Japan came to see itself as an “economic superpower.” But after the collapse of the “bubble economy,” the country was caught in the whirlpool of globalisation, and is beginning to question its own identity, especially amid the United States (US)–China friction. From this observation it is possible to state that Japan, in its process of modernisation, has perceived itself not only as a small nation but also as a large nation and has wavered between these two ways of looking at its own nation.

Defining substantively whether Japan is a large or small nation is not meaningful unless it is examined contextually, since largeness and smallness are relational and depend on social and historical contexts. Based on this premise, the first working hypothesis of this chapter attempts to connect Japanese historical experience with a notion of “universality.” In the dichotomy of universality and particularity, Japan, as a country, has been classified on the side of particularity, and it is said that this nation lacks the moment of transcendent universality (Bellah, 2010; Maruyama, 1961). In recent years, however, a small number of studies have approached the concept of universality from a Japanese point of view (Mitani, 2020). In such a case, it is necessary to avoid falling into an ethnocentric advocacy of “universality”

that would simply reverse the conventional “particular” to the “universal.” It is instructive in this regard to refer to what Baik Young-seo, a Korean historian and specialist of contemporary East Asian history, calls the “core location.” This term represents a place “where contradictions across time and space are concentrated” (Baik, 2016: 4). What Baik specifically had in mind was the “double peripheries” associated with infinite “transferred oppression” in the modern dynamics between empires and their colonies, such as Okinawa, Taiwan and the divided Korean Peninsula. However, he also states that “any of our living environments could potentially be core locations.” Such locations could carry specific names or represent more abstract political communities. In this sense, core locations may be found in various parts of Japan, and Japan itself could also be considered as a core location. From this point of view, Japan offers an interesting example in that this nation, oscillating between the consciousness of a small nation and that of great nation, has become a mediator of “transferred oppression.” This nation has become a responsible subject of creating “core locations” – small nations and collectivities – both inside and outside its territory.<sup>2</sup> The idea of core location allows us to think about universality from another perspective. It is true that certain ideas and commodities that are accepted around the world are usually considered as “universal,” but the idea of core location can revolutionalise this notion of “universality” by redefining it as universal human experiences in the consciousness of “small nations” that resists the growing “great powers.” Here we can also witness the paradox of the relationship between large and small nations. For example, aspiration to be bigger can turn out to be small, barbaric and particular, while we could find in the smallness what it is really great, human and universal.

The second working hypothesis is to relate the secular and the religious to the dialectical dynamism of large and small nations. In the past, modernisation theory was often premised on the secularisation theory that religion would decline as modernisation progressed. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt’s theory of multiple modernities, Jean-François Laniel’s discussions on small nations as well as José Casanova’s argument on public religion are characterised by a focus on the role played by religion in the modernisation of small nations (Eisenstadt ed., 2002; Laniel, 2017; Casanova, 1994). It is also known that the dichotomy between “religion” and “secular” is not wholly applicable outside the Christian West (Asad, 1993; Asad, 2003). Richard Madsen has argued that in Asia, even with the appearance of a secular political regime, there is often a hidden religious spirit; in the social level, religion tends to be viewed as a private faith in the West, whereas in Asia, ritual and mythology are more important; in cultural aspects, Asian religions have been characterised by communal practices, but in recent years there are more and more people who choose a set of beliefs and practices that are more in line with their individual sensibilities (Madsen, 2011).

We can safely say that the most well-received image of “great power” for Japanese people may be that of the West when it took over the previously dominant image of China. This switch took place in the middle of the 19th century, and it

was around the same time that this small nation encountered with the “religious” and “secular” dichotomy. In this context, Japan’s political and religious relations were also reconfigured. Adding further to this discussion, Japan later faced the challenge of creating a modern state in the form of a secular system that would ensure religious freedom. In the end, Japan created a polity that could be described as both religious and secular (which demonstrates the limitations of the Western-style dichotomy of secularity and religion). Having gained political legitimacy, this polity began to engender various contradictions and core locations both internally and externally. This chapter sets the hypothesis that life experiences in these locations may provide insights into their universal nature with traces of specific contexts. Should universal experiences such as these be considered secular or religious? This sort of binary question is probably rather meaningless. One thing is for certain, however: universality derived from life experiences in core locations – regardless of whether they are defined as religious or secular – differs in quality and dimensions from the religiosity or secularity of an apparatus that, as an actor, causes transferred oppression. It might be possible from such a perspective to make a categorisation of the religious.

Third, in this chapter, while postulating that the mainstream orientation of modern and contemporary Japanese nation is feigning to be something greater, I would like to grasp the significance of the critical spirit of those who envisioned this country as a small nation. Tanaka Akira, the author of *Nationalism of a Small Nation*, focuses on the position taken by a small number of intellectuals who criticised the general tendency of modern Japan to aspire towards greater power after the Russo-Japanese War (Tanaka, 1999). As a historian of the wartime generation, Tanaka (born in 1928) seems to emphasise the rupture between pre-war and post-war periods, seeing the accomplishment of the Japanese pursuit of prosperity as a small nation in the Japanese Constitution of 1946. In contrast, science historian Yoshitaka Yamamoto (born in 1941) emphasises the continuity between pre-war and post-war Japan, which spanned 150 years (Yamamoto, 2018). If so, it is necessary to find the genealogy of those who advocate the power of smallness in the post-war period and evaluate its significance.

Being placed at the beginning of the Japan and Asia part of this book, this chapter has an introductory character and it tries to overview the issues.<sup>3</sup> At the core of these interrelated issues, a question needs to be addressed: in what way can Japan successfully achieve a shift to a small nation? This chapter will illustrate the importance of retracing a genealogy of Japanese small-nation theory and of divesting itself from the mainstream, superpower-oriented thinking.

## 5.2 Premodern Japan as a small nation and its religious aspects

The image of Japan as a nation state in the modern world today should not be projected back to the distant past. Before trying to understand how modern and contemporary Japan has swayed between its perceived weaknesses or smallness

and its sense of greatness, let us begin with an overview of how pre-modern Japan perceived it, for it helps to understand the relationship between the religious and the political in an era when the modern Western-derived concept of religion did not yet exist.

The Japanese people in pre-modern era also had long perceived themselves as being on the periphery of the global core. The major difference then was that they perceived their nation as “small” against the great power of China.<sup>4</sup> For instance, the *Dongyi (Encounters with Eastern Barbarians)* passage in the *Book of Sui*, which was completed in AD 636, mentions that a king of Japan, known as a *Wa* in those days, referred to himself as a “barbarian” and sought lessons in how to transform his kingdom into a great power like China (quoted by Narusawa, 2012:127). In this instance, the relationship between civilised China and its barbarian neighbours in the Sinocentric system overlaps with that of a great power and small nations.

As Buddhism gained a local foothold, the Japanese began to view the world as being divided into three regions: Tianzhu (i.e., India as the birthplace of Buddhism), China and Japan. This development provided the Japanese with a means of acquiring a fresh perspective to relativise China. With classification according to a state’s proximity to the home of Buddhism being added to the distinction between civilised China and its barbarian neighbours, Japan would be considered nothing more than a tiny outland in contrast to Tianzhu. In the mid-Heian period, from the 10th century onwards, coupled with the prevailing view of an impending Buddhist decline, the Japanese began to deplore the ethical inferiority of the many inhabitants of their petty outland, all of whom fell far short of the Buddhist truth.

Throughout the Heian period (8th to 12th centuries), the Japanese overcame the sense of inferiority associated with their being an outland due to the famous theory of *honji suijaku*, which asserts that Buddhist deities appear in Japan as native Shinto gods. Narusawa Akira points out that this theory provided the Japanese with “an opportunity to turn their outland into a divine land of the gods,” which in turn justified their portrayal of Japan as “a great nation instead of a small nation” (Narusawa, 2012:189–193).

Initially, as argued by Satō Hiroo, the medieval Japanese belief in their entitlement to divine protection did not translate into Japanese superiority over other countries. This belief simply amounted to an attempt to find a suitable position in the world of Buddhism based on the idea that the truth that exists beyond the world of the living tangibly manifests itself in the earthbound land of Japan. Such an underlying dichotomy drew a line between our world and another, instead of comparing the relative merits of Japan and other countries. Later, as medieval Japan transitioned into the early modern period, the backing of such a Buddhist universal world view was gradually eroded. From the middle of the Edo period onwards, the divine protection of Japan, therefore, began to carry a different meaning, and some Shintoists and Japanese classical scholars began to assert Japanese ethnocentric superiority by relying on this newly emerging concept (Satō, 2006).

During this process, Buddhism gradually ceased to serve as a transcendental instance for relativising the world of the living because it was transformed into something that provided moral and social supports to the earthly political system. The ruling Tokugawa shogunate politically exploited Buddhism under its strict control while banning Christianity. Instead, Confucianism became widely accepted and practised by the ruling samurai class, and Confucian philosophy was accepted in close association with Shintoism.

During the Edo period, Japan's international consciousness was based on Confucian Sinocentrism. In terms of political units, Japan was recognised as a small nation, which cast Japan as a "barbarian" neighbour as compared to civilised China. Meanwhile, another attempt was made to reshape the country's tributary diplomacy with China into a more equitable bilateral relationship by leaning on the Confucian idea of putting names and titles in the right order (i.e., to place Japanese emperors on a par with Chinese emperors). With Japan's inferiority complex towards China having been reversed, some Confucianists and Japanese classical scholars even adhered to Japan-centrism, claiming that Japan was the centre of civilisation.

Kojima Tsuyoshi points out that a religious policy influenced by Chinese Confucianism encouraged the destruction of shrines that were said to be dedicated to evil deities (*inshi*) and promoted the consolidation of the remaining shrines (Kojima, 2017:43). He goes on to explain that a new form of Shintoism was shaped in the early modern period by drawing on Confucianism as an ideological resource, which would later bolster the modern state of Japan in the Meiji era and beyond. His account implies that State Shinto shrines in modern Japan draw on Chinese Confucianism as an ideological resource.

Confronted by the Western powers during the twilight years of the Tokugawa shogunate and the subsequent Meiji Revolution, Japan took a more egalitarian view of relations among states in a move away from the earlier Sinocentric view. In practice, however, this egalitarian ideal remained overshadowed by the international reality of power politics. For this reason, the idea behind Sinocentrism was not completely cast away. Instead, the West replaced China as the centre of civilisation. As a result, the Japanese would assume contradictory attitudes based on reverence of Western countries and contempt for fellow Asian countries (Uete, 1971).

### **5.3 Is modern Japan's national body secular or religious or rather Confucian?**

As suggested above, when Japan's most fundamental reference point to shape its own identity shifted from China to the West, this small nation met with the "religious" and "secular" dichotomy. In such a context, what types of ideological resources of a secular or religious nature were mobilised in Japan to create a new source of political legitimacy? It is worth asking this question in connection with the small nation studies because one of the major challenges that modernising Japan faced

was a reconstruction of the relationship between politics and the religious, namely, creating a government institution that had a “secular” appearance but incorporated a “religious” ethos in practice; and making Japanese people familiar with this ethos through rituals, myths and education. In short, it was a typical reaction and strategy of a small nation to adapt itself to the global standard by building a new political and religious system that could assure the freedom of religion as well as the national integration. At the very core was an emperor and imperial household, being Buddhism, Shintoism and Christianity set aside. Was this national body (or *kokutai*) religious or secular in nature?

According to one master narrative, the Japanese political system was built during the Meiji era around State Shinto and led by the emperor until 1945. After Japan’s defeat in the Second World War, this system was dismantled to give way to a secular political system liberated from religious authority (Miyazawa, [1968] 1978; Murakami, 1970). Actually, the term “State Shinto” was seldom used in pre-war Japan; it appears in the Shinto Directive in December 1945 as a retrospective concept to collectively describe the political and religious structure in pre-war Japan. Some Shinto scholars have objected to the view that Shinto would serve as a militaristic ideology, reasoning that State Shinto was supposed to only refer to Shrine Shinto (Ashizu, 1987; Sakamoto, 1994). Even an opponent to a statist ideology added nuance to a broad notion of State Shinto (Yasumaru, 1992:194). However, the idea that State Shinto carried through into the post-war period – Shinto Directive left indeed Imperial Household Shinto untouched – is important (Shimazono, 2010). Anyway, the master narrative on the transition from a religious state to a secular state was brought about through discussions on State Shinto in post-war Japan (Yamaguchi, ed., 2018).

The narrative according to which the relationship between the politics and religion in post-war Japan is authentically secular may portray the automatisations of politics from religious authority as an achievement of modernisation. However, an overemphasis of this narrative obscures several important issues. One blind spot is the lingering legacy of State Shinto. In fact, it can be claimed that State Shinto endures even today as a national ideology with the imperial cult at its core (Shimazono, 2010).

Another blinder is the possible existence of a logical premise for the separation of politics and religion in pre-war Japan. On this point, Jason Josephson proposed the notion of “Shinto Secular.” Instead of seeing the officialisation of Shrine Shinto as the foundation of State Shinto, he looks more closely at efforts by the leaders of Meiji Japan to form a common core for Japanese people, concluding that it is inappropriate to call this core a state religion. Although Article 3 of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan stipulated that “the Emperor is sacred and inviolable,” Article 28 guaranteed freedom of religion (“Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religion”). In reality, this provision fell short of guaranteeing freedom of religion founded on the natural human rights, but at

least on paper, the political system in place at that time was sufficiently secular (Josephson, 2012). Such a new trend of research has appeared, contributing to the exploration of how secularity was formed in modern Japan (Rots and Teeuwen eds., 2017). It is useful to compare and situate the case of a small Asian nation in the context of international comparative studies of secularity or secularism (Warner, Vanantwerpen and Calhoun eds., 2010; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and Vanantwerpen eds., 2011; Baubérot and Milot, 2011; etc.). Since a dichotomous approach that treats religion and secularity as mutually exclusive to the Japanese national body is sterile, State Shinto or Secular Shinto discussions rather reveal limitations to a simple application of the Western-style dichotomy of secular and religion on Japanese national body.<sup>5</sup>

One more factor that should be noted is the position of Confucian elements in Japanese national body, or what is referred to as State Shinto or Shinto Secular. At the end of the 19th century, Confucianism was categorised as one of the major world religions according to the European intellectual paradigm. However, it would be more accurate to say that Confucianism is a social and cultural system that is more focused on earthly matters. It has not given rise to any religious institutions that are organised around transcendental values from beyond our world. For this reason, Confucianism does not quite fit the Western notion of religion as generally accepted in the Christian world (Sun, 2013).

In Japan, a new political and religious structure developed based on the notion of religion introduced from the West in the latter half of the 19th century. During the Edo period, the Japanese notion of the “three teachings” traditionally referred to Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism. At the end of the Meiji era, though, the government invited representatives of the three religions of Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity. This means that these three were institutionally categorised in religion, while Confucianism was omitted. When Shinto was divided into religious Shinto and Shrine Shinto, the latter of which was officially a non-religious form of Shinto that involved conducting rites for the state, what happened to Confucianism? Kojima Tsuyoshi asserts that Shinto tapped into Confucianism as an ideological resource throughout the early and late modern periods (Kojima, 2017).

Japanese modernisation, though commonly equated with Westernisation, had been in fact prepared by Confucian elements, and the role of the West was rather a catalyst. Based on this line of thinking, what we call State Shinto or Shinto Secular can be assumed to have adopted many Confucian elements. According to Hiroshi Watanabe, Japanese intellectuals cultured in Confucianism during these modern periods relied on the universal framework of this Chinese philosophy to understand Western-style universality. If the Meiji state was built by embracing the Western notion of religion, we can say that the constructed imperial state is “not Japanese,” in that the intellectual and political leaders in Meiji Japan had “a Chinese intellectual framework,” to “build this ‘educational’ and ‘religious’ state by emulating the West” (Watanabe, 2016: 283). Jun Yonaha makes a more schematic and direct statement, considering the imperial Meiji state as an “emergence of a tyrannical

monarchy relying on Confucian morality.” It was “a unified sovereign authority just like that of the Chinese emperors had been,” by “eliminating the previous dual power structure occupied also by shoguns” (Yonaha, 2014:146). Indeed, the political system of the Edo period can be considered as a federation of small countries or nations having as its two heads the imperial court and shogunate. The construction of the Meiji State can be understood in this regard as an elimination of shogunate and a centralisation of the imperial power.

Based on this premise that the process through which Japan was Westernised had been to some degree prepared by Confucian ideas, Japanese modernisation can be considered equally, or perhaps even more, attributable to Sinicisation or a deeper embrace of Confucianism. This implication supports the plausible explanation that although Japan was forced to regard itself as a small nation in the face of the Western powers, it had also internalised a Confucian-style classification in relation to the centre of civilisation and barbaric peripheries, and the adoption of this classification eventually took an offensive turn when it developed into a sense of greatness toward its neighbours.

This political and religious structure is somewhat secular and Confucian in nature, and the national body of pre-war Japan was characterised by expansionist tendencies. Dismantling this body, in fact, formed the core component of the occupation policy adopted by the US in the immediate wake of Japan’s defeat in the Second World War. Although this move certainly helped build the democratic foundation for a free and peaceful country, it placed Japan at the forefront in the camp of the Free World during the rivalry of the Cold War. If the United States promoted freedom of religion in Japan, it was not out of genuine concern for human rights and the self-actualisation of individual Japanese, but with a strategic interest in international security (Su, 2016:91). On one hand, the transition from pre-war to post-war Japan certainly ensured that sovereignty was passed from the Emperor to the people. On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that the replacement of the Emperor by the United States as a virtual and transcendental yardstick served to impart legitimacy to the governance of Japan (Yoshimi and Morris-Suzuki, 2010). Shirai Satoshi goes so far as to regard the United States as the national body of post-war Japan. He even remarked that the essence of the political ideology introduced by the United States to defeat Japanese people was neither freedom nor democracy, but rather “a right to discriminate against fellow Asians” (Shirai, 2018:305).

#### **5.4 Oscillating perception of smallness/greatness and critical intellectual genealogy of seeing Japan as a small nation**

Over the course of their country’s modern and contemporary history, the Japanese have held two conflicting perceptions of their weaknesses and greatness. Broadly speaking, they perceived themselves as a small nation when compared with the Western powers, while behaving as a great power at home and towards their Asian

neighbours. Eventually, after the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War in particular, they began to vie with the West as an emerging power. Japan's path leading up to the Second World War was heavily tinged with the pursuit of military power, while its path thereafter was focused on the pursuit of economic power. It is worth discussing whether discontinuity or continuity can be found between these two types of pursuits. Another issue in question is to uncover a subterranean counter- intellectual current that has been casting critical eyes on modern and contemporary Japan's major trends to become a greater power.

#### 5.4.1 Pre-war period: From 1868 to 1945

Just after the Meiji Revolution (1868), the Iwakura Mission visited to the United States and Europe. While considering the United Kingdom, the United States and France as the three greatest powers of the world, it paid a special attention to Prussia as a small nation that had dramatically transformed itself into a great power. At the same time, the mission also devoted a relatively large amount of attention to smaller European countries. For instance, on seeing exhibits from various countries during the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, Iwakura and his group expressed the view that "with respect to the independence of the nations, the major powers need not be feared while small nations should not be slighted" (Tanaka, 1999).

Although the Japanese government was preoccupied with how Japan could grow from a small nation into a major power taking Prussia as the leading model, proponents of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement and their intellectual followers eagerly recognised the intrinsic value of small nations. For instance, an editorial of *Yūbin Hōchi Shinbun* entitled "diplomatic theory" (1881) argued that

Great powers always rely on brute force, and weaker nations cannot maintain peace among these great powers without appealing to principles of the rights. If you see Denmark, Switzerland, and other smaller nations still standing tall in Europe and having not been annexed by the surrounding great powers, you can understand that brute force cannot overturn rights.

*(cited in Matsunaga, 2014: 177)*

Nakae Chōmin stated in his part that the "independence of small nations can only be maintained by this principle as followed: not fearing great powers and not slighting other smaller nations" (Nakae, 1993: 124). In *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* (1887), Nakae contrasts the argument of Mr. Champion, who argues for Japan's national pursuit of greater power, with that of Mr. Gentleman, who argues for Japan's national pursuit of prosperity as a small nation (Nakae, 1984).

While Japan became a great power by defeating the ancient overwhelming "great power" Qing throughout the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Freedom and People's Rights Movement has shown new developments. If socialism emerged

from its “left” side, this movement drifted also to the “right.” It is a paradox that this people’s movement, usually classified as a “left” one, produced not only a germ of solidarity with Asian people, but also an extensive “Asianism” which would be recovered from the “right.” As Takeuchi Yoshi points out in his “Japanese Asianism” (1963), the first problem depends on the fact that Miyazaki Toten’s “nonaggressive Asianism” did not sublimate into Okakura Tenshin’s “Asian philosophy” equipped with a “universal” scope. Second, if at the beginning there was a friendship filled with trust between Nakae Chōmin, nicknamed an Asian Rousseau, and Genyōsha’s Tōyama Mitsuru, leader of the emerging Asianism, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Kōtoku Shūsui, a disciple of Chōmin, opposed the war from a socialist point of view, while Genyōsha’s position had shifted from the theory of civil rights to the theory of national rights. In this context, Uchida Ryōhei, a disciple of Tōyama, argued to support the war (Takeuchi, 1993: 337–340). The “two missed encounters” – Miyazaki Tōten and Okakura Tenshin on the one hand, and Uchida Ryōhei and Kōtoku Shūsui on the other hand – prevented the maturation of philosophy of Asianism as well as the formation of ties of resistance and cooperation among Asians, resulting in an expanding “Asianism as political strategy” (Nakajima, 2017: 37–60).

Throughout the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War, Japanese orientation towards a great power became decisive. Paradoxically, however, “grandeur” as a national ideology is inversely proportional to the “grandeur” of a person’s character and perspective. Fukuzawa Yukichi advocated in *An Encouragement of Learning* (1872) for “national independence through personal independence.” In the case of Tokutomi Sohō, the author of *On the Expansion of Greater Japan* (1894), he claimed that the “personal growth of individuals drives national expansion.” Japan’s aspiration to pursue greater power made those supporting the status of a small nation less audible.

Nonetheless, these undercurrent voices were heard among socialists and Christians of the time. Patterns of “core locations” emerged from the struggles experienced by those holding secular or religious beliefs that ran counter to the imperial ideology or the capitalist economic development. The paradox of grandeur/pettiness can also be seen in their discourses. In *Imperialism* (1901), for instance, Kōtoku Shūsui paraphrases the British diplomat Robert Moliere to explain that “under imperialism, a country grows bigger, but its people become smaller.” Uchimura Kanzō shares a similar thought in *A Story of Denmark* (1911) from a Christian point of view:

Not all occupants of the world’s continents are wealthy. Not all occupants of small islands are poor. [...] We do not need to own one-sixth of the world’s land surface like the United Kingdom does. It is enough for us to be like Denmark or even a smaller nation. Instead of seeking external expansion, we should develop our own inner land.

(Uchimura, 2011:93)

It should be noted, however, that Kōtoku was a colonialist who held the idea of Japanese economic settlement in Manchuria and Korea, although he advocated pacifism during the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Uchimura stated after the end of the Russo-Japanese War that the Japanese people must plan for the “peaceful expansion of our nation.” “Japan will die if we only plan to make Japanese people, he says. On the contrary, Japan will never cease to expand if we try to make worldly people” (Uchimura, [1905] 1981: 362–365). Uchimura indicates here the guiding principle for Japan: he criticises a petty expansionist nationalism and advocates a cosmopolitan-oriented policy that would enhance the presence of Japanese people in the international scene.

In any case, after the Russo-Japanese War, Japan pressed for the conclusion of the Second Japan-Korea Agreement (November 1905) and moved towards the annexation of Korea (1910). This makes plausible the story told by Shiba Ryōtarō, as was introduced at the beginning of this chapter: Japan remained a growing “small nation” until the Russo-Japanese War but became a militarised large nation thereafter. Of course, 1905 was not the first year that Japan initiated expansionist colonialist policies. As early as 1869, the Meiji government dispatched the Development Commissioner (*Kaitakushi*) to Hokkaido for settlement projects. In 1879, it disposed of Ryukyu and made Okinawa prefecture a part of the centralised Japanese administrative structure, while continuing to discriminate against Okinawan people.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, some Japanese leaders launched the “Conquest of Korea” campaign (*Seikanron*) in 1873, and the following year, in 1874, the Japanese invasion of Taiwan took place. This expanding nation has created core locations inside and outside the country.

After the First World War, Japan came to be counted as one of the five big powers at the League of Nations, but as the international relations scholar Hiroshi Momose indicates, this nation “lacked the ability to live up to this rank” (Momose, 2011:165). In the wake of the Manchurian Incident, Japan would be condemned at the League of Nations even by small nations, including those from Eastern Europe. During and after the first Sino-Japanese War in 1894 and the second one in 1931, that is, during the Fifteen Years’ War (1931–1945), Japan had shown a contempt for China and Chinese people. This was the reverse of the awe that Japanese people had long held towards China. They acted as if China, an initial great power, were a miserable small nation, and Japan, an expanding small nation, were a great power.

This mainstream “great power” aspiration was challenged especially by those who advocated for “Small Japanism” in the periodical *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō*. In his article “Economic Great Japanism” (1912), Uematsu Hisaaki opposed government intervention in economic trade and military expansion. In a piece entitled “Great Japanism or Small Japanism?” (1913), Miura Tetsutarō wrote as follows:

Similarly to the expansive inclinations of the British Empire, Great Japanism seeks to promote national interests and people’s welfare through territorial expansion and protectionism. In contrast, similarly to the convictions of Little

Englandism, Small Japanism opposes such policies and seeks to promote national interests and people's welfare through better governance as well as greater individual freedom and activities.

In the same economic magazine, Ishibashi Tanzan, who criticised Japan's expansionism, wrote an article entitled "The Illusions of Greater Japan" (1921). He elaborates Japan's rationale to hold onto its colonies in the following manner: "the United Kingdom and the United States would be in serious trouble" if Japan were to relinquish Manchuria or the Shandong Peninsula and grant freedom to Korea and Taiwan. Because, he says, "if Japan alone adopted such a liberal policy, these powers would lose moral ground around the world." He reasoned that if Japan took the initiative to relinquish its colonies, this small nation would gain a moral advantage over the other great powers. Since his early childhood, Ishibashi had lived in a temple under the care of his father, who was a Buddhist priest of the Nichiren sect. Due to this background, his patriotism is reminiscent of the Nichiren teaching. However, his version of nationalism was "totally alien to the concept of nationalism as a backlash against Westernization" (Masuda, 1990:2). Small Japanism of *Tōyō Keizai Shinpō* was not necessarily an anti-nationalism that isolated this nation from the rest of the world, but rather a keen consciousness of "Japan in the world" and tended to appeal to the world in another way so that Japan would occupy an appropriate international status (Mochizuki, 2022).

Aside from such a minority advocating for the pursuit of prosperity as a small nation in direct conflict with the mainstream drive towards achieving great power status, there were also some individuals who had difficulty in matching their personal growth with the development of the expanding nation. Witnessing the High Treason Incident of 1910, in which dissidents were arrested and Kōtoku Shūsui and others were executed under the pretext of a plot to assassinate the Emperor, the novelist Mushanokōji Saneatsu perceived acutely the atmosphere of state oppression and adopted an attitude of self-closing individualism. It was the first time that modern Japan created such a purely inward-looking space withdrawing from anything social (Katō, 2009:150). Ultimately, the pursuit of an expansionist policy brought the nation to the Pacific War, and the mobilisation of the entire nation made it impossible to ensure even the inner life of individuals confronting the state. In the midst of such an impasse, the literary critic Hanada Kiyoteru chose to survive while letting himself be torn apart as this was the only alternative to dead-end resistance (Id.:251–275). Nagai Kafū also survived the pre-war and wartime period by turning his back on imperial nationalism and living his individualistic life.

Thus, to the Japanese pre-war expanding national body, some intellectuals such as Uchimura, Kōtoku or Ishibashi opposed their small-nation theory, while others like Mushanokōji, Hanada or Kafū put up a desperate resistance by showing their physical and psychological rejection. It implies that negative effects of imperialist nationalism can appear with an individual body as core location.

#### 5.4.2 Post-war period: Since 1945

The defeat of Japan in 1945 marked a setback on a modern Japan's quest for greater power. On this occasion, the Marxist Kawakami Hajime wrote: "Japanese people might actually be even happier if this defeat make them understand profound meaning of Lao Tzu's teachings concerning small nation and small population" (*"Shokoku Kamin,"* September 1, 1945). And it is possible to find in the Japanese Constitution of 1946 a crystallisation of the idea of pursuing prosperity as a small nation that has its root in Miura Tetsutarō's or Ishibashi Tanzan's thought (Tanaka, 1999:160). In a text written in 1951 during the occupation, Masao Maruyama, one of the leading post-war Japanese intellectuals, stated that the Japanese Empire had lost its colonial territories and had "shrunk into a tiny island nation" (Maruyama, [1951a] 1995: 71). While considering the turnaround in 1945 as a major event, he also indicated that there could be no complete break in history, and that multiple types of new nationalisms were emerging in relation to the old one. According to him, the success of Meiji Japan's modernisation was exceptional in Asia, but it was a modernisation from above, led by the old ruling class, so that its nationalism was a combination of pre-modern mentality and state imperialism, that was not a principle of national liberation. The collapse of the religious pillar of the nation, due to ultra-nationalist education based on the divinity of the Emperor, had created a "spiritual vacuity," he continued, and whatever form the new nationalism would take, it should inspire a "fresh sense of mission" to form the force of Japan's development. In Japan, caught up in the Cold War, he observed that while reactionary and right-wing groups sought to revive or compromise with the old nationalism, liberal and socialist groups tried to enforce the principles of the new Constitution. If the former made a shift from anti-Anglo-Saxon to pro-American policy and even called a rearmament, the latter opposed making Japan exclusively aligned with the United States, by supposing "simple but sincere feelings of the many people unwilling to be under either American or Soviet rule" (Maruyama, [1951b] 1995: 110). Maruyama himself expected for the development of a healthy democratic nationalism from the left side that would achieve liberation from feudalism and independence of nation.

Thus, rather than denying nationalism in general, Maruyama sought to take on the challenge of eliminating tyranny and national independence in Japan as seen in core locations of other Asian countries. Pointing out that generally the Japanese did not recognise that they had been defeated by China in the Second World War Takeuchi Yoshimi, a scholar of Chinese literature, observed that while the Japanese modernisation was superficial because it seldom resisted the West, the modernisation of China was more thorough by its resistance to the Western powers. Takeuchi, however, does not advocate an anti-Western stance, but insists the necessity to "transform the West from our side" by retaking "superior cultural values of the West" by the East, and creating "universality through this cultural rollback" (Takeuchi, [1961] 1993: 463). This is an attempt to form a subject

in Japan that can resist the Western imperial expansionism, and to conceive of universality in another way, from experiences of core locations in the small nation.

Conceptualising such a unique universality from a position of small nation original conception of universality from the standpoint of a small country, however, never constituted a mainstream in post-war Japan. Having been defeated and occupied by US forces before nominally gaining independence with the Treaty of San Francisco, post-war Japan was drawn into the camp of the Free World in the rivalry of the Cold War. The basic construct of post-war Japan is epitomised by the Yoshida Doctrine of pursuing economic development while relying on the security alliance with the United States. In terms of the dynamism of smallness and largeness, Japan behaved as a typical small nation by depending entirely on another country for its own security while aspiring to become an economic power (Momose, 2011: 327). In the 1970s, having already achieved its post-war reconstruction and high-speed economic growth, Japan gradually took on the role of an undisputed economic power. Both rupture and continuity can be observed here between the pre-war and post-war periods. I have already pointed out the sift of transcendental instance giving legitimacy to politics from the Emperor to the United States; here I would like to introduce the point of view of the historian Yamanouchi Yasushi, according to whom changes brought about by the wartime national mobilisation prepared a high-speed economic growth of post-war period. He indicates a paradoxical identity of irrational warfare-state and rational welfare-state (Yamanouchi, 2015).

The critic Katō Shūichi accurately summarised Japan's behaviour in the latter half of the 20th century in terms of smallness and largeness.

Regardless of how the great powers were defined, the United States was a superpower rivalled only by the Soviet Union until the end of the 1980s. Japan became another great power due to its economic influence but behaved as a typical small nation. It responded passively to changes in international affairs as they arose without taking the initiative to tip the balance in its favor.

(Katō, 2007:128)

If the pre-war Japan was initially a passive subject of oppression on the periphery of the Western powers, the post-war Japan has also created core locations filled with various strains and contradictions. Core locations emerged both internally and externally – the double strains of transferred oppression were already being observed in Okinawa, Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, other parts of Japan and elsewhere, and they paradoxically sprouted during Japan's economic growth under the American nuclear umbrella. For example, Ishimure Michiko's *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow* (1969), which covers the Minamata disease, describes the complex mechanics involved in a core location, the misery and despair of the people's lives

and the prospects for salvation through a transformation of values. Her writing itself can be described as an animistic conjuror's religious behaviour towards victims killed by modern capitalist exploitation. In this regard, Yamamoto Yoshitaka, a science historian, pinpoints the end of the 1960s as the moment when modern Japan's pursuit of greater power, or even scientific progress and advancement as a civilisation, was openly questioned (Yamamoto, 2018).

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where the atomic bombs were dropped in 1945, can also be regarded as core locations when we look at Ōe Kenzaburō's *Hiroshima Notes* (1965). Against the backdrop of Tokyo Olympics (1964) and economic growth, he meticulously portrayed the suffering of people in Hiroshima with "the hope of human recovery, and the danger of fatal corruption" (Ōe, 1995: 97–98). He pictures some "people who convert the misery from a passive into an active force." Witnessing such a transvaluation, Ōe says that his personal experience in Hiroshima had brought about a decisive turning point in his life. He even calls this shift a "conversion," albeit "eschewing all religious connotations" (ibid.: 8). Beyond the dichotomy of the secular and the religious, he presents a roadmap for deriving a universal perspective from life experiences in a core location.

Even after Japan regained its "independence" in 1952, Okinawa remained a US territory until 1972 (Okinawa is still a core location, where US military bases are concentrated). During the Vietnam War, military planes took off from bases in Okinawa to bomb Vietnam. Tsurumi Shunsuke formed the anti-war movement "Japan Peace for Vietnam! Committee" (*Beheiren*) with Oda Makoto and others, trying to find hope in civil solidarity beyond states. Influenced by American pragmatism and anarchism, Tsurumi represents a type of leading intellectuals of the post-war period who criticise great powers in favour of small nations or collectivities. Philosopher Takahashi Tetsuya links Okinawa and Fukushima, with pointing out that the post-war Japan has constructed a colonial-style relationship between the ruler and the ruled: as the government left Okinawa to deal with the unsolicited US military bases, it located nuclear power plants disproportionately in provincial areas. These core locations symbolise "sacrificial system" of post-war Japan (Takahashi, 2012).<sup>8</sup>

These core locations can be linked to the discovery of "small nations or collectivities within a nation" around the 1970s, which refer normally to autonomous communities like Okinawa or the Ainu but can also include protest movements by first and subsequent generations of people from Korea, China and Taiwan as well as the campaign against the Alien Registration Act. This concept can even cover transnational movements that address global challenges and aim to achieve goals such as a nuclear-free world (Momose, 2011: 344). In this manner, the theoretical potential of discourse concerning small nations is widened by clearly acknowledging that Japan, as a small nation itself, consists of even smaller nations, collectivities and movements.

### 5.5 Conclusion: In search of universality from a Japan that will become a small nation

Japan established itself as an economic power following its post-war reconstruction. Shortly after the end of the Cold War, however, the nation became mired in a drawn-out post-bubble economic slump, while a multipolar world was being formed. And in the mid-2000s, the geopolitical balance in East Asia began to shift with the re-emergence of China as a great power. Caught between two major powers, the United States and China, Japan has been compelled to find a roadmap for assuming its due place in the world and fulfil new roles. Nonetheless, it is no easy task for Japan, which has relied on the US free trade regime, to tactfully change the course away from its earlier aspiration of becoming an economic power to instead become a thriving small nation. Habits cannot be changed overnight but the reality is still harsh. Having previously been hailed as an “economic superpower,” Japan is now laying itself low. The country has even been dubbed a “powerhouse of irregular employment” due to its increasingly precarious patterns of employment. Furthermore, its confidence as a “technological superpower” has been shaken. Given its high life expectancy, Japan is sometimes heralded as a “leading nation of longevity.” Some see this differently, describing Japan as the “leading nation of the senile” in mockery of its low birth rate and declining population. A series of natural and man-made disasters has also earned Japan another name as a “disaster-prone nation.” Ostensibly, these labels emphasise the notion of Japan being “a leading nation” in a certain sense, but they are actually all sobering reminders of Japan’s diminishing power.

How, then, can Japan successfully achieve a shift to a smaller nation? It will be useful to look back and retrace a genealogy of Japanese small nation theory, for learning from the methods used to confront the mainstream of superpower-oriented thinking. In the pre-war period, Uchimura Kanzō, Kōtoku Shūsui, Ishibashi Tanzan and others criticised outspokenly the expanding imperial nationalism, while Mushanokōji Saneatsu, Hanada Kiyoteru, Nagai Kafū and others relied on their individualism to survive an absolutist Emperor system. In the post-war period, Takeuchi Yoshimi proposed a creation of universality from small nations of Asia, and Tsurumi Shunsuke squarely criticised the Vietnam War conducted by the US superpower. Ishimure Michiko and Ōe Kenzaburō found in the people living in Minamata and Hiroshima a human ability to transform misery into hope.

Today, Japan’s shrinking into a small nation seems inevitable. As for population decline, policies to increase the birth rate have not worked, and there is no prospect of reversing this trend. Relying on the immigrants is another idea to compensate for the declining population. In fact, ethnocultural and religious diversity is increasing, but there is a strong opposition among conservatives to actively promoting immigration policies, and the human rights of foreigners are not adequately guaranteed. Of course, there are some cases where multicultural conviviality is successfully working on several fronts, but from the outset, Japan has had a weak

sense of respect for independence of individuality based on the Western-style concept of natural rights of human beings, and the policy and political or social philosophy to naturalise foreigners and make them future citizens of Japan are limited. The major challenge is how to develop a Japanese concept of coexistence.

Located on the periphery of great civilisations, Japan has – schematically speaking – been classified as a small nation faced by a great power and described as being “specific” rather than “universal.” At the same time, the modern nation’s aspiration to become a great power gradually led to the establishment of a national body as a virtual and transcendental authority that imparted legitimacy to political power. That authority was the Emperor in pre-war Japan, but this would later be replaced by the United States in post-war Japan. This “emulation of the universality” associated with great powers, regardless of whether it is called “secular” or “religious,” undeniably caused various forms of oppression. The transformation of values to turn its experience of oppression into that of liberation may offer clues to an appropriate means of salvation in an era dominated by earthly worldviews and an “alternative universality.” Whether this should be described as “secular” or “religious” is not a pressing issue. This is partly because the Western Christian dichotomy of “the religious” and “the secular” does not really hold true in Japan, but it may also have something to do with the fact that “the secular” and “the religious” penetrate each other in a global trend known as post-secularity. In any case, it is necessary to distinguish the two ways of being universal, and it is reasonable to think that “the religious” and “the secular” are not *a priori* antonyms, but rather articulated along the lines of two types of universality.

## Notes

- 1 This chapter is an expanded and adapted version of an article in Japanese: Date, 2021.
- 2 If we extend this logic further, core locations could also emerge in the body and mind of an individual. For instance, transferred oppression and marginalisation could be the mechanisms behind discrimination and the exclusion of the socially vulnerable. Places that preoccupy the minds of the actors involved and their sympathetic advocates could also be counted as core locations.
- 3 And this chapter is based on my initial Japanese essay (Date, 2021) with significant additions and corrections.
- 4 It is, however, important to note that the *Wa* kingdom did not necessarily view itself as “small” in relation to all Asian neighbours. Indeed, Japan saw itself as holding greater power than the kingdoms found on the Korean Peninsula. In other words, despite their perceived military and cultural inferiority to China, the Japanese has tended to assert their superiority over Korean kingdoms. Hence, Japan’s position in relation to Asian countries cannot be defined in a straightforward manner.
- 5 The use of the term “State Shinto” may be somewhat problematic, but terms such as “secular” and “national body” would omit the religious connection. As an alternative, a focus can be made on the divinity of Emperor (Shimazono, 2019).
- 6 For more information on this point, see Hiroki Tanaka’s chapter (Chapter 6) in this book.
- 7 See Katsuya Hirano’s chapter (Chapter 7) in this book for treatment of Hokkaido, and Sana Sakihama’s chapter (Chapter 8) on Okinawa.
- 8 With respect to this matter, I have already pointed out visible signs of the unraveling of the myth of nuclear safety and other underpinning myths of post-war Japan (Date, 2019).

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# 6

## IMAGINING A SMALL NATION IN AN EMPIRE

Kōtoku Shūsui and his “small-nationism”

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### 6.1 Introduction

Kōtoku Shūsui (1871–1911) is one of the most prominent figures in early Japanese socialism. Having started out as a small nation in the Far East with the Meiji Restoration of 1868, modern Japan strived to build an empire modelled on those of great Western powers. At the same time, early Japanese socialists sought a different kind of nationhood, criticising the country’s push towards capitalism and militarism. This chapter will reread the writings of the charismatic Kōtoku from the perspective of small nation studies. In the English-speaking world, especially due to the works of F. G. Notehelfer (1971), Robert Thomas Tierney (2015) and the recently published anthology on the 1910 High Treason Incident (2013), Kōtoku is known as a socialist who criticised modern imperialism and capitalism, a pacifist who opposed to the Russo-Japanese War, and, in his last years, an anarchist who was executed on suspicion of planning to murder the emperor. However, little is known about the kind of small nation that Kōtoku took as an ideal. This chapter argues that Kōtoku was also a “small-nationist,” a person who resisted modern Japan’s imperialistic orientation and took small nations to be the ideal form of statehood.

By examining small nations, we can rethink from a “particular” perspective the “universal” that has been monopolised by great powers. However, modern Japan was East Asia’s imperial hegemon in the first half of the 20th century and major economic power in its second half. How is it possible to discuss the country from the standpoint of small nation studies? In *Small-Nationism* (Shōkoku shugi), historian Tanaka Akira (1999) acknowledges that “great-nationism” (*taikoku shugi*) has been predominant throughout Japan’s modern history but argues that

small-nationism has also existed as a “substream.” Tracing the genealogy of small-nationism – the Iwakura Mission after the Meiji Restoration; Ueki Emori (1857–1892) and Nakae Chōmin (1847–1901) during the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement; Miura Tetsutarō (1874–1972) and Ishibashi Tanzan (1884–1973) during the Taishō Democracy Movement; and the Constitution of Japan born after its defeat in the Second World War – Tanaka successfully wrote an alternative modern history of Japan. However, he pays little attention to Kōtoku as a small-nationist. In this chapter, I place Kōtoku in Japan’s history of small-nationism by rereading his writings from a small-nation studies perspective and elucidating the characteristics and development of his ideas on the subject.

Also, studying ideas about small nations enables us to rethink, from a “particular” perspective, the secularism that Western powers have promoted as “universal.” Behind modern Western secularism lies an allegedly universal set of assumptions about the division of “the religious” and “the secular.” However, in recent decades, scholars have recognised that this epistemological dichotomy is not self-evident. In the case of modern Japan, while it aspired to be a kind of secular state, “the secular” and “the religious” were conceived differently than in the West (Josephson 2012). From such a perspective, in his article on small nation studies published in 2021, Date Kiyonobu describes his “small nation” research that focuses on Japan’s particular religious-secular configuration in modern Japan, stating, “I am interested in.... reading the ‘universal’ human experience in the consciousness of a ‘small nation’ that resists the growing ‘great nation’ consciousness, and deciphering the relationship between the secular and the religious in concrete situations” (Date 2021, 46–47). Sharing this orientation, I will discuss the influence of Confucian ethics on Kōtoku’s seemingly secular small-nationism.

Before going any further, I should explain the neologism “small-nationism,” a translation of Japanese compound *shōkoku* (small nation) *shugi* (ideology). I use this term to refer to an ideology that sees small nations as the ideal form of nationhood. With few exceptions, research on small nations has been led mainly by the social and political sciences. For example, the recent monumental work *Les Petites nations*, edited by Jean-François Laniel and Joseph Yvon Thériault, depicts the “multiple modernities” (S.N. Eisenstadt) of small nations by drawing attention to their “existential precariousness” and “collective fragility” emphasised by M. Kundera (Laniel and Thériault 2020). In contrast, this chapter investigates this subject using the methodology of intellectual history. This approach enables us to find “small nations” in the history of nations that are hardly considered small. I aim to contribute to small nation research by studying the intellectual history of small-nationism and presenting another methodology that is different from the political and social sciences. A focus on small-nationism reveals that, while the history of modern Japan is indeed the history of a great power, there have always been resisters who found a small nation as ideal.

## 6.2 Kōtoku's small-nationism

### 6.2.1 The "Little England" Model

Kōtoku's small-nationism is found in his first work *Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century* (Nijūseiki no kaibutsu: Teikokushugi), which was published in April 1901. In this polemic, he censures big-nationist imperialism and praises small-nationist statehood. Readers immediately detect a highly moralistic tone. For instance, Kōtoku insists that empires cannot help but collapse due to their moral injustices: "I am pained to note that the acquisition of new territories can only take place at the cost of numerous crimes and injustices, widespread corruption and degradation, and all kinds of destruction and decadence" (Kōtoku 2015, 186). According to him, military expansionism is nothing more than "theft and plunder" of another nation's territory. This immoral state is doomed to fail due to rebellion or corruption, as was the case with Napoleon Bonaparte's French Empire and Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire. In this way, imperialism does not bring prosperity to the nation. He states,

The prosperity of the nation must not be based on theft and pillage, and the greatness of a people can never be built on a foundation of plunder and invasion. The progress of civilization will not occur under the despotism of a single ruler and the welfare of society will not be brought about by unification under a single flag. These goals can only be achieved by peace, freedom, universal love, and equality.

(*Ibid*, 188)

Before the economic critiques of John A. Hobson's 1902 *Imperialism* and Vladimir Lenin's 1916 *Imperialism*, Kōtoku unreservedly condemned the imperialism and expansionism of big nations, including Japan, Germany, the US and the UK, on largely moralistic grounds.

However, little attention has been given to the fact that, besides criticising the imperialism of great powers, Kōtoku favourably discussed "little England." As Yamada (1984) and Miyamoto (1982) have pointed out, *Imperialism* was heavily influenced by British New Radicalism, which advocated anti-imperialism and for a "little England," in particular by John Robertson's (1856–1933) 1899 *Patriotism and Empire*. Kōtoku, relying on this work of Robertson, praises the age of "little England." Refuting expansionism's legitimation of acquiring far-flung colonies on national security grounds, he argues that British defence reached its apogee during the period of "little England." According to Kōtoku, adequate national defence does not require a vast territory, as is shown by the history of England: "Consider that the England that defeated the great Spanish Empire at the time of Philip II was still known as 'little England.' The England that trounced the great French Empire of Louis XIV was also called 'little England'" (*Ibid*, 200). Admittedly, England

had, since the time of “little England,” expanded its colonies around the world (e.g. Canada and Australia), but, according to Kōtoku, it was not an empire because its expansion was not through military invasion but industrial cooperation, and, furthermore, England granted high degree of autonomy to its colonies, especially after the independence of the United States. He continues,

since the English are linked to their former colonies by ties of blood, language, and culture, they remain bound together by sentiments of mutual sympathy. Since both sides benefit from commerce, their community will likely last forever, bringing limitless prosperity to all.

*(Ibid, 201)*

Kōtoku praises the prosperity of the “little England” that resorted not to military force but to industrial development. At a time when policymakers expected Japan to become the “England of the Far East” by rapid empire-building, Kōtoku looked back at the “little England” of the past, not the coeval “Great Britain,” in search of a model for Japan’s nation-building.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful, in hindsight, that the England of which Kōtoku speaks can be considered a small nation. Consider, for example, “the imperialism of free trade” (Gallagher and Robinson 1953), an influential concept created by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, historians of the British Empire. Studies on the history of the British Empire had widely accepted that the late 19th century was an era of imperialism, while the middle of the century was more an era of anti-imperialism. It is true that in their advocacy of free trade and opposition to colonial expansion, the Manchester School of the mid-19th century, including Richard Cobden and John Bright, embodied the spirit of a “little England” ideology. However, if we take into account its “informal empire” (the sphere of influence in which England had basically established economic/industrial domination), in addition to its “formal empire” (colonies under British control per international law), it becomes doubtful that there is such a clear contrast. From this point of view, Gallagher and Robinson argued that the principle of free trade significantly contributed to the colonial expansion of the “informal empire” and that the mid-19th century, an era which had been described as the period of “little England,” was as imperialistic as later in the century. From this viewpoint, even though Kōtoku’s small-nationism was a part of a critique against imperialism, we can say that it is lacking because it denied that “little England” was an empire and did not have a critical perspective on “the imperialism of free trade.” Certainly, he vehemently denounced the military colonialism of contemporary “Great Britain.” However, he overlooks the economic colonialism of the past’s “little England,” or even approves of it as peaceful international cooperation. He steadfastly refutes “hard imperialism” but implicitly accepts “soft imperialism.” While imperialism does not necessarily appear with militarism, Kōtoku regarded militarism and patriotism as

components of imperialism, and thereby overlooked the possibility of imperialism without militarism.

Kōtoku's covert imperialism cast a shadow on his views on Korea and Manchuria. Scholars have pointed out that settler colonialism was outside the scope of Kōtoku's anti-imperialist argument. He advocated for Japan to expand its economic influence over these places through an emigration policy and railroad construction from Pusan to Seoul (Asukai 1978, 1979; Ishizaka 1987; Ko 2003). In a speech at the Socialist Association held on 18 July 1903, titled "Against Starting War" (Hikaisenron), Kōtoku opposed to the idea of war with Russia, arguing that it would be more profitable for Japan to expand its economic influence over Korea and Manchuria than to fight militarily with the country. According to him, no matter how much Japan counteracts Russia's southward policy, this would be meaningless unless Japan establishes an economic base in Manchuria and Korea, stating,

Today, Japan's task is not to fight a war with Russia, but to make substantial economic expansion into Manchuria. In other words, have large numbers of people emigrate, invest capital, put down roots there, and siphon off the wealth. Then Japan will be safe.

*(KSZ4, 1968, 419)*

The key to this continental expansion was the railroad. Russia had already built a railroad in Siberia and was extending its influence in the Far East, but Japan had yet to complete the railroad connecting Pusan and Beijing, and thus was lacking groundwork for economic, let alone military, expansion into the continent. Therefore, according to Kōtoku, Japan must first complete this railroad. He repeated the same argument in an article titled "Against the War" (Hisenron), published in *Japanese* (Nihonjin) on 5 August 1903. It is interesting to note that Kōtoku shared the idea that building a railroad on the Korean peninsula is important for Japan's national interests with Yamagata Aritomo, a major militarist of Meiji Japan, and Shibusawa Eiichi, a major capitalist of the same period. Kōtoku's arguments reveal that, as Robert Thomas Tierney has already pointed out, while Kōtoku opposed any military invasion, he accepted the economic acquisition of Korea and Manchuria (Tierney 2015, 52). Admittedly, Kōtoku praises "little England" and denounces militarism and imperialism, but his anti-imperialism does not reject the settler colonialism of the past's "little England" or Meiji Japan. At least until 1903, Kōtoku's small-nationism was compatible with colonialism.

### 6.2.2 *The Switzerland Model*

In 1902, Kōtoku found a new model for his small-nationism in Switzerland. While he had discussed "little England" to oppose the imperialism of great powers, a year after the publication of *Imperialism*, he turned to Switzerland while criticising

Japan's electoral system. After the establishment of the Imperial Diet based on the Meiji Constitution, the right to vote was restricted to males who were over 25 years old and paid more than ¥15 in annual taxes, making only about 1% of the population eligible. For Kōtoku, this reflected the undemocratic and oligarchic reality of Meiji Japan. For example, in "Socialism and Direct Legislation" (Shakaishugi to chokusetsu rippō), an article published in *Yorozu chōhō* on 27 January 1902, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the status quo of Japan's electoral system:

Only a small minority of the Japanese population has the right to vote. Moreover, it is only during the moment they put their vote for diet members into a ballot box that this minority exercises their right to participate into politics, and after this moment it disappears like mist. It is preposterous to proclaim the existence of people's right to participate in politics.

(KSZ4, 1968, 525)

In addition, Kōtoku says, even if universal suffrage and proportional representation were introduced, it would be nothing but a preliminary step in the realisation of genuine democracy in Japan because in representative democracy people cannot participate in politics except for voting. For that reason, Kōtoku proposes the introduction of referendums and initiatives, following the example of Switzerland, arguing, "Without these systems, people cannot fully participate in politics and prevent bureaucrats and assemblymen, who do not represent the will of the people, from tyrannizing. Among Western nations, the Swiss Confederation realizes these two systems" (KSZ4, 1968, 527).

Kōtoku found an ideal model for nationhood in Switzerland. Another example is "Socialism and State" (Shakaishugi to kokka), which appeared in *Japanese* on 5 February 1902. In this article, Kōtoku discusses "a state mode that a socialist would idealize." According to him, socialism is often incorrectly understood in Japan. Sometimes it is mistaken for state socialism, in which the state monopolises power, and at other times for anarchism, in which the state is abolished. However, such understandings of socialism are incorrect. True socialism is neither state socialism nor anarchism. The real purpose of socialism is the construction of a democratic society:

Indeed, socialism and democracy are two wings of a bird or two casters of a wagon, so to speak. Both have the same purpose: to pursue—one economically and another politically—common, shared, and equal happiness. Therefore, a genuine socialist needs to be a genuine democrat.

(KSZ4, 1968, 522)

From this socio-democratic perspective, Kōtoku again refers to Switzerland:

In their [socialists'] eyes, the Swiss political system is the closest to the admirable ideal. The referendum allows ordinary people to vote for and against

a law; the initiative permits many people to suggest a new law; and proportional representation is an electoral system in which the number of representatives is most proportionately reflected in the legislature. These systems are of great democratic significance and what socialists crave.

(*Ibid*)

These two articles clearly show that in 1902 Kōtoku found a new model for his small-nationism in Switzerland while searching for a truly socio-democratic political system to replace Meiji Japan's pseudo-democracy.

However, among socialists during the early Meiji period, Kōtoku was neither the only nor the first person to find in Switzerland a model for Japan's nation-building. Abe Isoo (1865–1949), one of the so-called fathers of Japanese socialism, also was particularly interested in the country (Ōta 1993). Abe, a Unitarian convert influenced by Christian socialism during his stay in the US, became a leading Meiji socialist after returning to Japan in 1895. Even after the focus of Japanese socialism shifted from Abe's Christian socialism to Kōtoku's materialist socialism at the beginning of the 20th century, Abe worked closely with Kōtoku to promote socialism, at least until Kōtoku's conversion to anarchism in 1905. In fact, Abe presented Switzerland as an ideal nation earlier than Kōtoku. For example, in his "Switzerland and Japan" (Suisu to Nihon) article published in *Cosmic Journal* (Rikugō zasshi) on 15 December 1897, Abe praised Switzerland, because, despite being surrounded by major European powers, its neutrality policy had prevented an increase in military expenditure and improved domestic education and welfare. According to Abe, Japan, which is also surrounded by superpowers, must follow the example of this small nation:

While all its neighbors are busy expanding their armaments and creating enormous national debt to prepare for war, Switzerland, despite its geographical position among these great powers, does not need to exhaust its power for war. Switzerland has focused its efforts on domestic governance and has implemented educational and social reforms that qualify it as a first-rate civilized nation. For us, Switzerland is a country to emulate.

(*Abe 1897, 5*)

Abe then continued to publish articles on Swiss neutrality, and *Ideal State on Earth: Switzerland* (Chijō no risōkoku: Suisu), published in 1904, came out of these discussions (Abe 1947). Kōtoku was inspired by Abe's arguments, which saw Switzerland as an ideal small nation. (It was not only Abe, Kōtoku's contemporary, who inspired Kōtoku's small-nationism. As will be discussed later, Kōtoku, through his mentor Nakae Chōmin, also found philosophical roots of small-nationism in East Asia's Confucian tradition and Western Europe's Enlightenment philosophy.)

While sharing an interest in Switzerland, Kōtoku's argument differs from Abe's in that he stresses the advantage of its political systems rather than focusing

on Swiss neutrality and pacifism. This difference of perspectives explains his occasional remarks about Belgium. Like Switzerland, Belgium was known in Meiji Japan as a neutral small nation. Aside from its neutrality, however, Kōtoku was interested in its electoral system, as illustrated, for example, in “Standards for the Election” (Senkyo no hyōjun), an article published in *Yorozu chōhō* on 28 March 1902. With the seventh general election of the Lower House coming up in summer, Kōtoku mentions the Belgian compulsory voting system to encourage readers to vote, stating,

Voting is a right, but on the other hand, it is also a duty. It is a right of voters to participate in politics through their representatives, but it is clearly an important duty in that it allows them to choose good legislators for the nation and to serve the nation’s progress and development. So, in Belgium, voting is not a right, but an obligation. There is a law in Belgium that stipulates that if a person does not vote, he will be fined accordingly.

(KSZA, 1968, 59)

At the end of the 19th century, Belgium carried out electoral system reforms: compulsory voting (1892), universal male suffrage (1893) and proportional representation (1899). Kōtoku’s interest in Belgium seems to have been stimulated by them. Nevertheless, compared to Switzerland, his references to Belgium are less frequent and fewer. It can be said, therefore, that Switzerland, rather than Belgium, was still the model for Kōtoku’s small-nationism around this time.

### 6.2.3 Another principle of *Heiminsha*

In November 1903, with his comrades, Kōtoku established *Heiminsha* (Common Man’s Association) and launched its weekly *Heimin shinbun* (*Common Man’s Newspaper*), the first socialist newspaper in Japan. *Heiminsha*’s founding principles were democracy, socialism and pacifism. This can be seen in the newspaper’s initial issue: “*Heimin shinbun* was launched as an organ to contribute to the prompt realization of the utopia of democracy, socialism, and pacifism, embracing all humankind” (MSS III, 1). However, the core principles of the *Heiminsha* were not only this trinity; small-nationism also guided the association. The publication of Abe’s *Ideal State on Earth* as part of the *Heimin Collection* (*Heimin bunko*) is one example that shows this. In *Heimin Shinbun* on 8 May 1904 (MSS III, 215), Kōtoku begins his recommendation of Abe’s book by articulating his own small-nation ideology:

A country with a large territory is not necessarily a happy country. A country with a strong military force is not necessarily a peaceful country. The ideal state guarantees people adequate necessities, teaches them to behave properly, and provides them with freedom, equality and peace.

After arguing Switzerland is the closest to such an ideal state, Kōtoku announces the publication of *Ideal State on Earth*:

Abe Isoo's *Ideal State on Earth: Switzerland* describes in detail the political, economic, educational, and social conditions in Switzerland. The manuscript has already been completed and it is now in the hands of the printer. It will be published in just a few days. We, together with our colleagues, will be able to satisfy our everyday thirst by reading this book.

(MSS III, 215)

An article titled "Small Japan" (Shō Nippon narukana), published in *Heimin shinbun* on 17 January 1904, illustrates more clearly that small-nationism was one of the principles of Heiminsha (MSS III, 82).<sup>1</sup> In a largely moralistic and utopian tone, this article argues that Japan should aspire to be a "small Japan." Kōtoku first asserts that in addition to eliminating armaments, a "truly autonomous government" is necessary for the people's well-being. "The truly autonomous government means, in our sense, a politics that does not rely on the military, police, judges, prisons, but on morality as its sole pivot." He argues that the military and other institutions are unnecessary for social order. On the contrary, it is because of the infiltration of state power into every aspect of life that people are losing their morality. Therefore, he says, if these representatives of state power are abolished, people will regain their morality and an ideal society based on "politics that relies on morality as its sole pivot" will be realised. He argues, "Only after the abolition of the military, police, courts, prisons, etc., will the true human self be revealed and the spirit of mutual assistance that lies deep within people be realized. Only then will people be truly happy." Kōtoku's main argument in this article is clear: Japan should adopt small-nationism to realise this ideal society. "In order to realize the above ideals, I wish first of all to make Japan's national policy 'coming to terms with being a small nation' (*shōkoku o motte amanjiru koto*)." This text, which ends rhetorically with the catchy refrain, "Oh small Japan, oh small Japan," illustrates clearly, but without pointing to actual small nations as models, that Kōtoku and his Heiminsha were committed to small-nationism.

It is also interesting to note that Kōtoku's small-nationism took on a cosmopolitan dimension in Heiminsha. In the article mentioned above, Kōtoku presents the utopian outlook that an ideal society will take shape globally if "small Japan" is realised and Japan and other small nations work together to advocate for peace:

I hope that Japan will make people happy, and then, in consultation with other small nations, become an advocate of peace, so that the people of big nations may be saved, and the day may come when my ideals will be fully realized in the world.

This international small-nationism appears in a correspondence column, in which the editors of *Heimin shinbun* reply to readers' questions, on 17 January 1904

(MSS III, 85).<sup>2</sup> In response to a reader's request to "give us a general idea of what you would do as key government officials to peacefully solve the current situation," Kōtoku says that Japan should abolish its military and then advocate for peace in cooperation with other neutral nations such as Switzerland and Belgium: "If we were to address the current political situation, we would have no choice but to abolish all armaments, become neutral, and join with other small nations, such as Switzerland and Belgium, to work for peace in the world." While Kōtoku had initially discussed small nations within the framework of nation-states, referring to "little England" and Switzerland, his small-nationism in the context of *Heiminsha* clearly deviates from this modern unilateralist vision. Kōtoku's small-nationism during his *Heiminsha* period was an attempt to escape the framework of the nation-state. He shifted from a nationalistic small-nationism to a non-nationalistic more cosmopolitan one, foreshadowing his later turn to anarchism, just before the start of the Russo-Japanese War.

However, despite this development in his small-nationism, his view on Korea and Manchuria did not change significantly. Certainly, after the establishment of the *Heiminsha*, Kōtoku ceased to encourage economic or settler colonialism. Even after the Russo-Japanese War began and public opinion became belligerent, *Heiminsha* kept advocating pacifism. The prowar argument held that Japan needed to gain colonies on the continent to alleviate its overpopulation. In "Socialist's View on the War" (*Shakaitō no sensōkan*), a 21 August 1904 *Heimin shinbun* editorial, Kōtoku counters this prowar discourse, arguing that the acquisition of colonies and markets in the continent will not benefit the working class: "Let us assume Japan seizes Korea, Manchuria, and even Siberia. It will be only politicians and capitalist classes who will profit. For the majority of workers without status or capital, it is of no benefit" (KSZ5, 1968, 244). As mentioned above, Kōtoku once approved of settler colonialism and economic domination over Korea and Manchuria. With this in mind, Kōtoku's refutation of the colonialist narrative looks like a major change. However, there is a wide gulf between not affirming colonialism and criticising it. Kōtoku rejects colonialism only because it is not in the interest of the Japanese working class, a logic of the aggressor unconcerned with the interests and dignity of eventually colonised people. Kōtoku never developed anti-colonialist thought. Kōtoku's small-nationism advocated collaboration with idealised Western small nations but did not lead to solidarity with real East Asian small nations.

### 6.3 The intellectual sources of Kōtoku's small-nationism

#### 6.3.1 *Nakae Chōmin*

What prompted Kōtoku's interest in small nations? One answer is Nakae Chōmin (1847–1901), a leading Freedom and People's Rights Movement intellectual from a generation earlier. This is no surprise given that Chōmin was Kōtoku's mentor. Chōmin's major work is his 1887 *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*

(Sansuijin keirin mondō), in which the Master Nankai (Nankai-sensei), the Gentleman of Western Learning (Yōgaku-shinshi), and the Champion of the East (Gōketsu-kun) discuss the proper form of government for modern Japan. Chōmin gave voice to his small-nationism in the idealism of the Gentleman:

Since the opponent takes great pride in his civilization, it cannot be that he lacks the moral principles which are the essence of civilization. Why shouldn't we, a small nation, use as our weapon the intangible moral principles our opponent aspires to but is unable to practice? If we adopt liberty as our army and navy, equality as our fortress, and fraternity as our sword and cannon, who in the world would dare attack us?

(Nakae 1984, 51)

In other words, since Japan, a small nation, is no military match for great powers, it has no choice but to defend itself with its moral supremacy. Kōtoku inherited Chōmin's emphasis on morality. However, there is a clear difference between the small-nationism of Chōmin, who lived when Japan was only a tiny archipelago in the Far East, and that of Kōtoku, who lived when the country was, after its victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, becoming a great power that, as depicted in the famous cartoon, was dividing "the cake of China" with Western powers. While Kōtoku idealised small nations to denounce immoral great powers, Chōmin regarded morality as a condition for the survival of Japan, which he considered a small nation.

### 6.3.2 The East Asian tradition: Mencius

We should also note that Kōtoku drew his small-nationism from two sources via Chōmin. On the one hand, there was an East Asian source. Mencius had a profound influence on Kōtoku. Chōmin suggested to Kōtoku that he study *Mencius* (Ch. Mengzi, Jp. Mōshi) when the latter was a live-in student (*shosei*) of the former. Indeed, in "Why I Became a Socialist" (Yo wa ika ni shite shakaishugisha to narishi ka), published in *Heimin shinbun* on 17 January 1904 (KSZ5, 1968, 68), he mentioned, in addition to Chōmin's *Discourse*, *Mencius* as a book that guided him to socialism. Moreover, in *Imperialism*, he considered patriotism as an emotional source of imperialism and criticised it from the perspective of Mencian ethics. Referring to Mencius' parable of a child falling into a well, Kōtoku argues that the feeling of empathy (*sokuin no jō*) discussed by Mencius is a universal human emotion:

I agree with Mencius that any human being would, without hesitation, rush to rescue a child about to fall into a well. ... [A] human being moved by such selfless love and charity does not pause to think whether the child is a family member or a close relative.

(Kōtoku 2015, 143)

In contrast to this universality of empathy, patriotism is nothing but an insular and false love only for one's own people:

In fact, the love a patriot feels for his country stops at national borders. . . . A patriot who does not care for the people of other countries and only loves his fellow countrymen is like a man who only loves members of his own family and immediate relatives and is indifferent to everyone else.

(*Kōtoku 2015, 144*)

As this example illustrates, traditional Mencian ethics functioned as an important moral reference for Kōtoku.

Although Kōtoku's Mencian ethics were, in the 20th century, often dismissed as residue of a pre-modern feudal world view (Ichii 1959; Notehelfer 1971), scholars now generally agree that they played an important catalytic role for him when understanding Western ideas such as socialism and effectively importing them into the Japanese society (Ohara 1970; Lévy 2005; Tierney 2015, 65–68). In the early Meiji period, there was still a tradition of children of wealthy families receiving a Confucian education at private schools, and intellectuals who had done so thereby became acquainted with Confucian ethics (Watanabe 1978). In *Imperialism*, Kōtoku's rhetoric used expressions derived from Chinese classics – such as “the rivalry between the Yu and the Rui” (*guzei no arasoi*), which is derived from the *Records of the Grand Historian* (Ch. *Shiji*, Jp. *Shiki*), and “the fable of warring kingdoms on the horns of a snail” (*shokuban no tataikai*), which is mentioned in the *Zhuangzi* (Jp. *Sōshi*) – because knowledge of Chinese classics was wildly shared, among educated persons at least, in the Meiji period. For this reason, Kōtoku relied on *Mencius*'s episode of a child falling into a well to criticise the narrow-mindedness of nationalistic patriotism, and quoted a *Mencius* maxim (“If, on looking inward, I find that I am upright, I may proceed against thousands and tens of thousands” [Mencius 2009, 29]) to praise Emile Zola in the Dreyfus Affair. As Christine Lévy points out, for Kōtoku, Confucian ethics served as a “foundation for understanding new foreign thought” (Lévy 2005, 67).

Besides Kōtoku's socialism, Mencian ethics also influenced his small-nationism. *Mencius*'s political philosophy was very moralistic and democratic. He preached the “Royal Road” (Ch. *wangdao*, Jp. *ōdō*) of rule by virtue rather than the “Hegemonic Road” (Ch. *badao*, Jp. *hadō*) of force, and used the now-famous maxim, “The people are of greatest importance” (Ch. *min wei gui*, Jp. *tami o motte tōtoshi to nasu*). However, scholars have paid little attention to how small-nationism characterises his political philosophy. For instance, the first part of *Mencius*'s second book “Gong Sun Chou” superimposes the contrast between the militaristic “Hegemonic Road” and the democratic “Royal Road” on that between big nations and small nations:

One who, supported by force, pretends to being humane is a hegemon, and a hegemon has to have a large state. One who out of Virtue practices humaneness is a true king, and a true king does not need anything large. Tang did it with only seventy *li*, and King Wen did it with a hundred. When one uses force to make people submit, they do not submit in their hearts but only because their strength is insufficient. When one uses Virtue to make people submit, they are pleased to the depths of their hearts, and they sincerely submit. So it was with the seventy disciples who submitted to Confucius.

(*Mencius* 2009, 33)

According to Mencius, one who walks on the “Royal Road” does not need large territory, and in a small nation based on virtue, the people will willingly follow the state, which allows for more stable governance than in a large nation based on military power. In short, Mencius envisioned a small nation, not a large one, as the ideal “Royal Road”-based state. In this sense, he is the earliest East Asian figure to espouse small-nationism. There is no doubt that Kōtoku, who professed to be influenced by Mencius, was inspired by his moralistic small-nationism. The same is true of his teacher Chōmin, who drew inspiration for his small-nationism from Mencius. There is a genealogy of East Asian small-nationism that runs from Mencius to Chōmin and then to Kōtoku.

### 6.3.3 *The Western European enlightenment: Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

On the other hand, there was also a Western source of Kōtoku’s small-nationism. Kōtoku appears to have also been influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) through his teacher Chōmin. Although Kōtoku does not name Rousseau as an influence, he likely read this European’s writings; his teacher Chōmin was the translator of *The Social Contract* and was called “Rousseau of the East.” In fact, Kōtoku’s and Rousseau’s views of humankind and politics have much in common.

Rousseau, in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1755), regarded “pity” as a characteristic of the “natural man.” He wrote that humans have “an innate repugnance to see his fellow suffer” (Rousseau 1992, 36). In the “natural state,” before inequality is created by reason and society, humans have the capacity to sympathise with the suffering of others. The same idea can be found in Kōtoku’s *Imperialism*. As mentioned earlier, Kōtoku, citing an episode from Mencius, argued that humans have a universal capacity for empathy. While their arguments differ in that Rousseau contrasted the “pity” of nature with the “self-interest” of reason and Kōtoku contrasted it with the “patriotism” that supports imperialism, they share the strategy of citing the universal human capacity for empathy in order to criticise the misery caused by capitalism.

As for their views of politics, like Kōtoku’s advocacy of Swiss-style direct democracy for Japan, the enlightenment intellectual Rousseau completely rejected

representative government in his *Social Contract* (1762), holding that sovereignty could neither be transferred nor represented. He criticises the British representative system, stating,

Any law that the People in person has not ratified is null; it is not a law. The English people thinks it is free. It greatly deceives itself; it is free only during the election of the members of Parliament. As soon as they are elected, it is a slave, it is nothing. Given the use made of these brief moments of freedom, the people certainly deserves to lose it.

(Rousseau 1994, 192)

This logic is almost the same as Kōtoku's critique of representative government: "Suffrage is exercised only for one moment, one moment only, when a member's vote is cast in the ballot box, and then it disappears in a puff of smoke" (KSZ4, 1968, 525). Although never using Rousseau's term "general will," Kōtoku's statement that "the true politics lies in the direct politics of the people" (KSZ4, 1968, 529–530) indicates the closeness of their political views. Rousseau's influence on Kōtoku has not been widely discussed, even in Japan. However, these similarities should not be overlooked. Whether directly through his reading or indirectly through Chōmin, Kōtoku's ideas seem to owe much to Rousseau.

This proximity in political views also brings Rousseau and Kōtoku closer in terms of their admiration for small nations. Rousseau distinguished between democratic, aristocratic and monarchical forms of government in his *Social Contract* and argues that they each are best for countries of a certain size. In general, democracy is best for small nations, aristocracy for medium nations and monarchy for large ones. Although Rousseau holds that a democratic government is so perfect that it is only appropriate for a nation of gods, it is clear that he regarded a democratic small nation as ideal. In this sense, he was an 18th-century European small-nationist. Even more interesting is that Rousseau and Kōtoku both adopted an internationalist small-nationism. As mentioned earlier, Kōtoku, during his Heimisha period, was not a unilateralist, but an internationalist small-nationist, and held the view that small nations must unite in pacifism and resist the imperialism of the great powers. The same vision was shared by Rousseau: "But how can small states be given enough force to resist large one? In the same way that the Greek Towns resisted the great King long ago, and Holland and Switzerland more recently resisted the house of Austria?" (Rousseau 1994, 190). Like Rousseau, Kōtoku proposes an international collaboration ideology that resists the great powers through solidarity among small nations.

The genealogy of small-nationism reveals that Kōtoku was at the intersection of an East Asian religious tradition and the Western European Enlightenment. Following his teacher Chōmin, Kōtoku developed his own thought, including anti-imperialism and small-nationism, by interpreting Rousseau's enlightenment philosophy from the perspective of Mencian ethics, and at the same time, by reading

East Asian classics from a Western European perspective. It is true, as Benjamin Middleton (1999) and Umemori Naoyuki (2005) point out, that Kōtoku developed his thought by absorbing a discourse of contemporaneous Western societies that were geographically distant from Japan. In this sense, Kōtoku's anti-imperialism was a product of early 20th-century globalisation. However, Kōtoku crossed not only the geographical distance but also temporal distance, giving life in the 20th century to the Confucian tradition of East Asia and the 18th-century Western Enlightenment. Were Kōtoku's thought a fabric, it would be woven from the weft of space connecting East and West and the warp of time connecting tradition and modernity.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

In opposition to a Japan that intended to become a great power, Kōtoku lived as a small-nationist who found ideal statehood in small nations. It is true that his small-nationism gradually changed: *Imperialism*, published in 1901, denounced the imperialism of his day and found ideal nationhood in the "little England" of the past; the 1902 articles "Socialism and State" and "Socialism and Direct Legislation" denounced Japan's restricted suffrage and praised Switzerland's direct democracy; and during his period with Heiminsha, the 1904 article "Small Japan" expressed his small-nationism on a more theoretical level, calling for the construction of a "small Japan" that relies on "morality as its sole pivot" and the realisation of world peace through international cooperation among small nations. However, despite substantial variability, his thought was consistent in that it always idealised small nations. Though his teacher Chōmin, he found two sources of this small-nationism: the traditional Confucian ethics of East Asia and the Enlightenment of Western Europe. However, we cannot ignore that Kōtoku's over-idealisation of small nations led him to underestimate their real-world "existential precariousness" and thereby be insensitive to Japanese settler colonialism in Korea and Manchuria, actual small nations in Japan's immediate neighbourhood. This fatal shortcoming of his small-nationism can be explained by examining the meaning of "small nation" for Kōtoku.

At the beginning of the 20th century, after rapid industrialisation and victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, Meiji Japan began building a modern empire. However, for the socialist, the reality of imperialism and capitalism was nothing but a betrayal of the modern promise of liberty, equality and fraternity. In this context, the concept of "small nations" was a standpoint from which Kōtoku could criticise Japan as it sought to become a great nation. Consequently, for the small-nationist, demonstrating how small nations are ideal was more important than examining what they are like in reality. Just as brighter light makes darker shadows, the more perfect the imagined small nation, the more imperfect the actual great nation. When praising small nations, Kōtoku always severely critiqued Japanese politics. His emphasis on the peaceful prosperity of "little England" was for illustrating that

military force was unnecessary for Japan's prosperity, his praise for Switzerland's democratic political system was for exposing the undemocratic character of Japan's political system and his proposition for a moralistic and cosmopolitan "small Japan" was for revealing the immorality and jingoism of the Empire of Japan. In this sense, Kōtoku's small nation was an illuminator of modern Japan's pathology. Pointing out the misery caused by this empire, Kōtoku imagined another modernity of Japan in his advocacy for constructing a utopian small nation. It is ironic, however, that Kōtoku's small-nationism was so focused on an imaginary small nation that he became blind to the suffering of real small nations.

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### Notes

- 1 This unsigned article is not included in the complete works of Kōtoku Shūsui published from 1968 to 1973. However, the fact that Kōtoku was interested in small nation since *Imperialism* and its poetic writing style suggests that Kōtoku was the author. Indeed, Kanson Arahata (1887–1981), who worked with Kōtoku at the Heiminsha, later referred to this article in his *The Heiminsha Days (Heiminsha jidai)* and stated, "the author of these words is Kōtoku without a doubt" (Arahata 1977, 107).
- 2 The *Heimin shinbun* had a "Readers and Reporters" column in which reporters answer readers' questions. The answers are not included in complete works of Kōtoku Shūsui because it has long been assumed that the "reporter" was Sakai Toshihiko (1871–1933). However, historian Ōta Masao, through his bibliographical and historical research, made clear it was Kōtoku (Ōta 1991, 570–575).

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# 7

## THE FOUNDATIONAL VIOLENCE OF SOVEREIGNTY

### The racist logic of “rescuing” the Ainu

*Katsuya Hirano*

Because Indigenous societies were considered so low on the natural scale of social and cultural evolution, settler authorities felt justified in claiming North America legally vacant, or *terra nullius*, and sovereignty was acquired by the mere act of settlement itself.

(Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin White Masks*)<sup>1</sup>

We were weak, and because of that, we had to accept unbearable insults. If we were stronger then, who could have silently resigned themselves to their contempt?... “Utari!” Why are we weak? How did they insult us yesterday? And how did we feel when we heard those insulting words? Think, think of those insults will you! I’m sure you won’t be able to forget them. Why did you believe them? Why don’t you take revenge on them?

(Iboshi Hokuto, “Iboshi Hokuto’s Posthumous Manuscripts”)<sup>2</sup>

#### 7.1 Introduction

The creation of the modern world is inseparable from the birth of the Westphalian system of international law, in particular its core principle of national sovereignty. The principle of sovereignty has elevated the nation-state system as the most universal and fundamental of all political forms inherent to our modern world. This universalism has produced an asymmetrical system that divides the world into those who possess sovereignty and those who don’t. International law designated Indigenous societies as the latter by declaring the lands upon which they had lived on for so many years as *terra nullius*. In the modern world, premised on the concept of sovereignty, Indigenous peoples historically were not even recognised as “small nations,” nor was their right to existence guaranteed. The annexation and occupation of *terra nullius* by a sovereign state was considered neither an invasion

of another country nor an illegal conduct. In other words, the asymmetrical power relations built on the principle of sovereignty precluded Indigenous peoples from the nation-state system, unilaterally subjecting them to colonial and settler colonial conquest and domination.

Considering the problematic of sovereignty, the concept of nation, whether large or small, can work as a force of exclusion against those who are classified as belonging to *terra nullius*. The scale of a nation is, after all, a matter of power and status *within* the system of international law. *Terra nullius*, on the other hand, constitutes not only an outside but also an Other against and over which the nation establishes itself as a sovereign subject in the modern world. *Terra nullius* consolidates the self of sovereign nation by relegating Indigenous peoples to occupy the position of the Other on their home grounds. It un-inscribes the already richly inscribed or meaningful world of Indigenous peoples by rendering it into “empty” land to be occupied and possessed by a new Master. This chapter examines the foundational violence of the logic of sovereign nation as well as the principle of sovereignty, taking as an example Japan’s settler colonial policies towards the Indigenous Ainu of Hokkaidō.

## 7.2 The act of “rescue” as dispossession

Imperial Japan embarked on the settler-colonisation of Ainu Mosir (peaceful lands of humans in Ainu language) in 1869 when it renamed the lands to Hokkaidō. The new Meiji government established in 1868 saw the development of the lands as essential for Japan’s drive for creating wealth and consolidating national borders against Russia. It pursued aggressive migration of farmer soldiers and poor peasants from across the country not only to build harbours, highways and railroads but also to open mines and foster modern agriculture. The massive settlement of Japanese immigrants and the rapid influx of mainland capital in Hokkaidō, which continued throughout the late 19th century, drove Ainu people to the barren lands. Towards the end of the century, the Japanese policymakers and academics came to hold the common view that the Ainu people were doomed to extinction as they believed that the law of natural selection dictated the course of historical progress and Indigenous peoples such as the Ainu had no place in the course.

The idea that the Ainu were a “vanishing ethnicity” formed the basis of the 1899 Native Protection Law. This chapter responds to the following questions: from what type of colonial policies and ideological premises did this notion of “rescuing” the Ainu emerge? How did the notion change the lives of the Ainu people? The objective of the following discussion therefore is not to seek the answers within the law itself. It is rather to understand various ideological currents – both national and global – that shaped the discourse of “rescuing” in the Protection Law by investigating the ways in which imperial Japan deployed the concept of sovereignty and sovereign (the emperor) to facilitate and legitimise the exploitation and dispossession of Ainu Mosir.<sup>3</sup>

Consider first the “Reasons for the Former Hokkaidō Natives Protection Law,” which was passed by the 1898 Cabinet and then submitted to the Upper House in the National Diet the following year:

With respect to the former natives of Hokkaidō, though we have respected his majesty’s will to treat them with impartial compassion (*isshi dōjin*) and have implemented this approach since the first year of the Meiji era, this goal has yet to be sufficiently accomplished. However the former natives have only basked in the light of imperialization not for so long, and so their level of intellectual development remains low. From time immemorial, they have relied upon the bounty of nature, but gradually over time, immigrants from the mainland came to occupy their lands, making them steadily lose their livelihood day in and day out while leaving them with no other perspective but that of waiting to die in freezing weather. Once more we are seeing the law of nature—the survival of the fittest—at work, and though this should not come to us as a shock, these natives are above all his majesty’s children (*sekishi*). Now to witness them sink to such depths of despair, we should not endure this once again and find a means of rescuing them. To eliminate this calamity and alleviate this poverty by way of suitable industries, the preservation of life, as well as the creation of families, I believe, is the duty of the nation, that is, to follow his majesty’s idea of treating them with impartial compassion. This is why I am proposing this law.<sup>4</sup>

What is noteworthy about this proposal is the logic that, because the emperor treated all of his subjects as his children with impartial compassion, it was the state’s duty to rescue the Ainu from “calamity” and “poverty” caused by the “natural law of survival of the fittest” rather than the government’s colonisation policies. In other words, the discourse of the Ainu as emperor’s children served as the basis for their “rescuing” while presenting settler-colonisation as a natural selection process. In the field of Japanese political thought, the idea of taking imperial subject as *sekishi* has been analysed as the ideological foundation of Japan’s unique “family state” (*kazoku kokka*) – a type of oriental despotism characterised by a deep bond between the ruler and the subject.<sup>5</sup> But this conception of pseudo-familial connections between rulers and subjects is also found in the Latin doctrine of *parens patriae*, which can be translated directly as “parent of the nation” or styled as “the State as parent of the nation.” This idea had been the foundation for the British monarchy beginning in the 17th century and had served as a governing principle throughout much of Europe (Custer, 1978: 195–208; James cited in Wootton, 1986: 107–109). As Lynn Hunt argues in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, this doctrine was used by the French monarchy on the eve of the revolution and was even commonly felt among the French people (Hunt, 1992). According to this doctrine, the subjects of the paternal (King) or maternal (Queen) sovereign must guarantee the safety of his or her subjects when they are in need of protection. The assertion that “the Ainu should be given relief as children of his majesty the

emperor” is not an expression of some uniquely oriental despotic form peculiar to the Meiji state, but rather a variation of the doctrine of *parens patriae* widely shared across the European monarchies that Meiji leaders used as models for the formation of the modern Japanese counterpart.

The benevolence of the emperor directed at the Ainu should not, however, be understood in terms of the general monarch–subject relation in which the sovereign must care for his subjects (in this case the Japanese, or *wajin* as the Ainu people called them). Rather, this compassion was directed at a so-called inferior race within the empire’s borders defined as an ignorant people devoid of intellect and thus left behind by the laws of natural selection. For the emperor, the Ainu were “equal *sekishi*” to the *wajin* but, at the same time, were “ignorant and unintelligent” people who lacked the qualifications needed to be considered full subjects. In other words, despite their “low level of intellect,” because of the Ainu’s status as co-imperials, they were worthy of salvation. This narrative of “impartial compassion” obscured or justified the ideology of racism rooted in social evolutionism and concealed the underlying mechanics of settler colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples and destruction of their mode of life. The act of “rescuing” stipulated in the Protection Law’s rationale, therefore, was none other than the logic of racism that underpinned the settler colonial policy revolving around the axis of discrimination and protection.

As I have argued elsewhere, settler colonial discrimination does not function purely with regard to the repression or exclusion of the other. Settler colonial discrimination works under the circumstances in which “norms (sovereignty, progress, civilisation – inside) create forms of exception (*terra nullius*, backwardness, barbarism – outside), leaving the latter in a relationship of total subordination to the former” (Hirano, 2018: 64). In other words, settler colonial discrimination works in social relations where the prevailing norms produce the spaces of exception and subject them to their own terms.

As discussed above, the Ainu, who were exceptionalised as an inferior race by Japanese definitions of progress and intelligence, were included in imperial Japan as the emperor’s children while simultaneously denied as full-fledged members of society. This is an example of how discrimination under the settler colonial regime necessarily accompanies persistent violence. If discrimination were simply a form of temporary exclusion that had nothing to do with the sustained forces of authority and restriction of norms, then there could be no mechanics of violence to enforce the norms. The violence of settler colonial discrimination produces an effect of social death – a state of suspension between life and death in which people exceptionalised by norms are subsumed into dominant social relations all the while being excluded *within* them. In this way, settler colonial discrimination can be understood as a form of “inclusive exclusion,” or inclusion-*as*-exclusion, in which the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion blur – a condition which philosopher Giorgio Agamben called “the state of exception” (Agamben, 1998).

Agamben's "state of exception" provides a framework to consider not only the ways in which the law can be suspended, but more importantly how sovereign power has the ability to determine and normalise these exceptions. In the state of exception, distinctions between legality and illegality, norm and exception, and inside and outside are all obscured. Life is stripped of all political protections, reduced to a type of bare life devoid of dignity. Unfortunately, Agamben's work does not consider the discriminatory structures produced by colonial and settler colonial regimes. This chapter aims to offer a decolonial application of Agamben's thesis on the state of exception to explore settler colonial racism in Hokkaidō.<sup>6</sup>

### 7.3 Sovereignty and sekishi

Let me further inquire into how the discourse of the Ainu as children in need of protection was intimately tied to the Meiji government's dispossession of Indigenous peoples from the land and their subsequent descent into poverty. Looking at this problem through the lens of the 19th-century historicist thinking like that of Herbert Spencer, there are clear echoes of this discourse in his claim that "the intellectual traits of the uncivilized. . . [these] traits are recurring in the children of the civilized" (Spencer, 1898: 89–90). Liberal thinkers such as Spencer and John Stuart Mill equated the level of intelligence of "savages" to that of "irrational" and ignorant children of civilised nations; moreover, they put forth that adults of civilised nations are "rational" and therefore "obligated to protect and raise the former as their very own children into adulthood" (Mills and Lefrancois, 2018: 503–524).<sup>7</sup> According to Caroline Thyer, many believed "uncivilised peoples separated from their colonial masters would lapse into a deficient mental state, much like a regular child would if they were to be estranged from their parents" (Sawyer, 2006: 1–14). Therefore, the "uncivilised" were conceptualised as half-formed human beings lacking in capacities of self-management and self-determination, and, due to those half-formed personalities, the parent-sovereign had to bear the responsibility of caring for them. The term "white man's burden," with its sense of racial supremacy and self-righteousness, meant exactly this, as European colonial governments deployed this moral justification for the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Due to their "immaturity" and "ignorance and incompetence," Indigenous peoples are not seen as occupants of the land, and as a result "civilised peoples" should own and operate it on their behalf. As Robert Jackson puts it in his book *Sovereignty: The Evolution of an Idea*, "Because sovereignty entailed the most basic rights and the heaviest responsibilities, it was necessary to ensure that it was conferred on rulers and peoples who were fit for it. Fitness was ultimately defined in racial terms" (Jackson, 2007: 75). In this way, non-white societies were seen as deficient in their capacity for sovereignty.

Ironically, this notion of sovereignty based on white supremacy was used to discriminate against Japan (via unequal port treaties signed during the 1850s), which tended to deem itself an "honorary white" nation and asserted itself thusly

throughout the 19th and 20th centuries by actively adopting and participating in this ideology of “civilisation.” The initial proving ground for Japan was Ainu Mosir. Settler colonial policies were made possible by denying the legal personhood of the Ainu, and the national project of developing Hokkaidō, including “civilising” the Ainu, became the “Japanese people’s burden,” not unlike “white man’s burden.”<sup>8</sup> As Vice Minister of Development in Hokkaidō Kuroda Kiyotaka explained in 1872, when 35 Ainu were sent to Tokyo as part of the “civilising” process:

Originally the customs, appearances, and language of the Ainu were different from those of the Japanese, and therefore they could not shed their bad habits. At the moment a vast undertaking of development is underway: they must overcome evil customs, advancing together with the development of the mainland (*naichi*) in such a way as to become no different from us. Only with immigrants from *naichi* can we make them learn proper customs.

*(Hokudai hyakunenshi Sapporo nō gakkō shiryō, 1981: 41–42)*

In February 1899, the Upper House debated the Former Natives Protection Law, with one member stating that, “education for the impoverished Ainu is a good thing, but from what I’ve been hearing, I think the former natives can’t be educated. I have the impression that it has not produced the intended effect.” In response to the question, Shirani Takashi, chief of the Hokkaidō Division of the Home Minister’s Secretariat and the original drafter of the Protection Law, answered in the following way:

Although the authorities have been paying a great deal of attention to the education of the natives, the results have not been sufficient because they are an inferior race. At the same time, if we teach them to read, write, and how to engage in manual labor, surely as these measures add up gradually—of course not to the level where they can compete with mainlanders—but there’s no denying that the sun will eventually set on their conditions of illiteracy and ignorance.

*(History of the Protection of Former Natives of Hokkaidō, 1981: 211)*

Additionally, Matsudaira Masanao, who presented the Protection Law to the House of Councilors, explained the significance of the law in the following terms:

The reasoning behind this law...as you all are aware, the former natives of Hokkaidō, or ‘Ainu’ as they are called, are the same as any imperial subject, but as the opening of the territory has gotten underway and industries have begun working the land, the result gradually was competition for survival of the fittest. This has put pressure upon the former natives, and we can all imagine how this continues to result in conditions where they lose their way of life. That fellow imperial subjects should fall into such distress is contrary to what we would call the imperial command of fairness and impartial compassion. The enactment

of this law is nothing less than the former natives, or ‘Ainu,’ being given this opportunity to find their place.

*(History of the Protection of Former Natives of Hokkaidō, 1981: 207)*

All of the above passages reason Ainu poverty as the result of the “survival of the fittest” and, given their endangered existence as a racially “inferior” people, puts forth the view that the fairness and impartiality of the emperor’s benevolence, together with his only legitimate subjects, the Japanese, can rescue the Ainu.

Widely shared among the policymakers was the notion that the inferiority of the Ainu as a “species” was manifested both in their unhygienic lifestyles – “shabby” dwelling and “hirsute” body – and in a deepening physical vulnerability in the face of infectious diseases. The reason why the Ainu lost their own lands, and also why their Indigeneity and sovereignty had to be denied, was not only due to inferior intellect: they lacked a hygienic lifestyle and as a result had lost their vitality as living organisms. Shirani therefore emphasised that “medical hygiene” needed to be taught to the Ainu, and that the focus of colonial administrators should be on making them active individuals, in both mind and body, so that they could be fit for Japanese subjecthood (Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 453). It was the duty of the Japanese, who possessed healthy minds and bodies, to help the “feeble” Ainu “mature into adults” as imperial subjects through “medical hygiene” and education. The Ainu here are subjected to the logics of what Michel Foucault calls “biopower,” presented not as an entirely hopeless and perishing race but rather as with the capacity to be reborn as splendid Japanese should they acquire healthy bodies and minds (Foucault, 2003: 254). For Shirani and members of the House of Councilors, the Protection Law was meant to serve as the way forward for Ainu to accomplish this. Indeed, the moral education provided to Ainu children was said especially to inculcate a sense of cleanliness, order, honour, thrift and loyalty to one’s ruler, as well as patriotism. Moreover, “a focus on everyday etiquette was emphasized as a way to lead oneself to the development of clean customs” (Ueno, 2014: 34). By reforming Ainu “cleanliness,” hygiene and other everyday customs, the aim was to transform them into imperial subjects who possessed vitality with a sense of duty to the nation, as well as a spirit of patriotism.

The 1899 Protection Law did not explicitly refer to the Ainu as “children left behind by progress” based on the Social Darwinian view of the civilising process, but a closer examination reveals that the law was derived from the same ideological root in its stipulation that the Ainu needed to abandon their dependency on hunting and gathering and instead adopt farming, medical hygiene and compulsory education. One could say that this life-affirming biopolitical gaze, in which the Ainu could be made into a new type of clean and healthy “species,” was really the logic of cultural genocide under the guise of “rescue.” Whether or not they could be sublimated into “children of his majesty the emperor” depended on the results of these racialised reforms brought forth by the Protection Law.

Here it is apparent that the issue of sovereignty is inextricably linked to racism. It has been argued often that scientific racism differentiated human intelligences based on the presence of modern reason and the degree of “development” in science and technology (or the degree of material civilisation). But the form of racism instituted by the Protection Law introduced a new type of racial segmentation that was organised around the body and its hygiene, or life vitality. This conception used hygiene as a way to reflect intellectual and spiritual development, which was considered necessary for a people to become a legitimate part of a sovereign nation. By embodying proper hygiene, one could leave a primitive stage and go on to become a proper child of the emperor.

This biopolitical view surrounding hygiene was not limited to just Japanese bureaucrats and the government. The Ainu writer Urakawa Tarokichi even wrote in a 1927 issue of the magazine *Kotan* that “our most pressing issue is hygiene,” and that

hygiene is an indispensable part of civilization. We shouldn't go as far as saying that an unhygienic lifestyle killed the Ainu people, but hygiene will strengthen our bodies and helps refresh our minds. It will help elevate us to a new stage of life.

*(Urakawa, 1972: 384)*

It is evident here that the discourse of hygiene and sanitation, deeply intertwined with racialist discrimination, had colonised the mind of an Ainu with an inferiority complex or sense of self-negation.

#### **7.4 “Terra nullius:” The logic of dispossession and occupation**

As I have discussed in other works, imperial Japan's act of expropriation of Ainu Mosir was legally justified in the name of *terra nullius* (Hirano, 2022: 23–54). In order to better understand the role the concept of *terra nullius* played in Ainu's dispossession, I would like to pay closer attention to the connections between sovereignty and the notion of the “native Ainu lacking in personhood.”

It has been argued since the late 18th century that the national community, embodying “true” freedom, necessarily developed a State whereby it could possess its own territory and claim independence and the right to self-governance. This, in turn, meant that those who did not develop a State were deemed unable to carry out their freedom through reason and thereby were judged as being incapable of possessing sovereignty (Hegel, 1956: 91, 93).<sup>9</sup> Those who lack states must have those who possess them to intervene in their affairs and guide them.<sup>10</sup> This is why there are treaties regulating intercourse between nations, but none regulating the interactions between state and stateless societies (such as the Ainu or Australian Aborigines). Therefore, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands was not considered illegal, but instead was seen as a legitimate act by nations

that possessed sovereignty. This was the political basis for colonialism (Dörr, 2014: 477–499). Thus, the Westphalian system is foundationally hierarchical and exclusionary in two ways. Firstly, the idea of sovereign nations – nations with legal personality that possesses supreme authority and whose laws express a capacity to extend dominion over all its territories and subjects, along with the ability to maintain equal relations with other nations – implies that societies (read as non-Christian societies) that lack such mechanisms cannot have rights over their own territories and existence. Secondly, according to Hugo Grotius, whose work formed the basis of the idea of sovereignty, the lack of fixed territories or borders in nomadic societies translates to a lack of a sense of ownership and no organised state structures. The lands on which they have lived for many generations are territories that “no one inhabits” or that are “ownerless” (*terra nullius*). Their lands were thus to be regarded as “territory” destined to be occupied through a process of either “discovery,” migration, or conquest (via war or other means) (Fitzmaurice, 2007: 1–15; Lesaffer, 2005: 25–58; Hendlin, 2014: 141–174).

Later, this logic of “territorial land” developed by Grotius became the rationale behind private property rights as articulated by John Locke. Locke describes land ownership as follows:

as much land as man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his Property... God and his Reason commanded him to subdue the Earth, i.e. improve it for the benefit of Life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labor.

*(Locke and Laslett, 1988: 290–291)*

Thus, Locke believed that the peculiar power of “reason” (which he calls a proper right) given to man by God served as a form of labour “for their benefit” (Locke and Laslett, 1988: 290–291). The ability to conquer nature, improve it and thereby produce things for one’s own benefit is what makes man the lord of all things, and private property is the most obvious expression of this ability. Therefore, “it cannot be supposed” that God intended for land to “always remain common and uncultivated” (Locke and Laslett, 1988: 290–291). Furthermore, Locke argued that the value of land only arises when the productivity of grains and other crops is increased through the natural improvement of labour. Citing biblical examples, Locke argued that “Whatsoever he tilled and reaped, laid up and made use of, before it spoiled, that was his peculiar Right; whatsoever he enclosed, and could feed, and make use of, the cattle and product was also his” (Locke and Laslett, 1988: 295).

This Lockean conception of *terra nullius* was applied in the British Empire’s policies towards the Indigenous peoples of Australia and North America, which defined all people not engaged in farming as “savages” lacking both the Christian concept of God and reason. Because Indigenous peoples still engaged in hunting and gathering on common properties, their territories were deemed a “no man’s

land” in need of new masters who would obey God’s commands. Therefore, Indigenous peoples were subjugated and massacred in the name of God and reason (Tomita, 1989: 5–21).<sup>11</sup>

Looking at the relationship between sovereignty and the nation-state and its meaning for Indigenous peoples, racism exists as one of the important philosophical elements of the Treaty of Westphalia, which laid the foundation for the modern international system. Racism here can be rephrased as the relationship between self and other that allows state-holding societies to conquer, subjugate or eliminate those who lack the nation-state form. The normalisation of this situation is precisely what Agamben, via Carl Schmitt, labelled the “state of exception,” in which the normative judgement of right and wrong is suspended. In other words, the conquest and eradication of Indigenous societies by sovereign states was seen as the “lawful” exclusion of bare life – dehumanised beings who could not be considered the victims of crimes or sacrifice because they were regarded as existing outside humanity.

Following this logic, we begin to understand why the Meiji policymakers, who learned this conception of *terra nullius* via *Bankoku kōhō*, a Chinese translation of Henry Wheaton’s *Elements of International Law* (1836), considered the dispossession of Ainu Mosir not an illegal act but the inevitable outcome of “natural selection” (Hirano, 2022: 7–32). By renaming Ainu Mosir “Hokkaidō,” the Japanese claimed that they did not dispossess the original inhabitants, but rather “rescued” them from an ignorant and “uncivilised” ethnos. The Ainu lived off the bounty of nature and did not apply their labour to improve the land or the productivity of agriculture and thus were deemed not to be the rightful inhabitants of the land. As seen above, Japanese policymakers understood sovereignty as a right that could only be obtained by clearing wasteland and raising crops, and only Japanese farmer-pioneers who were the legitimate “children” of the emperor could stand in as historical subjects to perform these tasks. The Ainu were therefore seen as “useless” and “redundant” when Meiji Japan asserted itself in Hokkaidō in response to the growing encroachment of imperial Russia and the United States. Only the new bodies of *wajin* were seen as being capable of populating and controlling the land. *The History of Hokkaidō*, compiled and published by the Hokkaidō Government in 1918 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Hokkaidō development office, explains the reasons why the *wajin* have “opened” up Hokkaidō in place of the Ainu since the Meiji period:

With respect to their old customs, the great majority of the Ainu have not yet managed to escape a savage and uncivilized stage. . . . From the very outset, the task of opening the frontier can only be accomplished by an ethnos that has reached a certain cultural level. It is of course impossible to hope that this opening of the frontier could be performed by the people of Ezo (Ainu) themselves, a people that has not yet left behind a period of primitive savagery—the only nation among

those close to Hokkaidō and near to the Ezo people which possesses a culture capable of enduring this duty is unquestionably the Japanese.

*(Hokkaidō-shi dai ikkan, 1918: 3–5)*

### 7.5 The logic and reality of “rescue”

Let us move on to examine the systems of private and common properties that were foisted upon the Ainu to understand the logic and reality of “rescue.” The logic that Indigenous people do not possess legal personality also was connected to the idea that only the colonial government could protect Ainu people’s lands and common properties. The Ainu, as subjects of the Japanese empire, could certainly receive land from the Meiji government. They could not, however, enjoy equal rights with other Japanese because, as Meiji policymakers argued, the Ainu had deficient notions of property ownership and were immature beings who could not reap the benefits of the land. Article 10 of the Protection Law stipulated not only that “the Hokkaidō Prefectural Office shall manage the communal properties of the former natives,” but also that the state reserved the right to operate and dispose of them, which in practice meant that many Japanese immigrants appropriated Ainu lands with the blessing of the state (Hokkaidō kyūdojin hogo enkakushi, 1981: 206). This idea that the Japanese must manage the lands was in essence said to be an expression of the “imperial blessing,” that is, an “impartial benevolence” bestowed by the emperor upon the Ainu. The logic of dispossessing the lands and livelihoods of the Ainu here is presented as that of the emperor’s “gifts” and the state’s duty to carry them out. To reiterate, what made this dual logic possible was the racialist idea of sovereignty, which portrayed the Ainu as an “unenlightened inferior race” lacking legal personality. By following this logic, the development of Hokkaidō does not appear as the deprivation of the Ainu’s livelihoods and community, but as a project to protect and save them through civilisation.

Given that the protection law was built upon the aforementioned ideological premise, consider now the problems involved in landownership. Article 2 of the Protection Law imposed strict limits upon Ainu’s allocated lands developed through farming. With the exception of inheritance, the rights to pledges, mortgages and land speculation were prohibited, as was the right to easement or liens (Hokkaidō kyūdojin hogo enkakushi, 1981: 205). The Ainu could not legally dispose of or sell the land the government provided in a marked departure from the modern concept of land ownership, which states that the owner can use, generate income and dispose of or sell the land. This is a clear instance in which the Protection Law applied the “state of exception” to the Ainu. After being dispossessed in the name of modern private property, the Ainu were forced to take up farming to participate in this system of ownership. That right was not even fully granted to them, however, as they were not allowed to independently manage their lands. This, of course, is not the original meaning of the term “private property.” This inclusive exclusion of the Ainu, in other words, incorporating them as an economic “interior” all the while

treating them as a legal “exterior,” was justified in the following terms: “The former natives who lack the ability to manage their properties will receive supervision from the *wajin*” (Sekiguchi, Kuwabara, Takizawa and Tabata, 2015: 194). The idea that the Ainu were incapable of productively governing and managing the land served as a legal and economic basis for privileging the agricultural labour form, which in turn denied hunting and gathering as legitimate forms of labour. Anyone who took up farming was supposed to receive guarantees to life but the Ainu were faced with severe restrictions when trying to exercise this right. Such an exception was made in the case of the Ainu’s relationship with modern property rights because they were seen as lacking the ability to work and survive on their own. Racism was thus not merely about cultural representation, but also about the labour power that sustains life, as well as the issue of property ownership. In other words, there is no explaining labour and property under capitalism without this ideological operation of racialisation.

In 1911, Kōno Tsunekichi conducted a survey titled “The Former Hokkaidō Natives,” in which he explains the reasons behind Ainu poverty: “because the Ainu terribly lack the mindset of savings, it is natural for them to lack the ability to own a lot of property” (Kōno, 1980: 26). In essence, Ainu poverty was attributable to an absence of modern economic concepts. At no point does Kōno consider that the Ainu were being forced into a system of private property through dispossession all the while being denied the right to freely manage their properties. Furthermore, the criminal act of exploitation and misappropriation, in which the Ainu people have been defrauded of their land by *wajin* settlers, is reframed as a problem that pertains to the Ainu’s inability to manage land. Instead of colonial rulers and settlers being held accountable for crimes, the Ainu are blamed for their own problems based on their “childishness” and “unenlightened” character. Put differently, Kōno presents the plight of the Ainu here as a problem of racial “inferiority,” rather than one of the settler-colonial systems.

According to a survey conducted 12 years after the Protection Law came into force, the Ainu did become farmers for a period of time, but the authors lamented that, “some have once again neglected farming and migrated to fishing grounds. Most of the work has fallen into the hands of women and girls” (Kōno, 1980: 29). According to a survey conducted five years later in 1916, however, 2,354 of 4,007 total Ainu households (57.5%) were engaged in farming, demonstrating that progress had been made with regard to their adoption of an agrarian lifestyle (Sekiguchi, Kuwabara, Takizawa and Tabata, 2015: 199–200). Even so, the production value of Ainu agriculture was four times less than that of the *wajin*. During the 11 years from 1899 to 1910, the area of land granted to the Ainu under the Protection Law was about 6,865 hectares, but most of it was barren and unsuitable for cultivation. As a result, “the area the Ainu cultivated from which they made profit [was] very small,” leading the Ainu to abandon farming (Kōno, 1980: 27). As of 1916, according to Kōno, only 17 years had passed since the law had been enacted, no one had their land confiscated yet. But 15 years later, land that had

remained uncultivated could be seized by the state based on the Protection Law. The impoverished Ainu therefore borrowed money from *wajin* at high interest rates to try to develop their lands, and in many cases lost the right of lease as a result of their failure to pay back the debts. By 1924, 45% of cultivated lands (68% of lands given by the government) had been leased to *wajin* (Enomori, 1987: 170–171).

There were issues inherent to the system of common properties as well. Common property was property that was jointly owned by all Ainu people in Hokkaidō or in a certain area, and there were three main types. The first was cash, deposits and bonds, which were financial assets intended to be profitable. The second was real estate, such as farms, marine drying pits, residential land and buildings, which were used jointly by Ainu people in the area or lent to Japanese people to earn income from usage fees. The third were fishing grounds (fishing rights), which the Ainu used themselves or leased to *wajin* to receive income. These properties had been set up by the Meiji government in the 1870s and 1880s and had been managed by Ainu representatives, or town and village offices until the Protection Law was enacted.

Financial resources were comprised of three components: profits from state-run fishing industries, gifts from the emperor, and relief funds (Hokkaidō Kyū dojin hogo enkakushi, 1981: 289–291). With the end of the contract labour system in the fishing industry in 1869, there were no longer any jobs for the Ainu, so proceeds from the prefecturally-run fishing industries were collected. Then, during an imperial tour of Hokkaidō in 1881, each Ainu household living in Shiraoi, Yufutsu and Saru counties received 25 sen, for a total of 925.25 sen, which was distributed among towns and villages in the counties as a source of funds. In addition, in 1883 (Meiji 16), 1,000 yen was subsidised by the Ministry of the Imperial Household, and 2,000 yen was subsidised by the Ministry of Education in response to requests from Sapporo, Hakodate and Nemuro. All of these were earmarked to finance schooling and education. Finally, the relief funds took the form of rice surpluses collected by the Prefectural Office.

These common properties were not profitable or utilised as intended and did not contribute to improving the lives of the Ainu. In 1880, when the Ainu fishermen's associations of Hiroo, Toberi, Tokachi, Kamikawa, Nakagawa, Kasai and Kato counties in Tokachi Province were dissolved, the association entrusted the management of 40,750 yen to the prefectural government. However, the government used part of the funds to buy the shares of Kyodo Unyu Kaisha (later Nippon Yusen), later replacing these with shares from the Sapporo Sugar and Hokkaidō Hemp corporations. The bankruptcy of both these companies later resulted in the “dramatic reduction of common properties” (*Shin Hokkaidōshi dai 4-kan*, 1981: 180). Of these, the holdings of the Kasai and Kato areas saw a significant drop, from about 22,060 yen in 1880 to 13,279 yen in 1894 (*Obihiro-shi-shi hensan iinkai*, 1984). Additionally, according to the *New History of Hokkaidō*, the 3,000 yen from the Imperial Household and Culture ministries earmarked for Ainu education throughout Hokkaidō “had been deposited among the three prefectures despite the fact that they did not agree on how to use it” (*Shin*

*Hokkaidōshi dai 4-kan*, 1981: 179). In 1898, the sum had grown to 6,000 yen and sat idle. Also, in 1881, 925 yen and 25 sen, which was bestowed on the occasion of the imperial tour, was “stored in vain, and part of it was donated to the construction costs of schools, hospitals, etc.” for the Japanese settlers (*Shin Hokkaidōshi dai 4-kan*, 1981: 179).

It was in this context that article 10 of the Protection Law decreed that “The Commissioner of Hokkaidō will manage the common properties of the former natives” (Hokkaidō Kyū dojin hogo enkakushi, 1981: 206). Following the Protection Law, the “regulations surrounding management of the common properties of the former natives” were passed in October of the same year, and any properties that belonged to over two administrative areas at county level would be managed by the prefectural government while other properties would be taken care of by the head of county, town or village (Hokkaidō Kyū dojin hogo enkakushi, 1981: 279). The Protection Law also stipulated that no cash would be kept as common properties, only postal savings accounts and public bond certificates that would increase profit via interest. Additionally, with the approval of the Commissioner of Hokkaidō, it was possible to convert the funds into bank deposits and stock certificates. Due to poor management, however, the head of county, town or village sold common properties to *wajin*, or used them for investments that failed. In some cases, the head of town appropriated the property, which remained unaccounted for (Shin Hokkaidō-shi, 1981: 180–181).

After the Second World War, the Ainu were hit even harder by the agrarian land reforms carried out by the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP) as they were treated as an absentee landlord. The lands that the Ainu had received under the Protection Law were to be sold to the government and then to tenant farmers under the Law on Special Measures for the Establishment of Free Farmers (*jisōhō*). These lands were not being used by the Ainu at the time largely due to their dire economic conditions that caused them to sign 99-year semi-permanent tenancy contracts with *wajin* settlers in order to borrow some money, as well as their difficulties with farming, which had forced the Ainu to take up jobs as seasonal labourers. The Hokkaidō Ainu Association requested that the Hokkaidō government and the Japanese government take into consideration these special circumstances and reconsider the application of the *jisōhō*, but their request was not granted. In the end, the government forcibly sold 26% of all Ainu land (Tsunemoto, 2000: 12–15). I will return to this postwar development at the end of the chapter.

Public opinion on the 1899 Protection Law varied in the years after its passage. *Hokkaidō mainichi shinbun* journalist Ito San’ka, without much deliberation, criticised the fact that only farmers could benefit from “protection” and “relief”:

Is there any reason why we should be restricting the rights to only those engaging in farming, but not to those engaged in fishing?

(*Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 473*)

Next, he argued that the Law should be there to support the Ainu, framing it in the following terms:

The goal of the Protection Law is not to inflict violence upon the Ainu but to support their existence and put them on the road to self-sufficiency, so that they can embrace civilization and let go of their barbaric conditions as quickly as possible. This will allow them to bask in the bountiful grace of our emperor who bestows love and compassion upon all.

(Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 475)

Others firmly opposed the Protection Law. One contributor to the *Hokkaidō mainichi shimbun*, writing under the name Kasumi Katana, noted that “the goal of colonization is not to have exchanges with the former natives.” Rather the Protection Law should be carried out in the “national interest” or in the name of “national policy” and should not be mixed up with moral or ethical considerations. This, Kasumi noted, was “consistent with the sacred principle of natural selection,” and so the Protection Law for the Ainu would ultimately be “completely pointless” (Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 475).

Interestingly, both the drafters and critical supporters of the bill saw the imperial sovereign as fairly providing favour and benevolence to all – a move that recalls the relationship between pastors and their followers in Michel Foucault’s conception of pastoral power (Foucault, 2007).<sup>12</sup> The position of the imperial sovereign here transcends the state as an instrument of violence. The violent dispossession and occupation of Ainu Mosir could not function without this ideological apparatus of the emperor and national sovereignty. But the central axis around which this mechanism is organised is the emperor, whose offerings of “bountiful grace” and unlimited affection towards each and every subject help conceal the system’s violent nature. The emperor system exists as the core of authority that enables the violence of discrimination, plunder, and occupation, but, at the same time, it is a structure that makes that violence invisible through benevolence and favour. This cunning structure of invisible violence pretends to look after each and every individual, both materially and spiritually, in the name of benevolent affection whereby it actually interpellates individuals on a deeply personal level. As Ogawa Masato argues, it is no accident that the foremost values that were taught in Ainu education were “loyalty” to imperial authority and “patriotism” (Ogawa, 1997: 143). Imperial Japan found it essential to make the Ainu willingly swear loyalty to the emperor and to instil in them a love for Japan so that they would not recognise the violence of colonial exploitation as violence and in turn would misrecognise it as the emperor’s “favour” and “compassion.” According to Ogawa, the Hokkaidō government felt in the late Meiji period that there was a looming crisis because the Ainu “completely lacked a conception of love for the nation and imperial household,” and so the “most important task of moral instruction was to teach them love and reverence for the nation and emperor” (Ogawa, 1997: 143).

The trick behind the emperor system's "fairness and impartiality" of benevolence is that even though the emperor – the sovereign – is at the core of the violence of exclusion, it subsumes those who were excluded with compensations of "favour" and "benevolence," all the while demanding unconditional loyalty from them.

This structure of misrecognition resembles that of a confession. Those who are discriminated against must accept the cause of the discrimination, and all the pain that comes with it, as an original sin, which leads to a kind of self-negation encouraged through one's striving to become one of the emperor's model children (*sekishi*). Relief, here in the form of becoming a splendid imperial subject, appears to serve as the only path to salvation. In this way, devotion to the emperor – which is synonymous with subordinating oneself – conceals the violence of settler colonialism by constructing an idea of Indigenous peoples' original sin. With the emperor playing the role of the pastor of the Ainu people, the expropriation of Ainu Mosir turned into a story of progress and Ainu salvation.

## 7.6 Conclusion

The Meiji government, through the compulsory national education apparatus, instilled into the Ainu an inferiority complex by labelling them "the empire's disgrace," all the while trying to encourage them to "love the emperor and nation." Takekuma Tokusaburou, a Karafuto Ainu and Ainu school teacher, laments in the *Ainu monogatari* (Tale of Ainu) that the Protection Law had yet to help the Ainu because they historically possessed "a strong mindset of dependence," and "lacked conceptions of hygiene" (Takekuma in Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 370–371). This was due to the fact that "many remain illiterate and lack education" (Takekuma in Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 370). Also because of their illiteracy and ignorance, Takekuma laments, "they lack abilities to make sound judgements, and the decisiveness to do anything" (Takekuma in Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 371). "As a result, Ainu society is trapped in darkness." This is why, he writes, "I want to help all Ainu children to become a *wajin*" (Takekuma in Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 371). Takekuma concludes that "it is my conviction that the Ainu must assimilate into Japanese society to avoid the fate of vanishing race" (Takekuma in Ogawa and Yamada, 1998: 358).

Ainu education made the Ainu believe that their own ignorance and incompetence brought about a crisis of self-annihilation. This sense of self-blame is the psychological effect produced by racist violence. Racism's strength as a hegemonic ideology is that it narrates the predicament of each and every Indigenous person through the words and values of colonisers and forces Indigenous people to accept their own "inferiority" and "ignorance" as undeniable facts, then feel ashamed of it, confess to it and curse their very existence. This was possible only through the settler colonial logic of elimination: it deprives the Indigenous people of all sense of dignified existence through dispossession of their livelihood, culture, customs and community whereby it reduces them to a bare life.

Iboshi Hokuto, who passed away in 1929 at the young age of 27, confronted the violence of racism and settler-colonial rule, and developed an uncontrollable hatred and urge for revenge against those who discriminated against him. Let us recall the last words in which we wrote down in grief:

My lonesome thoughts:

As Ainu, we have been despised by many people since we were children.

We were weak, and because of that, we had to accept unbearable insults. If we were stronger then, who would have silently resigned themselves to their contempt? Even though I bullied them to my heart's content...

How many times have we clenched our fists involuntarily reminiscing on these events?

But we were serious,

Truly honest.

The insults we endured one day we believed in the next. I really believed and looked up to them for love.

“Utari!” Why are we weak? How did they insult us yesterday? And how did we feel when we heard those insulting words? Think, think of those insults will you! I’m sure you won’t be able to forget them. Why did you believe them? Why don’t you take revenge on them?

My heart cried out at the time.

And then I burned with my plot to exact revenge. To this day, however frightened we are by the horrors of their sins, we have taken our revenge.

The suffering that comes from being weak, the sorrow that comes from being an outcast.

We have cursed them several times and we have cursed our society.

But we were honest.

We always forget when our hearts go wild. And the unbearable regret then turns to burning tears that flow endlessly.

*(Iboshi, 1984: 103–104)*

Iboshi Hokuto’s anguished words serve as an example of resistance to the ruses of misrecognition contrived in the ideology of “fairness and impartiality of imperial benevolence.” He refuses to submit to it by seeing insults as insults and taking them in with rightful anger but not remorse. Iboshi feels honest in confronting the predicament his fellow Ainu are in, all the while enduring the pain of agonising over the irrepressible desire for revenge against those who discriminate against them. A wild thought, loneliness, sadness, and shame overtake Iboshi. The “burning tears” streaming down his face are not those of a confession. He cried at the absurdity of being able to protect one’s self-respect and of redeeming one’s own humanity only by cursing and loathing, and at the existence of his “fellows” (*Utari*) cornered by such an absurdity. His tears were a testament to the agonising objection to becoming a “child of the emperor,” an

insidious ideology that turns settler colonial dispossession and subjugation into a gospel of imperial “grace.”

It is important to recall that the settler colonial domination sustained in Hokkaidō even after the Japanese empire experienced defeat and collapse in August 1945. The various exploited and discriminated minorities of the former empire raised their voices demanding liberation by seizing the opportunity of the empire’s demise. In April 1946, Ainu activists, under the leadership of Ainu linguist Chiri Mashiho, called for Ainu independence. This movement aimed to take back the land Japan had dispossessed the Ainu from during the 19th century in the name of imperial modernisation, as well as gain the right to live freely on it. One activist, Yamamoto Tasuke, appealed to Ainu independence in the following terms in *Ainu News*:

These scoundrels who thought they were doing the emperor’s work by invading and plundering have driven the motherland into ruins and are now dying as ‘war criminals.’ You reap what you sow! Japan’s peace and democratization are things that the Ainu also desperately need. I ask the whole *Utari* (brethren) to be fully awakened and spring into action. If we do not rouse ourselves we will surely perish as well. It is imperative that we secure our lands, improve housing, develop our education, and take back our communal properties from wicked bureaucrats and return them to our *Utari*. Our *Ekashi* (elders) have toiled meritoriously to put down the righteous path of the *Ainu* nation! To protect this pride the Ainu must now spring forth into action!

(*Tanikawa, 1972: 257–258; Shi’nya, 1977: 233*)

Yamamoto’s calls for an “awakening” came on the heels of the Hokkaidō Ainu Association’s drive for the Hokkaidō prefectural government to return “common properties” to the Ainu. A group of Ainu activists re-established the association, which would become the Hokkaidō *Utari* Association in 1961 and then rename itself as Hokkaidō Ainu Association again in 2009, in February 1946 to demand, as mentioned earlier, the return of common properties given to the Ainu as part of the Protection Law (Takeuchi, 2020: 63–66).

As briefly mentioned earlier, the fall of the Japanese empire brought about new threats to Ainu land rights in the shape of the 1946 Land Reform Law. Implemented in October of the same year by SCAP, the law was designed to dismantle the “parasitic” landlord system and increase independent small landowners and was considered a key element of Japan’s democratisation programme. The Ainu wanted to make sure that their lands were not considered parasitic under the new legislation in order to prevent any further losses. In 1947, the Hokkaidō Ainu Association sent a petition to the Hokkaidō prefectural government, making a case that their free ancestral lands, where they used to fish and hunt, were forcibly taken by the Meiji government through settler-colonial policies and that, therefore, they had the right to retain any common properties established under the Protection Law (Enomori, 2015: 518–519). Ultimately, the petition argued that although they

might appear on paper as absentee or delinquent landlords, the Ainu's specific historical circumstances should preclude the application of land reforms to their common properties (Enomori, 2015: 518–519). But, much to their dismay, the law did not factor in the realities of the Ainu's dispossession and imperial assimilation (Tsunemoto, 2000: 11–15). In 1948, the Agricultural Ministry communicated to the Commissioner of Hokkaidō prefectural government that the issue of Ainu's common properties could not be taken as an exception given that the democratisation programme needed to follow the principle of “public welfare” (Takeuchi, 2020: 55). SCAP also ignored an Ainu petition sent directly to General Douglas MacArthur in 1947 (Takeuchi, 2020: 54). In the end, the government bought the Ainu's lands cheaply and sold off their lands in parcels to tenant farmers, all in the name of democratisation (Takeuchi, 2020: 56). In effect, the land reform laws that aimed to foster a more egalitarian social structure perpetuated a structure of inequality and expropriation.

Other attempts to regain the lost land were only marginally more successful. In 1946, the Hokkaidō Ainu association petitioned the Hokkaidō Prefectural Office and related officials from each of the ministries of the national government to return the lands comprising Niikappu Imperial Ranch (Enomori, 2015: 512–514). Niikappu, home to generations of Ainu communities in southeast Hokkaidō, had been turned into a ranch by the Hokkaidō Development Commission in 1872, only to be declared a property of the imperial household in 1888. In 1877, lands belonging to the Ainu in Niikappu were designated national property and prohibited from purchase and sale (Shi'nya, 1977: 240). In 1916, 10 Ainu *kotan* (village communities) consisting of 80 households were forcibly relocated from the area to Biratori village. As a result of this, Ainu life had ceased to exist at Niikappu (Ogawa, 1990: 55). In 1918, during an inspection of the ranch by Prince Kan'in Kotohito, an Ainu *ekashi* (elder) pleaded: “Our ancestors have adopted this land and cultivated it for generations. Please for our sake, since today we suffer great distress, I beg you to return this land,” but Nishi Tadayoshi, the head of Urakawa town, dismissed this saying that the elder had likely “misspoken” (Yamada, 2011: 288–289). The Indigenous rights over the land were only partially recognised: “22 Ainu households were allowed to return to Niikappu in 1947, but many more were not granted access to their ancestral land by the prefectural government” (Tanikawa, 1972: 264; Takeuchi, 2020: 56).

Based on the above, it is clear that Japan's postwar democratisation began by silencing Ainu calls for liberation, along with the historical process in which Japan made Ainu Mosir into an internal colony through settler-colonisation policy since Meiji times. In other words, democratised Japanese society reconfigured itself as an ethnocracy in order to preserve the structures of settler colonial domination. This postwar history speaks volumes about the relationship of correlative constitution between the emperor-centred national sovereignty and Japan's “legal” occupation of Ainu Mosir in the name of *terra nullius*. During the 1970s and the 1980s, the Ainu people would resume various activisms claiming their Indigenous rights, if

not sovereign rights, to self-determination as well as demanding reparations for the century-long displacement and dispossession. This story deserves a thorough and comprehensive explanation. Due to space limitations, it will have to wait until another occasion.

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### Notes

- 1 Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (University of Minnesota, 2014), 100.
- 2 Hokuto Iboshi, *Iboshi hokuto ikō kotan [Iboshi Hokuto's Posthumous Manuscripts]*, (Sofusha, 1984), 103–104.
- 3 *Ainu Moshir* means “Land of quiet/tranquil humans” in the Ainu language. This is the term that the Ainu used for what the *Wajin* (Japanese) called “Ezochi” or “Hokkaidō.”
- 4 Japanese National Archives “Law for the Protection of the Former Natives of Hokkaidō:” Document number 00868100.
- 5 The most known study for this is Takeshi Ishida's *Research on the History of Meiji Political Thought*, Miraisha (1954). He sees Japanese patriarchy as a typical example of Hegel's oriental despotism.
- 6 The following are some critical points to consider when dealing with Agamben's “state of exception” and discrimination beyond the scope of this chapter. How is it that discrimination against the Ainu people has been virtually unrecognised and invisible among the people living in Japan for more than 150 years? To put it differently, why is it that violence of discrimination has not been understood as violence? This seems to suggest that the regime of citizenship produce a discriminatory structure in which “minorities,” under the state of exception, can be reduced to bare life. In other words, we cannot ascribe the foundational violence of sovereign power only to the state as an apparatus of violence (what Carl Schmidt calls the power to “make decisions about exceptional situations”). What we need to recognise is the fact that the regime of modern citizenship, or citizens themselves, can also serve as a type of *nomos* that produces a zone of exception (i.e. racism) in their daily speech and actions although they do not possess the ability to suspend the application of laws like the state does. Citizens' discrimination against minoritised peoples constitutes the micro-level of everyday violence that has more immediate and palpable effects on the peoples.
- 7 The idea and policy of treating Indigenous peoples and colonised people as underdeveloped children who need to be taught is a general trend of colonialism in the 19th century. See Mills and Lefrancois (2018: 503–524).
- 8 Legal personality/personhood here does not mean equal voting rights for both the Ainu and *wajin* but rather sovereignty based on Indigenous rights. Indigenous rights are not clearly defined in the “Law Concerning the Ainu People (Draft)” (1988) by the Hokkaidō Utari Association. Instead, they are expressed through the loss of the physical foundation of life and sovereignty as self-management: “The land, forests, and sea were all taken over by the *wajin*, deer and salmon were poached, and firewood was illegally logged. As overdevelopment began, the very existence of the Ainu people was threatened.” (*Hokkaidō Ainu Kyōkai, Ainu Minzoku no Gaisetsu - Hokkaidō Ainu Kyōkai wo fukume,*

*Kaiteiban, Kōeki Shadan Hōjin* [Overview of the Ainu People: Including Activities of the Hokkaidō Ainu Association, Revised Edition, Public Interest Incorporated Association], 2017, 13). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, passed by the United Nations in 2007, also stipulates that native peoples should have the right to self-determination over resources and territories deprived of colonialism. We must not forget that the Japanese government voted in favour of this declaration.

- 9 See also Kuykendall (1993).
- 10 This position was taken by liberals such as J.S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, and was later adopted in Japan by Fukuzawa Yukichi and Katō Hiroyuki. Kato was influenced by Spencer and Hegel in his “A New Theory of Human Rights.” Furthermore, later liberals like Nitobe Inazo supported colonial rule as a process of “civilisation.”
- 11 It is said that the “Former Natives Protection Law” was based on the 1887 Dawes Act, which the American government implemented for its native population. The Dawes Act abolished native-run reservation lands and substituted them for private property holdings, which could not be sold or transferred for a period of 25 years. Previously, the Federal government had enacted the 1862 Homestead Act, which sought to encourage native peoples to farm. But because American Indians were inexperienced in these practices and still relied on hunting or gathering, many sank into poverty and desperation, ultimately abandoning the land. This bears striking resemblance to the hardships faced by the Ainu (see Tomita, 1989: 5–21).
- 12 Foucault says the following of the relationship between the pastor and his followers: “[t]he pastor must really take charge of and observe daily life in order to form a never-ending knowledge of the behavior and conduct of the members of the flock he supervises” (181). The pastor’s concern with the minutiae of the quotidian must also extend to the “spiritual direction” [*direction de conscience*] of the thoughts of his flock – a procedure which involves the production and extraction of “a truth which binds one to the person who directs one’s conscience” (183). Foucault thus posits pastoral power to be a relationship of unconditional care and compassion between pastors and their flock of followers, i.e., the pastors carefully governing followers from their bodily conditions to their souls in order to secure their salvation. It in turn means, according to Foucault, that the followers form a relationship of unchanging and absolute obedience to their pastors in order to respond to their care and benevolence. The ideology of the emperor system, which foregrounds the relationship between the emperor and his subjects as one of “impartial compassion,” has much resonance with pastoral power. We can make an effective critique of the ideology by drawing on Foucault’s theory (see Foucault, 2007).

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# 8

## INVENTING “INDEPENDENCE”

A short intellectual history of post-war Okinawa

*Sana Sakihama*

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the Intellectual history of Okinawa, a region that has attempted to establish itself as a subject distinct from Japan, even though it is located within Japan. Though located within Japan, Okinawa, like Scotland and Catalonia or Québec, is known as a region with its history and identity. This chapter will consider the present significance of Okinawa’s search for “independence” by examining the discourse since 1945. Here, “independence” does not necessarily mean the construction of a new nation-state. Nevertheless, when “independence” is discussed in Okinawa, some people consider the possibility of its independence as a nation. At the same time, however, the establishment of a nation-state system in Okinawa has continued to be an ideological issue due to the difficulties Okinawa has faced, including its experience of military colonisation, which originated from the nation-state framework.

Okinawa, which cannot have sovereignty because it is bound both to the United States (US) military as a super-sovereign hegemony and to Japan as a nation-state whose structure forces it to rely on US military power, has sought ways to attain “independence” under such difficult circumstances. To achieve this, it was necessary to invent another form of “independence” that was different from the usual sense of the word – a system that did not require the establishment of a new nation-state and a declaration of independence. Though the attempt is still in its infancy and has so far resulted in a series of defeats, in this chapter, I would like to interpret this continuous attempt as a useful intellectual resource, rather than discard it as a mere dream that has no power in the real world. The attempt at independence was a move to pry open a place for Okinawan people to exist amidst

the power relations with the US and Japan, an attempt to depict a world that has not yet arrived in people's imagination.

When we reflect on the numerous attempts to invent “independence” in post-war Okinawa, we observe complex aspects of identity and ethnicity. It should never be understood as a simple anti-Japanese or anti-US Okinawan nationalism. To provide a background, Sections 8.2 and 8.3 outline the period of US military rule, which lasted 27 years from 1945 to 1972. The Okinawan people dreamed that the arrival of the US military would free Okinawa from Japanese imperialism and that they could build a democratic political system. However, amidst the rising tensions of the Cold War, they realised that this dream was unrealisable due to the military government's policy of cracking down on political activism in pursuit of autonomy. The US military attempted to separate Okinawa from Japan through a clever cultural policy, but the Okinawan people, who were opposed to the US military policy, developed a reversion movement seeking a sense of unity with Japan, contrary to the intentions of the US military. However, some forces questioned the rapidly growing nationalism in the reversion movement and advocated “anti-reversion.” Sections 8.4 and 8.5 analyse the process by which the “anti-reversion theory” gained traction in Okinawan thought after 1972. What is important here is that the questioning of the nation-state system itself was positioned as a fundamental issue for Okinawan thought. Section 8.5 refers to two constitutional drafts conceived in 1981 as concrete attempts to do so. In the conclusion, I will point out that the questions on the history of post-war Okinawan thought can be shared with other small nations positioned on the periphery, and I will interpret Okinawa's attempt as a “constituent power,” a power to change the status quo.

## **8.2 The US military occupation and the thirst for the right to self-determination in the early years of military rule after 1945**

On 1 April 1945, at the end of the Pacific War, US forces landed on Okinawa and began a fierce ground battle. During the Battle of Okinawa, 188,136 Japanese, including 94,000 civilians, were killed (Okinawakenheiwakinenshiryōkan, 2001: 81). Of these, 122,228 were from the local Okinawan population. It is said that one in four of the population of Okinawa at the time died in the battle. On the US side, it is estimated that 12,520 people died. As evidenced by the repeated desperate kamikaze attacks by young Japanese soldiers, there was a clear difference between the military power of the Japanese and the American forces. The Japanese military attempted to compensate for this gap in military strength by mobilising poorly trained civilians, such as Gokyoutai (護郷隊), which consisted mainly of Okinawans over 40 years old, Tekketsu Kin'nōtoitai (鉄血勤皇隊) and Himeyuri Gakutotai (ひめゆり学徒隊), composed of boys and girls not yet of fighting age. However, the Japanese forces were unable to reverse their disadvantage, and the resulting casualties were so great that for three months, the shells fired by the US forces from the sea, air, and land were known as the “iron storm<sup>1</sup>,” which not

only claimed many lives but also transformed the topography of the Okinawan islands.

On June 23 (also known as 22), General Mitsuru Ushijima, the commander-in-chief of the Japanese Army (the 32nd Army), committed suicide, and the organised fighting came to an end. However, General Ushijima's final order was to "Fight bravely to the last, and never live to suffer the shame of captivity, but live for the eternal cause," and he instructed his troops to fight to the last without allowing surrender (Okinawakenheiwakinenshiryōkan, 2001: 81). This meant that not only soldiers but also civilians were not allowed to surrender, and the war became even more of a quagmire. In this extreme situation, the Japanese military suspected Okinawans of being spies, which led to several executions. They were also forced to commit mass suicide. Behind these events lies a complex relationship between the "Japanese" and "Okinawan" ethnicities.

Until 1879, when Ryukyu was annexed and Okinawa Prefecture was established, Okinawa had been an independent country,<sup>2</sup> the Ryukyu Kingdom, since 1429. The language was called the Ryukyuan language, and although linguistically considered to be in the same family as Japanese, in reality, it was not understood by Japanese speakers. The reverse was also true: speakers of Ryukyuan languages could not speak Japanese at first. For this reason, a Japanese language textbook called *Okinawa Dialogue* (『沖縄対話』) was used in Okinawan education in the early Meiji period. In addition to language education, various efforts have been made to assimilate Ryukyu (Okinawa) into Japan through education since the Meiji period. Among these, the "Nichi-Ryū dōso-ron (日琉同祖論; theory of Japanese-Ryukyuan Common Ancestry)," a discourse that emanates from both the Japanese and Okinawan sides, has continued to attempt to foster a sense of national unity by showing that the roots of "Japan" and "Ryukyu/Okinawa" are the same. This theory had the negative aspect of depriving Ryukyu/Okinawa of its uniqueness and making it assimilate Japanese; it also had a counter-discourse to the discriminatory sentiment that regarded Ryukyuan (Okinawans) as inferior to the Japanese. However, under the extreme conditions of war, the sense of kinship that was barely held together by the theory crumbled. For the Japanese military, who did not understand Ryukyuan languages, Okinawans were potentially regarded as "spies" who could not be trusted. This distrust led to the execution of Okinawans by the Japanese and their forced mass suicide (Hayashi, 2009; Mikami, 2020).

On 15 August 1945, with the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, Japan was defeated.<sup>3</sup> While Japan was placed under the control of GHQ, Okinawa was placed under the direct control of the US military, and it was not until the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed in 1951 that a decision was made as to what would become of Okinawa. The political character of this six-year transitional period can be summed up in the following oppositional relationship – the conflict between the forces that demand democratic autonomy and the military government that will not allow this to happen. On 15 August 1945, the Okinawa Advisory Council was established as an advisory body to the US military government, which

was transformed into the Okinawa Civilian Administration in 1946. However, the “Civilian Administration” was only a name, and in effect, it was only tasked with conveying the orders of the military government to the population (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 18–9). In 1950, before the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty the following year, the US government announced its intention to place the Ryukyu Islands under US trusteeship (Toriyama, 2013: 138). As a result, the military government changed its name to the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR).

The legislative, executive and judicial branches of government were all subject to the director of USCAR, and all administrative structures were to be under the control of USCAR (Toriyama, 2013: 138). In addition to USCAR, an Okinawan Archipelago Government was formed under the USCAR, composed of Okinawans, and a parliament was established, which was also under the strict control of the USCAR (The Okinawa Archipelago Government was renamed the Provisional Central Government of Ryukyu in 1951 and the Ryukyu Government in 1952). Japan restored its sovereignty and returned to the international community as an independent country, but Okinawa was not given sovereignty, and even though it was governed by a US trusteeship, US laws were not applied, and in fact, the arbitrary government by the US military with its immense power continued. As will be discussed later, the continuation of military rule was the most efficient means of turning Okinawa into a military fortress as an anti-communist stronghold in the East Asian region in the face of the outbreak of the Korean War and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China by the Communist Party.

Under these circumstances, several political groups were organised to demand autonomy for the Okinawan people. The earliest was the Okinawa Kensetsu Kondankai (沖縄建設懇談会; Okinawa Construction Advisory Council), established in 1947, which called for the proper distribution of food and other goods, as well as the establishment of an organisation to represent the will of the people. In the same year, Okinawa Minshu Doumei (沖縄民主同盟; the Okinawa Democratic League) and Okinawa Jinmintou (沖縄人民党; the Okinawa People’s Party) were formed. The Okinawa Democratic League, which had the slogan “liberation of Okinawans by Okinawans,” aimed to establish a democratic government, send representatives to the San Francisco Peace Conference and establish an independent republic (Toriyama, 2013: 75). The Okinawa People’s Party likewise called for autonomy based on democracy. Kamejiro Senaga, who became the first permanent central committee member and later chairman, called for the “liberation of all Okinawans,” the “establishment of the sovereignty of the Okinawan people,” the “construction of a democratic Okinawa in cooperation with the US military as a liberation force,” the “establishment of an autonomous people’s government” and the “convening a constitutional assembly to make Okinawa’s basic laws” (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 27–28). Later, the Okinawa Democratic League aimed for Okinawa’s independence as a nation-state based on a pro-US line, while the Okinawa People’s Party aimed for its reversion to Japan based on an

anti-US line, but there was not much difference between the two groups' goals at the time of their establishment.

Yoshio Nakano and Moriteru Arasaki characterise the political tone of this period with the concept of "Okinawa's right to self-determination" (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 32). This is, of course, a kind of independence theory, but what is most important here is not the formal establishment of a new nation-state of Ryukyu or Okinawa, but the guarantee of the right of self-determination of the Okinawans themselves to decide their affairs. To symbolise this, Nakano and Arasaki cite the People's Party's concept of "establishing an autonomous government through the enactment of a constitution that would be the basic law of the Ryukyu nation" (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 32). According to Nakano and Arasaki, this is based on the idea that the Okinawan people will decide the future of Okinawa based on the premise of Okinawa's status as independent relative to the nation of Japan (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 32).

It is interesting to note that the Okinawa People's Party, which later came to be in violent conflict with the military government over autonomy, initially considered the US and US forces favourably. In other words, in the early post-war period, the US and US forces were positioned as liberators of Okinawans from Japanese imperialism and Japanese militarism. This was not limited to the People's Party, but communist forces in mainland Japan also presented similar arguments. For example, at its 5th Party Congress in February 1946, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) sent a message titled "Congratulation on the Independence of the Okinawan People" to Okinawajin Renmei (沖繩人連盟; the League of Okinawans), an organisation of Okinawan residents in mainland Japan (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 30).

It must be a source of great joy for you that the Okinawans, who have suffered for centuries under Japanese feudal rule, and since the Meiji era, under the exploitation and oppression of Japan's imperialist nationalism, have finally found their way to the independence and freedom that they have long desired in the global development of the democratic revolution. [...] Even if the Okinawans were separated from their Japanese ancestors in ancient times, Japan has clearly dominated Okinawa in modern and post-modern history. In other words, Okinawans are an oppressed minority. Your liberation can only be truly protected by a successful world revolution.<sup>4</sup>

*(Nakano, 1969: 6)*

What is being argued here is the viewpoint that "Okinawans" and "Japanese" are different peoples. This is the exact opposite of what the pre-war "theory of Japanese-Ryukyuan Common Ancestry" had argued. In other words, as early as 1946, the JCP presented the historical view that this group, which had its own Ryukyu Kingdom and its language, had been politically and culturally oppressed under the Empire of Japan, but had now been liberated by Japan's defeat in the war.

As can be seen from the expression, “the global development of the democratic revolution,” the US military was positioned as the entity that would overthrow fascism and bring democracy to the Japanese archipelago. This was true not only for the JCP but also for the Okinawa People’s Party and the Okinawa Democratic League.

However, hopes that the US military would bring democracy were quickly dashed by the military government’s intransigence. On 18 April 1946, at the Okinawa Advisory Council, Military Administrator Watkins made the following statement to Genwa Nakasone, who later formed the Okinawa Democratic League and strongly demanded autonomy for Okinawa (Toriyama, 2013: 34; Wakabayashi, 2015: 78–9):

For example, the military government is a cat and Okinawa is a rat. A rat can only play as much as the cat allows. Cats and rats are good friends now, but it would be a problem if the cat had a different idea.

*(Okinawaken Okinawashiryōhensansho, 1986: 492)*

In December 1947, the Okinawa Democratic League launched a petition drive to promote the election of a governor and councilors for all of Okinawa, and when 10,000 signatures were collected and submitted to the military government, the military government responded as follows:

It is wrong to expect that autonomy will be realized in the Ryukyu Islands. Japan is an independent nation and has its government, but the future belonging of the Ryukyu Islands has not yet been decided, and therefore a permanent civil government cannot be established.

*(Toriyama, 2013: 78; Ryūkyūseifubunkyoukyoku, 1956: 131)*

In other words, the idea of a military government is as follows: autonomy is a right that can only be granted to a sovereign nation, and the Ryukyu Islands, which have no sovereignty and whose future belonging has not yet been decided, have no right to demand such a right.

Behind this intransigent stance of the military government, which did not allow for autonomy or democracy, was the context of the escalation of the Cold War. The US military used Okinawa as a base from which to build a military network connecting the Philippines, Taiwan and South Korea (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 8). In Okinawa, residents’ residential and agricultural lands were forcibly confiscated using military force, and the construction of military bases began in earnest. Along with this, democratic mass movements were severely suppressed.

Okinawa was not the only place where forces seeking autonomy were labelled “red” and subjected to suppression. In South Korea, for example, those seeking autonomy were also suppressed. The 4.3 incident on Jeju Island is symbolic of this. This incident, which began when police opened fire on those who opposed

the election to establish the Republic of Korea in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula that was led by the US and demanded their autonomy, eventually claimed the lives of as many as 60,000 people and tore the Jeju community apart. Whether in Okinawa or Jeju, the people who sought autonomy under difficult circumstances that made sovereignty impossible were overpowered by the US military, which wanted to establish its own position as a super-sovereign entity across the Asia-Pacific region. As Moriteru Arasaki puts it, in the turbulent situation in East Asia, the US military bases in Okinawa played the role of

guaranteeing the freedom to bring in nuclear weapons and conduct combat operations without any restrictions as bases based on treaties with sovereign nations and ensuring integrated functions with U.S. military bases in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, and other countries.

*(Arasaki, in Nakamura et al., 1995: 210)*

### **8.3 Opposition to the separation policy and the desire for the reversion: Various aspects of identity in Okinawa**

Masanao Kano points out that the US and US forces intentionally placed Okinawa in a state of “statelessness” for the sake of US military supra-sovereignty in East Asia (Kano, 1987: 103). That is, they sought a state in which none of the post-war ideas for Okinawa would be actualised: a return to Japan, a secession from China, the creation of an independent nation or the annexation to the US. In other words, the policy goal was consciously aimed at perpetuating the indeterminacy of Okinawa’s status. It was the most expedient strategy to use Okinawa as a military fortress for anti-communist purposes at will.

Leaving Okinawa’s status ambiguous was also expedient for Japan, which, under the aegis of the US, achieved a dramatic post-war recovery by participating in special procurements during the Korean War and in the construction of bases in Okinawa. It was also inevitable for Japan to keep Okinawa under US military rule as a barter to achieve its political objective of maintaining the Emperor System. At the same time, however, Japan did not want Okinawa to be completely and forever separated from Japan, and this ambivalence is perfectly summed up in the “Emperor’s Message,” the views of the Showa Emperor conveyed to the Political Advisor to Supreme Commander W. J. Siebold in September 1947 through Hidenari Terasaki, the Imperial Household Agency’s official advisor. In the “Emperor’s Message,” the Showa Emperor expressed his desire for the continuation of the US military occupation of the Ryukyu Islands and that the US occupation should be based on a long-term lease, leaving Japan’s sovereignty intact<sup>5</sup>.

The Emperor’s wish was fulfilled by statements made at the San Francisco Peace Conference by US and British plenipotentiaries J. F. Dulles and K. Younger. Both men presented the bizarre possibility of “residual sovereignty” (in Japanese,

潜在主権: *senzaishuken*) for Japanese sovereignty over Okinawa. However, according to Yasuko Kono, not only was there no clear agreement between the Japanese and US governments on the specifics of this concept of “residual sovereignty,” but even within the US government, there was no consensus on the interpretation of “residual sovereignty” for a long time (Kōno, 2016: 41).

This ambiguous concept resulted in benefits for both the US and Japan. For the US, retaining sovereignty over Japan was an excellent way to avoid being denigrated by the international community as a colonial power over Okinawa. In addition, the “three non-nuclear principles” announced by Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato in 1967 prohibited the US military from bringing nuclear weapons into Japan, but nuclear weapons could be freely introduced into Okinawa under Japan’s residual sovereignty. This did not only benefit the US military but also Japan. This is because Article 9 of Japan’s newly enacted post-war Constitution forbids Japan from possessing any military force, thus, ostensibly, Japan cannot have an army (although this is not discussed in detail here, there is now in effect an organisation called the Japan Self-Defense Forces). However, the US military base in Okinawa, where Japan’s residual sovereignty exists, can fill the void by providing military power. As Moriteru Arasaki points out sharply, “As an invisible organic part of the Peace Constitution, there was the separate military control of Okinawa” (Arasaki cited in Nakamura et al., 1995: 202).

While recognising Japan’s residual sovereignty over Okinawa, the US military skilfully exploited the friction that existed between the two ethnic groups of Japanese and Okinawans to facilitate the separate governance of the islands. Masahide Ota and Masanao Kano have shown that the basic documents prepared by the US military for the occupation of Okinawa had a major impact on later military policy<sup>6</sup> (Ōta, 1996: chap. 2; Kano, 1987: chap. 1). The documents are *Civil Affairs Handbook Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands* and *The Okinawan of the Loo Choo Islands: A Japanese Minority*. Both documents, dated November 15, 1944, were issued by the Military Affairs Division, Office of Operations, U.S. Department of the Navy, and were prepared by anthropologists, sociologists, and historians who had taught at Yale University and Columbia University (Ōta, 1996: 84). Of the two documents, *The Okinawan of the Loo Choo Islands* describes a psychological strategy to develop the war situation to the advantage of the US forces by exploiting the psychological rift between the Japanese and Okinawans. It describes in detail the political and economic oppression and discrimination of the Okinawans by the Japanese since the abolition of the Ryukyu Kingdom and the annexation of Okinawa to the Empire of Japan. The US military believes that it can easily win the hearts and minds of Okinawans by inciting antipathy towards the Japanese nation and the Japanese people stemming from this deep-seated experience of oppression.

In the above documents and subsequent statements by military officials, the unequal relationship between the Japanese and Okinawans was described as “country cousin”. For example, G. P. Murdock, an anthropologist involved in the preparation of the *Handbook*, described the Okinawans as “poor cousins from the

country” (Kano, 1987: 35). Military administrators J.T. Watkins and W. A. Hanna, in their account entitled *Okinawa: The Land and People*, refer to them as “ludicrous and simpleminded country cousins” (Kano, 1987: 35). In addition, historian G. H. Kerr, in his book *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, uses the phrase “a minority of rather second class, country cousins” (Kano, 1987: 35).

This view of Okinawa was frequently utilised by the military government after the war ended. At the time, some Okinawans were already beginning to discuss reversion to Japan, but to suppress such claims, the military government promoted a policy of separation by stimulating a sense of discrimination among the Okinawan people. First, the military government decided to use the name “Ryukyu,” the name of an independent country that existed before the annexation, instead of the name “Okinawa,” an administrative division under the Empire of Japan. This policy can be seen in the names of organisations such as The Ryukyu Command and the USCAR. Ryukyuanisation was also promoted in cultural policy. Traditional cultures such as music, dance and theatre were promoted to strengthen the identity of “Okinawans” or, more strongly, “Ryukyuan” (Kano, 1987: 60–68). As Kano points out,

This policy of cultivating self-awareness as ‘Ryukyu’ was an ordeal for the Okinawan people in that they were forced into it, but it also worked as a liberation in their consciousness, and it seems to have been a mixture of ordeal and liberation.

*(Kano, 1987: 67)*

As Kano points out, the Okinawan people, who had worked hard to “Japanise” their island until 1945, had mixed feelings of confusion and joy in response to these cultural policies.

However, the US military’s intention to cultivate a sense of “Okinawan” or “Ryukyuan” nationality and to achieve a spiritual and political separation from Japan was not as successful as it seemed. Of course, as the *Handbook* and other documents have analysed in detail, “Okinawans” were a minority among “Japanese,” and even though they were “Japanese citizens” under the Empire of Japan, “Okinawans” were not completely the same or equal to “Japanese.” There was a deep-seated sense of inferiority among Okinawans that they were “sub-Japanese,” one level below the Japanese (Tomiyama, 2002). The defining factor in this long-standing sense of discrimination was the experience of the Battle of Okinawa. The fierce ground war in Okinawa was an endurance war to defend mainland Japan, and as a result, the mainland was spared from ground warfare, although it was heavily bombarded. This created a sense that Okinawa was a “cast-off stone.” As mentioned earlier, the Japanese military’s execution of “Okinawans” for being suspected spies and the experience of forced collective suicide also fostered a distrust of the “Japanese” people. As pointed out by Moriteru Arasaki, in post-war Okinawa, the term “Japanee” was used to distinguish the Japanese from

Okinawans, and the term “Japanee” contained a pejorative nuance (Arasaki cited in Nakamura et al., 1995: 206).

However, it is certain that at the same time as such opposition to the Japanese, there was also a deep-seated sense of simple-minded emotional nationalism and cultural unity that sought to assimilate into the Japanese culture of Okinawan people. Emotional nationalism here means nationalism based on feelings fostered by continually telling oneself that Okinawa is a member of Japan, an “imagined community” as Benedict Anderson put it, regardless of the anti-Japanese sentiment that comes from historical experience as described above (Anderson, 2006). As discussed earlier, there was a strong sense of inferiority among Okinawans towards the Japanese, and to overcome this sense of inferiority, a thinker named Fuyu Ifa (1876–1947) advocated the “Nichi-Ryū dōso-ron (日琉同祖論; theory of Japanese–Ryukyuan Common Ancestry)”, from the Meiji Period. By making full use of multiple methodologies such as linguistics, history and folklore, he insisted throughout his life that Japan and Ryukyu are nations with identical roots. His assertions influenced Ryuzo Torii, who laid the foundation of Japanese anthropology, and other leading scholars of Japanese folklore, such as Shinobu Orikuchi and Kunio Yanagida (Sakihama, 2022). The Meiji government had implemented the so-called “assimilation policy” to erase the cultural and ethnic uniqueness of “Ryukyu” or “Okinawa,” and the response to this policy from the Okinawan side was the “Nichi-Ryū dōso-ron” by Ifa, which was based on the idea that the Ryukyuan people had a common ancestry with Japan. On the one hand, it was a submission to the government’s policy, but on the other hand, it was also a defensive measure by the ruled to protect their own identity by taking over the discourse of the rulers (Kano, 1990). While insisting that Japan and Ryukyu were the same, it also stressed the cultural and ethnic uniqueness of the Ryukyu Islands. Ifa’s goal was to conceive of “Greater Japan” as a nation that encompassed not only Okinawa but also multiple ethnicities such as Korean and Taiwan while maintaining the uniqueness of the minority groups. Thus, the combination of Japan’s assimilation policy and Okinawa’s “Nichi-Ryū dōso-ron” has long nurtured Okinawa’s emotional nationalism and sense of cultural unity towards Japan.

This emotional nationalism, combined with opposition to the US military, which violently seized Okinawa’s land and built bases for anti-communist purposes, grew stronger under the military regime. In other words, the anti-military sentiment was transformed into anti-US sentiment. As seen in the “Shimagurumi Struggle (島ぐるみ闘争)” in 1956, an island-wide struggle to protect the land against the US military’s attempt to purchase the land at a low price, anti-military sentiment became a catalyst for the Okinawan people to unite as a political entity (Mori and Toriyama, 2013). Amid frequent incidents and accidents caused by military personnel, not only was the degree of guilt for serious crimes such as murder freely determined by race, nationality and affiliation but the law itself was arbitrarily changed and interpreted, which also contributed to the rise of anti-military government and anti-US sentiment (Arasaki, 2005: 10).

Under these circumstances, the slogan “return to a peaceful constitution” provided the political and theoretical basis for emotional nationalism. For Okinawa, which had suffered under harsh military rule, Japan, with its Constitution, which upheld the three principles of pacifism, respect for fundamental human rights and sovereignty of the people, became a country to which they aspired. It can be said that the desire to return to Japan grew among the masses, despite the existence of pre-war discrimination, because they yearned for democracy. It was the Okinawa People’s Party, which once regarded the US military as a liberation force and sought independence for Okinawa, that was the first to combine the two elements of emotional nationalism and desire for democracy. At the Central Committee meeting in 1951, General Secretary Kamejiro Senaga announced the policy of “we will join Japan on the condition that sovereignty be given to the people in accordance with democratic principles, or in other words, we demand reversion to Japan” (Toriyama, 2013: 139). To help Okinawa escape from the harsh situation, the three main principles of the Japanese Constitution were highlighted, including the sovereignty of the people.

#### **8.4 Scepticism about “reversion”: The wavering ethnic consciousness**

Thus, the slogan “Return to the Constitution of Japan” gained widespread popular support, and the Japanese flag was raised at rallies and marches calling for the reversion (see Figure 8.1). Initially, the movement calling for a reversion to Japan was violently suppressed by the military government as benefiting the communist movement, but this did not quell the enthusiasm of the masses for a reversion to Japan. The fact that the US military bases in Okinawa became a base for the bombing of the North as the Vietnam War escalated into full-scale warfare (Okinawa was called “Devil’s Island” by the Vietnamese at the time), and war once again became an everyday part of life, also intensified anti-base sentiment, and along with it, the desire to return to Japan as a nation under the Japanese Constitution with its pacifist ideals.

The people of Okinawa were not the only ones who wanted Okinawa’s reversion to Japan. At the Japan-US Summit Meeting in January 1965, Prime Minister Eisaku Sato expressed to President L. B. Johnson his recognition of the importance of US military bases on Okinawa to Japan’s security, and his hope for the early reversion of Okinawa (Arasaki cited in Nakamura et al., 1995: 222). During his visit to Okinawa in the summer of 1965, he stated that “the postwar period in Japan will not end unless Okinawa is returned to the mother country” (Arasaki cited in Nakamura et al., 1995: 222). However, this statement should not be understood as a response to the Okinawan people’s demand for sovereignty. Rather, it should be viewed as similar to Foreign Minister Hitoshi Ashida’s statement immediately after the war that “Okinawa is not of great importance to the Japanese economy, but the Japanese people are emotionally inclined to want the island back” (Fuyū,



**FIGURE 8.1** Demonstration march to demand reversion to Japan. Photographed on 27 April 1965. Ryukyu Government Related Photographic Materials 059. Document code 0000108769. Photo No. 016647. Owned by Okinawa Prefectural Archives.

1974: 457). For Japan, the reversion of Okinawa was necessary only to recover the territory lost in the war, and it was supported by mere emotional nationalism and nationalistic desires. Thus, for the Japanese government, the goal of full-fledged democracy in Okinawa, as demanded by the Okinawan people, was of no importance.

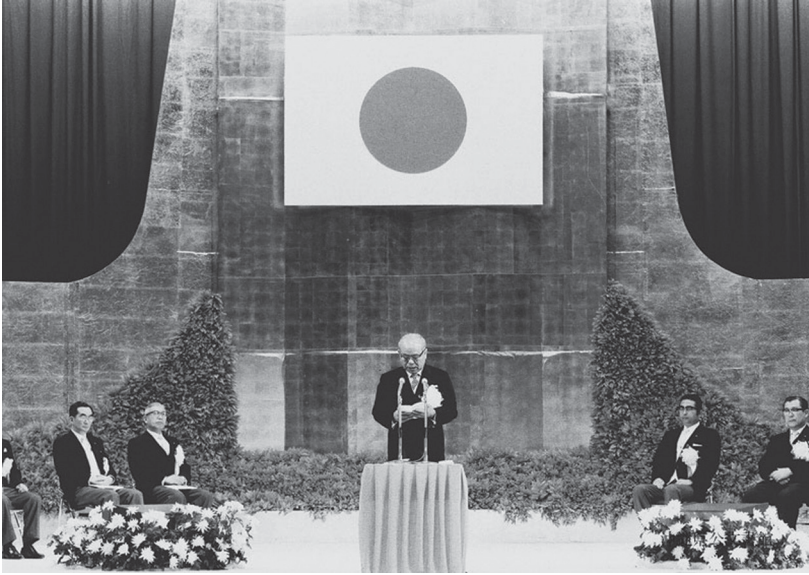
After Prime Minister Sato, the Japanese government began to place the reversion of Okinawa as the top priority of Japanese diplomacy and launched a campaign for the reversion of Okinawa (Arasaki in Nakamura et al., 1995: 223). This campaign led to the usurpation by the government of the slogans of the reversion movement in Okinawa, such as “reversion of Okinawa as a national aspiration” and “reversion to homeland as a national longing” (Arasaki cited in Nakamura et al., 1995: 223). In other words, the longing for democracy and the demand for popular sovereignty that had been contained in the slogans were dropped, and only sentimental nationalism was foregrounded by the Japanese government instead. The reversion of Okinawa was also a major political event that served as a good distraction for the Japanese government, which wanted to suppress the 1970 Anpo (Security Treaty) struggle against the automatic extension of the Japan-U. Security Treaty.

At the same time, there were advantages for the US and the US forces in agreeing to the reversion of Okinawa to Japan. As mentioned earlier, the protracted Vietnam War had heightened opposition to the bases in Okinawa, and the strengthening of this mass movement was naturally not favourable to the US or US military. Therefore, it was not a bad idea for the US and US forces to pretend to meet the demands of the Okinawan people by agreeing to the reversion of Okinawa. Even if the reversion of Okinawa were realised, the US forces will not experience any inconvenience as long as they could freely use US bases in Okinawa. As discussed below, the conclusion of the Status of Forces Agreement with Japan ensures the superiority of the US forces even when the sovereignty of the nation-state of Japan is extended to Okinawa. In this way, the political event of the reversion of Okinawa was transformed for the Japanese and US governments into “a means not only to maintain and strengthen the U.S. bases in Okinawa but also to strengthen the military-political partnership between Japan and the United States” (Arasaki cited in Nakamura et al., 1995: 226). The demands of the Okinawan people for democracy and the removal or reduction of US military bases were completely betrayed.

On 15 May 1972, the administration of Okinawa was returned from the US to the Japanese government, and Okinawa’s reversion to Japan became a reality. On that day, heavy rain fell in Okinawa. Amid the rain, the Okinawa reversion commemoration ceremony was held at the Naha Civic Hall (Naha City is the largest city in Okinawa and the prefectural capital), and a rally protesting the reversion was held in Yogi Park right next to the hall (see Figures 8.2 and 8.3). There was a group of intellectuals among those who participated in this protest rally who developed a discourse known as the “anti-reversion theory.”

According to Takashi Irei, one of the advocates of anti-reversion, “anti-reversion theory” is “an idea that Okinawa should not unconditionally return to Japan, but should fight against the reversion of Okinawa in 1972 as agreed in the Joint Statement of Sato and Nixon, with an orientation of anti-nation-state, anti-authority, and anti-imperialism” (Okinawadaihyakkajitenkankōjimukyoku, 1983: 275). This discourse was developed by such figures as Akira Arakawa, Shinichi Kawamitsu, Keitoku Okamoto, Isamu Nakasone and Takashi Irei. All of them experienced the Battle of Okinawa in their youth and have lived through turbulent times since then.

Three of the leading figures in the anti-reversion theory, Arakawa, Kawamitsu and Okamoto, were students at the University of the Ryukyus, an elite university in Okinawa under the military regime. This university was built to train the local elite to support the military government. However, contrary to the military’s intentions, the three were increasingly critical of the military government. They saw literature as a method of political practice, and in 1953, they published a coterie magazine, *Ryūdai Bungaku* (*Literature of the University of the Ryukyus*). From the sixth issue onwards, their harsh criticism of the occupation policy caught the attention of the government, and finally, the 11th issue was banned. In addition, seven students at the University of the Ryukyus were expelled or suspended for leading the people’s



**FIGURE 8.2** Governor of Okinawa Chōbō Yara delivers the ceremonial address at the ceremony commemorating the reversion of Okinawa to Japan sponsored by the Japanese government. Photographed on 15 May 1972. Ryukyu Government Related Photographic Materials 144. Document code 0000108854. Photo No. 040392. Owned by Okinawa Prefectural Archives.



**FIGURE 8.3** A rally protesting the reversion in Yogi Park. Photographed on 15 May 1972. Document code 02000875. Owned by Naha City Museum of History.

anti-base land struggle, four of whom were involved with the *Ryū dai Bungaku* (Kano, 1987: 152).

They were not initially opposed to reversion to Japan, but rather saw it as a way to break free from the military regime. Akira Arakawa, for example, considered the following poem titled “Nihongamieru (日本が見える, I can see Japan)”, written in 1960, as he thought about the “motherland of Japan”:

I can see Japan  
 I can see Japan  
 Standing on the northern end of Okinawa  
 Thirty miles from Naha  
 From the rocks of Cape Hedo  
 I hold my hand up and I call  
 Our “Homeland”  
 Our Poor “Homeland”  
 Japan floats on the waves  
 As a mass of poverty and unreliability  
 [...]
 Japan,  
 Our “Motherland”  
 Japan has come so far  
 To my cry,  
 She turns away her face  
 Against the sea of recklessness  
 Sea of Okinawa  
 Sea of Japan  
 Separating our sea,  
 Melting in the waves,  
 The 27th parallel north latitude  
 Like a jackknife  
 Cuts our hearts

(*Arakawa and Gima, 1983: 40*)

As Nakano and Arasaki pointed out, “in the movement for the reversion to the motherland, there is an aspect in which the reality of Japan is unnecessarily glorified in contrast to the negative reality of Okinawa,” in this poem, the “Homeland” or “Motherland” seems to be depicted as a paradise that brings liberation from the hardships of military rule (Nakano and Arasaki, 1976: 52). However, as Michael Molasky pointed out, the poem echoes a sense of distrust of the “Motherland” (Molasky, 2003: 225–239). It can be said that the poem expresses a confused state of mind in which conflicting feelings of longing and resignation coexist as if the “Motherland” does not look back at the poet even when he reaches out to it.

The confusion over the “homeland” can also be seen in the concept of “nation.” In a round-table discussion entitled “Okinawaniokeruminzokubunkanodentoutoke ishou (沖縄に於ける民族文化の傳統と繼承, Inheritance of traditional culture in Okinawa)” in the ninth issue of the *Ryūdai Bungaku*, Shinichi Kawamitsu who later became a major proponent of the anti-reversion theory, stated as follows:

Why do we need to reaffirm and pass on our traditions? One is to cling to our traditions as a result of the spiritual crisis we face in today’s ever-changing social climate, and the other is because our undermined, doubly and triply oppressed national spirit is now rebounding from the new oppression, and is the source of our positive motivation to create a liberated world. [...] The analysis, recognition, and inheritance of national culture must be linked to the movement for liberation from the current colonial conditions, not within the present given society.

(Arakawa et al., 1955: 10)

Here, “national spirit” or “national culture” and “tradition” are seen as important footholds for resistance to US military rule, or colonial conditions. Keitoku Okamoto, who, along with Arakawa and Kawamitsu, is known as a prominent theorist of anti-reversion theory, states in his editorial postscript to the 9th issue of *Ryūdai Bungaku* that he was inspired to hold this roundtable by the rising national consciousness and nationalist movements for decolonisation seen in the Southeast Asian region.

However, it is important to note the following. The roundtable discussion did not address the exact meaning of the terms “tradition” and “nation.. As seen in Akira Arakawa’s statement, “When we talk about the culture and traditions of a country or region, not just Okinawa, I think it is inevitable that they cannot be separated from the national ones,” it can be confirmed that “nation” and “tradition” are seen as inseparably related (Arakawa et al, 1955.: 10). However, the nature of this roundtable discussion becomes immediately ambiguous when we ask the question of what exactly “nation” refers to and whose traditions are being referred to. This is because it is not clear whether “nation” refers to the “Japanese” or the “Ryukyuan (or Okinawan),” as this can vary depending on the context. In this roundtable discussion, we can sense an ambivalent state of mind wherein, while yearning for “Japan” as a “homeland,” the “nation” for oneself can be either “Japan,” “Ryukyu” or “Okinawa” depending on the time and context. This ambivalence gradually led to scepticism of Japanese nationalism’s absolute emphasis on reversion, leading to the adoption of the anti-reversion theory.

### 8.5 The “Anti-reversion theory” as an attempt to overcome the nation-state

Why did these young intellectuals, who had pinned their hopes on “reversion” as a way to break free and liberate Okinawa from the military regime, gradually

become disappointed with their “homeland”? One reason, as noted above, is that the 1969 Sato-Nixon talks made it clear that the “reversion” was going to be realised differently from what Okinawa had hoped. But an even more important reason was that they were confronted with the fact that the leftist forces in mainland Japan, which they had hoped would show understanding and potential for solidarity with Okinawa, were indifferent to Okinawa. The symbolic event was the 1960 Anpo (Security Treaty) struggle.

Arakawa Akira, Keitoku Okamoto, and Isamu Nakasone, among the main proponents of the aforementioned anti-reversion theory, experienced the 1960 Anpo struggle in Tokyo and Osaka. The 1951 Japan-US Security Treaty, which stipulated the provision of bases to the US military, was about to be revised and a new Security Treaty, incorporating Japan’s obligation for joint defense, was about to be concluded in 1960 under the cabinet of Nobusuke Kishi with President Eisenhower. The sense of danger of being drawn into the U.S. war and the Kishi cabinet’s attempt to force the conclusion of the treaty without sufficient discussion led to a massive national opposition movement. This was the so-called 1960 Anpo struggle<sup>7</sup> (Oguma, 2002: chap. 12 and 13).

However, there was a significant gap between Okinawa and mainland Japan in terms of the concept of the “nation,” the bearers of this movement. While the Okinawans considered themselves part of the “Japanese nation” as a matter of course, this was not always the case on the Japanese mainland side. Akira Arakawa, who was working in Osaka as a newspaper reporter at the time, heard the claim that the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was to incorporate Japan into the U.S. strategy and was aimed at “Okinawanising” Japan as a whole. He felt despair at the fact that “Okinawa” was so distinct from “Japan” and that the movement was being organised to prevent Japan from becoming like Okinawa (Arakawa, 2000: 88). Isamu Nakasone, a student at the University of Tokyo’s Faculty of Law who had thrown himself into the Anpo struggle in Tokyo, was also shocked to hear the leftist organisation’s executive board tell the crowd in front of the National Diet that “We prevented Eisenhower’s visit to Japan! We have won! The despicable Eisenhower has fled to Okinawa!” and the crowd cheered. He thought, “What the hell is this? Wasn’t Eisenhower’s landing on Okinawa, in the first place, a sure step into Japan=Okinawa! Do they want to say that Okinawa is a foreign nation of a different kind?” (Nakasone, 1969: 59).

Okinawa yearns for Japan as its homeland and hopes for its “reversion” to the homeland as a way to break free from the domination of the U.S. military, but mainland Japan does not consider Okinawa as part of the imagined community of Japan. This difference made young intellectuals distrust the ideology of “reversion,” which “instills in the Okinawan masses the idea of ‘reversion to the absolute good’.” Besides, according to Nakasone, they began to have questions, “What is Okinawa? What is Okinawa for the Japanese nation? Or, rather, what is the ‘nation of Japan’ in the first place? More fundamentally, what is the nation itself?” (Nakasone, 1969: 60). Nakasone’s words clearly express the nature of the anti-reversion theory.

In other words, this theory is not simply an anti-Japanese nationalism movement, but rather an ideological movement that more fundamentally calls into question the very institution of the nation-state.

Often referred to as the culmination of the anti-reversion theory are two drafts of the Constitution of the Republic of the Ryukyus, “Constitution of the Republican Society of Ryukyus Private Draft C” and “Constitution of the Republic of Ryukyus Private Draft F,” which were drafted in 1981, just before the tenth anniversary of the reversion to Japan. These drafts were published in the 48th issue of the literary magazine *Shin Okinawa Bungaku* [*New Okinawan Literature*]. This magazine was published by Akira Arakawa, a leading advocate of anti-reversion theory, together with his close ally Shinichi Kawamitsu and others. The 48th issue was the first special issue published under the editorship of Kawamitsu, featured the theme of “A Bridge to the Republic of Ryukyu” and included a roundtable discussion on the two proposed constitutions. According to the roundtable discussion, the idea was to conceive of a constitution as a way to ideologically envision the coming community as the antithesis of the current situation in which various problems related to the US military bases have not been resolved even after 10 years since the reversion of the Okinawa to Japan (Tokumeizadankai, 1981: 185).

Draft C was written by Shinichi Kawamitsu and Draft F was written by Isamu Nakasone. The biggest difference between these two drafts is that the latter is based on the concept of a “republic,” or nation, as the basic unit, while the former is premised on the idea of a “republican society,” a new community that would break away from the nation-state. In addition, in the preamble to the Constitution, Draft F stipulates that “This Constitution shall automatically expire on the day before the day on which the United Earth Government is established and the Republic of Ryukyu joins that federation,” and it describes an ideal in which all nation-states are finally dissolved and the entire world is unified under one government, the United Earth Government (Nakasone, 1981: 176). However, in Article 1, Draft C proposes that “We, the people of the Republican Society of Ryukyus, based on our historical reflection and aspirations, hereby declare the abolition of the nation-state and the abolition of all evil acts committed by the centralized function of power since the beginning of human history” (Kawamitsu, 1981: 165). This is a radical stance that rejects the nation-state or government from the very foundation.

These drafts have again attracted attention in recent years. In particular, Draft C was highly praised by prominent Japanese scholars such as Chizuko Ueno and Nagao Nishikawa during the boom of the discourse criticising the nation-state in leftist discourse in Japan after the 1990s<sup>8</sup> (Nishikawa, 2006: chap. 4; Ueno, 2014: chap. 1). Even after the boom passed in mainland Japan, Draft C remained popular among the younger generation of Okinawan intellectuals. Ikuo Shinjo, a specialist in gender and queer theory, drew attention to Article 11 of Draft C;

The people of the Ryukyu Republican Society, not limited to those who reside within the defined territory of the center, but those who agree with the basic

principles of this Constitution and are willing to abide by them, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or nationality, shall be recognized as qualified at their location. (*Kawamitsu, 1981: 166*)

Regarding this article, Shinjo highly appreciated the fact that the “the Ryukyu Republican Society” is envisioned as a “movement of solidarity among people regardless of cultural identity or origin” (Shinjō, 2014: 201). Shinjo also metaphorically describes “refugees” as those who fall outside of all kinds of enclosures and categorisations such as race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality, and sees the potential of the Republican Society of Ryukyus as a community to come, to be carried by such “refugees” (Shinjō, 2014: 201).

Draft F, on the other hand, has not been discussed in the same boom-like manner as Draft C because it assumes an existing nation-state for the time being in the form of a republic. However, Isao Nakazato, a prominent Okinawan critic, argues that Draft F is not limited to nationalism either. Nakazato focuses on the preamble of Draft F, which states,

We, the people of the Republic of the Ryukyus, who for centuries have been enslaved under the feudal and imperialist rule of China, Japan, and the United States, and have suffered exploitation and oppression, have finally come to the path of establishing the equality and freedom that we have long desired, in the global development of the Konminshugi (困民主義, poor people centrism) democratic revolution.

(*Nakasone, 1981: 174*)

According to Nakasone’s commentary, the concept of “Konminshugi” is defined as

a historical philosophy that, in light of the historical reality of the end of the mission of the democratic revolution and the subsequent bureaucratic-state-capitalist degeneration of the socialist revolution, and in the face of the historical resentment of the Polish workers’ movement of the 1980s, which was crushed by anarcho-syndicalism and the United Socialist National Army, seeks to establish a “commune without politics” through popular participation and self-management.

(*Nakasone, 1981: 175*)

Nakazato interprets the concept of “Konmin (困民)” as “Sabartan,” which is not reducible to “nation,” and reads it as “a verbal subject that is open to ‘the future coming yet’,” a new political subject that can compete with the concept of the “nation” that has firm definitions and boundaries (Nakazato cited in Nakasone and Nakazato, 2022: 117). According to Nakazato, “the Republic of the Ryukyus” is a transitional community that aims to establish a “global federal government” and

even a “governmentless country,” and in this sense, “it means that the founding act incorporates the abolition of the state” (Nakazato cited in Nakasone and Nakazato, 2022: 120). This may be an attempt to contain the fundamental violence associated with the state, the violence that Walter Benjamin refers to as the violence that posits law or maintains it.

## 8.6 Conclusion: “Independence” as a constituent power

The discussion presented in this chapter is a rough intellectual history of Okinawa after 1945. The first was a desire for autonomy under military rule, the second was a desire to unite with Japan as a way of liberation from the military regime and the third was a search for a new form of community while noting the limits of nationalism. What all of these seemingly disparate discourses have in common is an ongoing Okinawa people’s search for ways to take the right to self-determination into their own hands. This could be described as an attempt to establish “constituent power,” to borrow Antonio Negri’s conception (Negri, 2009). This is because, while an overwhelming order was constructed by the super-sovereign power of the US military, it was a series of attempts to continue to cultivate potential power to restore the state of affairs that existed before the establishment of that order. At the same time, it can also be said to have been an attempt to continue to confront head-on the problem of violence that is inherent in the creation of the state itself. The two constitutional drafts discussed in Section 8.5 are sharply critical of state violence and place emphasis on its abolition. However, it is inevitable that any constituent power that attempts to change the existing order also entails some form of violence. In other words, while it is necessary to be critical of the violence of the state, at the same time, there is always a dilemma that if we try to deny and erase the fundamental violence, we may end up giving up our right to self-determination as a constituent power as well.

The difficulty in seeking the right to self-determination in Okinawa is first of all due to the presence of US forces, but another absurdity is that equality within the nation-state of Japan has yet to be realised. Having been defeated by the US and, as the world’s first pro-US nation after the war, Japan offered itself to the US to build the foundation of its super-sovereign power and has long abandoned negotiations with the US on an equal footing. Japan, which outsources its security through the Japan–US Security Treaty, shows no sign of revising the substantively unequal Japan–US Status of Forces Agreement, which it was forced to conclude in conjunction with the Japan–US Security Treaty. Under this agreement, even if US military personnel cause incidents or accidents on Japanese territory, they cannot be tried under Japanese law once they have fled to US military bases, where Japanese sovereignty does not extend. The Status of Forces Agreement applies throughout the Japanese territory, but Okinawa, where about 70 per cent of the US military bases in Japan are concentrated, suffers the most from this unfairness.

The difficulties facing Okinawa are a dual struggle: against the stateless, or super-sovereign power of the US military, and the state power of the nation-state of Japan. It would be extremely difficult to invent a form of right to self-determination that could simultaneously resolve and overcome these two problems. The two constitutional drafts attempted to propose a different kind of community to counter the stateless situation created by the US military and break free from the structural problems of Japan as a nation-state. However, such an approach would mean a departure from the Japanese polis, and would not solve the problem of inequality within Japan's nation-state.

There is also a current movement to re-evaluate Ryukyu/Okinawa nationalism as a minority nationalism that resists colonialism. In 2013, a group of researchers organised the Association of Comprehensive Studies for the Independence of the Lewchewans (ACSILs) to discuss the future independence of Okinawa. While some see potential in this movement, others criticise it as a re-enactment of exclusive nationalism, arguing that countering stateless and state power through the creation of a new nation-state, even if based on anti-colonialist goals, is nothing more than a repetition of the violence of nationalism.

The very difficult question of conceiving a new power to confront both stateless power and the power exercised by the state, while remaining conscious of the problem of violence that is fundamentally embodied in the power that Okinawa faces, is a challenge shared not only by Okinawa but also by all small nations that have been forced into a position on the margins. To borrow from Negri's argument earlier, this is nothing less than a challenge to question the very nature of the nation-state and sovereignty. According to Carl Schmitt, sovereignty is the supreme power underlying the legal order (Schmitt, 2006). It is the only power that can make decisions in a state of exception, a state in which the law is suspended. However, according to Negri, in the state of exception, there are countless possibilities. These myriads of possibilities are what Negri calls "constituent power." Sovereignty is a limited form of a convergence of these myriads of possibilities in one direction. When a small nation attempts to form some kind of subject in opposition to the status quo, it may not be achieved by trying to possess sovereignty like the major nations, but by seeking the direction of its own power as a constituent power that can be deployed in several ways. It is not a question that can be answered immediately, but I hope this short intellectual history of post-war Okinawan thought, a history of the struggle to answer this difficult question, will help in some small way to rally the constituent power.

## Notes

- 1 The expression is often used idiomatically in reference to the book *Tetsu no Bōfū* (*The Iron Storm*) (Naha: Okinawa Times-Sha, 1950), edited by reporters from the *Okinawa Times*, a local newspaper in Okinawa.
- 2 The term "country" is used here to refer to the form of political entity that existed before the modern nation-state.

- 3 Although 15 August, when the Emperor announced Japan's defeat in the Gyokuon-broadcast, is now the anniversary of the end of the war in Japan, the Potsdam Declaration was accepted on 14 August 1945. The official date of Japan's defeat under international law is September 2, when the surrender document was signed on the deck of the US battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.
- 4 My translation.
- 5 In the collection of the Okinawa Prefectural Archives, Document code: 0000017550. [www.archives.pref.okinawa.jp/uscar\\_document/5392](http://www.archives.pref.okinawa.jp/uscar_document/5392) (Last viewed on January 8, 2023).
- 6 See Chapter 2 of Ōta (1996) and Chapter 1 of Kano (1987).
- 7 On the 1960 Anpo struggle, see Chapters 12 and 13 of Oguma (2002).
- 8 See Chapter 4 of Nishikawa (2006) and Chapter 1 of Ueno (2014).

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## **PART III**

# Diversity

Small nations in subnational contexts



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# 9

## SMALL NATIONS, EMPIRES AND THE COMMONWEALTH

Canada, Quebec, Newfoundland and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon in global perspective

*Hiroyuki Ogawa*

### 9.1 Introduction

Membership of the United Nations (UN) expanded from 51 countries in 1945 to 193 in 2023. In 2023, the Commonwealth of Nations has 56 member states of which 33 are categorised as small states. The Commonwealth Secretariat defines small states as countries with a population of 1.5 million people or less, or countries with a bigger population that nevertheless share many of the same characteristics as the countries with a small population.<sup>1</sup> Of course, there are other small states outside the Commonwealth, and we now have about 200 independent sovereign states. However, British policymakers until the mid-20th century did not envisage this kind of “Balkanised” world, in which so many small states are independent and become members of the UN and the Commonwealth. Instead, what they often envisaged was a world with much fewer independent states, at least some of which would be federations of smaller territories – or “small nations”<sup>2</sup> – formerly under British colonial or quasi-colonial rule. Smaller colonies, protectorates and UN trust territories were expected to be regionally integrated to form larger federations. In the process of decolonisation after the Second World War, it was once believed by many anticolonial leaders as well as colonial rulers that small countries were “militarily vulnerable, politically weak, [and] economically unviable,” which could be called as the “bigness bias” (Simpson 2018: 423).

The British government also intended to maintain its political influence and economic interests by establishing federations in the process of decolonisation, with the Central African Federation (1953–1963) formed by Southern Rhodesia,

Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland as arguably the most notorious case. Sarah Elizabeth Stockwell argued that the Federation,

[p]resented as economically rational, ... conjoined cash-strapped Nyasaland (Malawi) with its more prosperous Northern and Southern Rhodesian (Zambia and Zimbabwe) neighbours, for whom it [Nyasaland] served as reservoir of labour. ... it has been convincingly shown that it was primarily a concession to Rhodesian white settler nationalism. Black African opinion was never reconciled to the project, and in 1963, it forced the dissolution of the Federation. (Stockwell 2018: 74)

This chapter will examine the parting of the ways among these “small nations” within the British Empire to become either parts of larger federations (such as Canada, Australia, South Africa and Malaysia) or separate small states (such as New Zealand and Fiji, both of which once joined discussions with Britain’s Australian colonies to form an Australasian federation – or a Greater Australasia – in the late 19th century). In doing so, particular attention will be paid to two Canadian provinces, Quebec and Newfoundland (renamed Newfoundland and Labrador in 2001), and to the small islands of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, a French *collectivité d’outre-mer* (overseas collectivity) off the coast of Newfoundland.

In advocating the study of global history, David Armitage maintained that “[t]he history of empires and the history of oceans have been two of the most vigorous and fertile strains of historiography in recent years” (Armitage 2013: 46). He went on to argue that: “This is a set of processes that emphasises exchange and interchange, fluidity and circulation ... rather than the fixity and boundedness associated with the classic conception of the territorial state” (Armitage 2013: 49). In this chapter, the concept and realities of “small nations” will be critically re-examined (not only broadened but also relativised) through perspectives of global history – historical analysis of “global connections and comparisons” (Bayly 2004). In addition, especially in the case of Newfoundland and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, “small nations” will be analysed through the prism of not only the history of empires and the Commonwealth but also oceanic and maritime history, the latter of which includes the history of islands surrounded by the sea as well.

## 9.2 “Bigness bias” and visions of “a federated future”

“Bigness bias” and visions of “a federated future” (Lake 2013: 550) were widely, though not always, shared and even internalised by settlers and indigenous leaders alike within the British Empire. Such individuals include Sir John A. Macdonald of Upper Canada, who served as prime minister of the Dominion of Canada from 1867 to 1873 and from 1878 to 1891; Alfred Deakin of Victoria (Australia), who was prime minister of the Commonwealth of Australia from

1903 to 1904, 1905 to 1908 and 1909 to 1910; Jan Smuts of Transvaal, who was prime minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919 to 1924 and 1939 to 1948; Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra who was the seventh son of the Sultan of Kedah and served as prime minister of the Federation of Malaya from 1957 to 1963 and the Federation of Malaysia (also called “Greater Malaysia”) from 1963 to 1970; and Sir Grantley H. Adams of Barbados, who was the first and only prime minister of the short-lived West Indies Federation formed within the British Empire from 1958 to 1962. As we know, Upper Canada (today’s Ontario), Victoria, Transvaal and Kedah have become parts of larger federations, namely Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Malaysia, respectively, whereas Barbados is a small island state that became independent in 1966 after the dissolution of the West Indies Federation.

“Bigness bias” seems to have been shared by George Orwell, but he keenly pointed out the lack of criteria for and consequent inconsistency in the granting of autonomy (and eventually independence) to colonised peoples. He also referred to the importance of publicity for minority groups, to gain “sympathy” from others. In February 1947, Orwell wrote in one of his regular columns, titled “As I Please,” in *Tribune*, a weekly newspaper published in the United Kingdom:

The question is always *how large* must a minority be before it deserves autonomy. At best, each case can only be treated on its merits in a rough and ready way: in practice, no one is consistent in his thinking on this subject, and the minorities which win the most sympathy are those that have the best means of publicity. Who is there who champions equally the Jews, the Balts, the Indonesians, the expelled Germans, the Sudanese, the Indian Untouchables [Scheduled Castes] and the South African Kaffirs [*sic*]? Sympathy for one group almost invariably entails callousness towards another.

(Orwell 2002: 39–42)<sup>3</sup>

Federations were formed by multiple self-governing settler colonies, which eventually became larger Dominions within the British Empire – in the case of Canada, Australia and the Union of South Africa in 1867, 1901 and 1910, respectively. The negotiations to form an Australasian federation partially led to the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia (formed by six of Britain’s ex-colonies, i.e., New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and West Australia), whereas New Zealand chose to become a separate Dominion established in 1907 and Fiji remained a British colony until its independence in 1970. The Federation of Malaya and the Federation of Malaysia were formed in 1957 and 1963, respectively, while the West Indies Federation was established within the British Empire in 1958 but dissolved only a few years later.

Many early French settlers and their descendants in Canada have deeper historical roots in North America than their British counterparts. Barry Buzan and

H. O. Nazareth argued in their article published in the midst of South Africa's state of emergency declared by the apartheid regime that the white South Africans were

a living remnant of the European imperial age: too large in number, and too long established, to take the withdrawal option of decolonization, and too small to overwhelm the native peoples as the whites did in Australia and the Americas.

*(Buzan and Nazareth 1985: 36)*

This is particularly the case with Afrikaners (formerly called Boers), who migrated and settled in South Africa earlier than most white South Africans of British ancestry. It is true that French Canadians as well as their British counterparts more or less overwhelm native peoples such as the Innu (Montagnais-Naskapi) of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula, as white settlers do in the United States, Australia and New Zealand. However, French Canadians, like Afrikaners in South Africa, could be considered "a living remnant of the European imperial age: too large in number, and too long established, to take the withdrawal option of decolonization"; and unlike Afrikaners, they are a minority among whites in Canada. Therefore, they have a tendency to insist on their separate identity and status vis-à-vis majority Anglophone Canadians, while French Canadians, at least partly due to their numerical advantage, have not pursued racial policies as systemic as apartheid in South Africa.

In the 1780s, the United Empire Loyalists who founded "Anglo Canada outside Newfoundland and Halifax" (Belich 2005: 39)<sup>4</sup> changed the demographic balance between French and British settlers in Canada, and exacerbated tensions between them. The Constitutional Act (Canada Act) of 1791 divided the Province of Quebec into French "Lower Canada" and British "Upper Canada" to avoid conflicts between the French and British populations. Following the Rebellions of 1837–1838 and the Durham Report of 1839, Britain united the colonies of Lower Canada and Upper Canada into the Province of Canada in 1841, mainly for the purpose of assimilating the former. Then, responsible government was granted to the Province of Canada in 1848, and the Dominion of Canada was established in 1867 by the Province of Canada (at that time separated once again into provinces of Quebec and Ontario), Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In the following year, the vast territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had been chartered in 1670 as "the oldest incorporated joint-stock merchandising company in the English-speaking world,"<sup>5</sup> were handed over to Canada, and consequently northwestern parts of modern-day Canada (which comprise today's three Canadian territories, i.e., the Northwest Territories, the Yukon Territory and Nunavut) were incorporated into the Dominion of Canada as the Northwest Territories in 1869. Furthermore, Manitoba (1870), British Columbia (1871), Prince Edward Island (1873), Alberta (1905) and Saskatchewan (1905) joined the Dominion as provinces, and a huge transcontinental federation covering about 15% of the world's land area was eventually formed. If

Australia has been beset by the “tyranny of distance” from Europe and particularly from the British Isles (Blainey 1966), Robert Bothwell pointed out that:

Canada, it’s been said, has been the victim of too much geography. The second largest country on earth [next to the Russian Federation], it stretches from the rainforest [temperate rainforest nurtured by humid wind from the Pacific] of Vancouver Island to the pebbled desert of the Arctic, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the latitude of northern California (though barely) to the Arctic Ocean. Canada’s extent, from sea (east) to sea (west) to sea (north), is a rhetorician’s dream and an administrator’s nightmare. Its prosperity, compared with most of the rest of the world, has saved many a politician the trouble of saying something original on occasions of public ceremony. Yet that prosperity, like the population, is unevenly distributed and heavily concentrated in certain favoured pockets. Fortunately, there aren’t too many people and there’s enough prosperity to go around. Perhaps only its sparse population has saved Canada from becoming a political impossibility.

*(Bothwell 2006: 3)*

In 1931, Canada became one of the seven founding members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Although it was established as a loose organisation which consisted of Britain and six self-governing Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, the Union of South Africa and the Irish Free State), the British Commonwealth stemmed, at least partly, from ideas of a Greater Britain, particularly the “ideal” of an organic union or imperial federation among Britain and its settler colonies (Bell 2007). The British Commonwealth of Nations and its successor from 1948 – the Commonwealth of Nations – have been far from a “federal” polity, but they were partially materialised by visions of an ocean-spanning “federated future” shared by a certain number of intellectuals and policymakers in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras.

In 2023, the Commonwealth of Nations has 56 member states and 33 of them are categorised as small states. The Commonwealth Secretariat defines small states as countries with a population of 1.5 million people or less, or countries with a bigger population that nevertheless share many of the same characteristics as those small countries (e.g., Botswana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Namibia and Papua New Guinea). According to the Commonwealth Secretariat, small states are particularly vulnerable because of their geographic positioning, strong dependence on trade, limited access to development finance and disproportionate impact from natural disasters and climate change.<sup>6</sup> The World Bank also defines small states as countries with a population of 1.5 million or less. In addition, eight out of 50 members of its Small States Forum (SSF), which is “an important platform for high-level dialogue on how the Bank Group is helping to address Small States’ special development needs,” have a population greater than 1.5 million but “share similar challenges.”<sup>7</sup>

In addition, 26 out of 56 Commonwealth member states are categorised as small island developing states (SIDS). For instance, the Maldives in the Indian Ocean, St. Lucia in the Caribbean and Tuvalu in the Pacific have populations of 540,542, 183,630 and 11,790, respectively as of 2022. In many cases, these polities are remnants of Britain's former colonial possessions of "many scattered, and often strategic, island outposts" (Deighton 2010: 112). It was stipulated in Article 14 of the Commonwealth Charter adopted in 2012 that:

We are committed to assisting small and developing states in the Commonwealth, including the particular needs of small island developing states, in tackling their particular economic, energy, climate change and security challenges, and in building their resilience for the future.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, according to the United Nations, SIDS are "a distinct group of 38 UN Member States and 20 Non-UN Members/Associate Members of United Nations regional commissions that face unique social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities."<sup>9</sup>

### 9.3 Quebec

If they were independent states, Newfoundland and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon would fulfil, at least by their small populations, the criteria of small states defined by the Commonwealth Secretariat and World Bank. However, Quebec would fail to meet them. In addition, while Quebec's population steadily increased across all censuses, from 1,111,566 (1861) to 8,501,833 (2021), Newfoundland lost some of its small population in the last 30 years, from 579,644 (1991) to 510,550 (2021).<sup>10</sup> However, "small nations" cannot be defined only by their size, such as population and surface area, or by economic, development and environmental challenges. *Subjective elements* such as identities and *mentalités* (collective mentalities) as well as *relative positions* and *regards* (*gaze*) vis-à-vis others, like their neighbours, allies, rivals and adversaries, may well matter too. Even as to population, Quebec has experienced certain demographic anxieties in a *relative* sense, as its population is well behind that of its predominantly English-speaking neighbour, Ontario (14,223,942 in 2021), and Quebec's population grew but often "failed to keep pace with Ontario's" (Bothwell 2006: 406). In addition, populations in provinces such as British Columbia as well as Canada as a whole have grown faster than that of Quebec.

Quebec's *relative* demographic anxieties seem to be less serious than what Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes called the "demographic panic" that raged in small nations in Central and Eastern Europe in the mid-2010s, because of "an illusory danger" of large-scale immigration as well as serious depopulation caused by massive emigration (especially of the young), low birth rate and aging population.

For instance, Latvia lost 27% of its population, Lithuania 22.5% and Bulgaria almost 21% during the period of 1989–2017.

The extraordinary extent of post-1989 emigration from Eastern and Central Europe, awakening fears of national disappearance, helps explain the deeply hostile reaction across the region to the refugee crisis of 2015–16 even though almost no refugees have relocated to the countries of the region.

In this context, Krastev and Holmes referred to the aphorism by the Czech novelist Milan Kundera that a small nation “is one whose very existence may be put in question at any moment; a small nation can disappear and it knows it” (Krastev and Holmes 2019: 37–40).<sup>11</sup> More or less similarly, Tony Judt referred to “the distinctively Czech qualities of doubt, cultural insecurity, and skeptical self-mockery.” Actually, a British Jewish historian who mainly wrote about 20th-century French and European history, Judt decided to learn the Czech language to tackle with his own “middle-aged uncertainties” or “midlife crisis” (Judt 2010: 165, 171).

Learning Czech ... made me a very different sort of scholar, historian, and person. I felt ... that distinctly Polish (or Russian) sense of cultural grandeur was precisely what I wanted to circumnavigate, preferring the distinctively Czech qualities of doubt, cultural insecurity, and skeptical self-mockery. These were already familiar to me from Jewish sources: Kafka, above all – but Kafka is also the Czech writer par excellence.

(Judt 2010: 170–171)

Although Quebec’s *relative* demographic anxieties as a small nation do not seem to be so serious as the “demographic panic” strongly felt in small nations in Central and Eastern Europe after the Cold War and especially in the mid-2010s, existential anxieties and “fears of national disappearance” have more or less been felt among the French-speaking population in Quebec as well.

Quebec is not only one of the ten provinces of Canada, but also one of the 88 *états et gouvernements* (states and governments) which comprise the Francophonie (among them, there are 54 members, 7 associate members and 27 observers in 2022). Quebec and New Brunswick as well as Canada are full members of the Francophonie. The Québécois journalist Jean-Marc Léger of *Le Devoir* played a crucial role in founding the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique on 20 March 1970 at the second Niamey Conference in Niger, which eventually developed into the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie in 1998. Furthermore, Senegal’s Léopold Sédar Senghor, another prominent architect of the Francophonie, strongly opposed the “Balkanisation” of French colonial territories in Africa, especially when the French government under socialist premier Guy Mollet devolved internal autonomy to the individual territories within the French

Union through the *loi-cadre* of June 1956 (Byrne 2013: 104). The establishment of the Francophonie was also facilitated by the fact that Charles de Gaulle's circle considered the French language to be one of France's invaluable international assets (Granatstein and Bothwell 1990: 128).

In Quebec, there is a Ministry of International Relations and the Francophonie through which the provincial government conducts its own international involvement and deals with relations with Francophonie member states and governments. It is notable that a province of Canada has a specific ministry – though with limited scope of authority – dealing with “international relations,” and this could be considered as one of the embodiments of Quebec's orientation towards “independence” or “sovereignty.” With regard to cultural diplomacy, Quebec had, for instance, a separate pavilion alongside the Canadian, Ontario and British Columbia ones at the Japan World Exposition, Osaka, 1970.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, there was only United Kingdom pavilion – that is, there were no English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish ones – at the first Expo held in Asia, three years after the previous one had been hosted by Montreal. From the United Kingdom, Prince Charles (on his way back from Australia to Britain) and Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Michael Stewart (during his five-day trip to Japan) visited the Osaka Expo on 11 April and 22 April 1970, respectively.<sup>13</sup>

Quebec was one of the four founding provinces of the Dominion of Canada, but has largely maintained the French language and *l'identité québécoise* as a “small nation.” During the First World War, for example, the Military Service Act was enacted in Canada under the prime ministership of Sir Robert Borden in 1917, but there was substantial criticism against conscription among French Canadians (almost all of whom were Catholics), mainly living in Quebec. The growth of “majoritarian nationalism” in the federated Dominion of Canada in the late 19th century enhanced “the Catholic Frenchness of Quebec” (Bayly 2004: 226). This could also have been the case with Quebec's experiences in the conscription controversy during the Great War. While Colin M. Coates analysed French Canadians' “ambivalence” towards the British Empire (Coates 2008), John Darwin went further to argue that to “the French Canadian minority, the Afrikaner majority among South African whites, and, in the Irish Free State, loyalty to the ‘British connection,’ was at best conditional, at worst non-existent.” In contrast, he pointed out that

among the ethnic British majorities in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland, and the large “English” minority among South African whites, a sense of shared British identity (to be sharply distinguished from any subservience to Britain) was deeply ingrained. Dominion politicians declared over and over again that Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland were “British countries,” or “British nations.” To them and their constituents ... the “Empire” was not an alien overload, but a joint enterprise in which they

were, or claimed to be, partners. It was not so much England as the Empire for which they were fighting, said [Lord] Milner in 1917.

(*Darwin 2009: 11*)

After conscription was introduced in Britain in January 1916, New Zealand and Canada followed the British lead in May 1916 and August 1917, respectively. However, the introduction of conscription pursued by the William Hughes government in Australia was denied by two referenda, held in October 1916 and December 1917. In Australia, anti-conscription campaigns were especially strong and widespread among Catholics, who were largely of Irish descent. They were organised by the Australian Labor Party and women's and labour movements, but particularly led by Daniel Patrick Mannix. Born in Ireland, he had studied, taught and become president at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth (forerunner of today's National University of Ireland Maynooth) and then was appointed Catholic Coadjutor Archbishop of Melbourne in 1913 and Archbishop of Melbourne in 1917.<sup>14</sup>

After the Second World War, Quebec nationalism was stimulated by French President de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec libre" speech at Montreal on 24 July 1967. De Gaulle made this speech during his visit to Canada to attend the Universal and International Exhibition – known as Expo 67 – held in Montreal from 28 April to 29 October 1967. De Gaulle's remarks at Montreal were apparently modelled after his own speech in London on 22 June 1940 (the day when the Franco-German Armistice<sup>15</sup> was signed), which ended with the well-known sentence – "Vive la France libre dans l'honneur et dans l'indépendance" – reminiscent of how de Gaulle had desperately encouraged resistance against the Nazis. De Gaulle's speech at Montreal in 1967 was not only a strong appeal for independence of Quebec from Canada, but also part of his efforts to pursue France's own *grandeur* and *indépendance* (Vaisse 1998: 34–52) from US dominance in world affairs. Jussi M. Hanhimäki, a historian specialising in the Cold War and American foreign policy, pointed out that: "De Gaulle even stirred trouble in America's backyard: while visiting the city of Montreal in 1967, he declared that the Francophone bastion should move towards independence ... thus helping to stir the pot of nationalism" (Hanhimäki 2010: 202). After the Canadian government under Lester B. Pearson expressed a strong protest against de Gaulle's statement, the French president quit his planned visit to Ottawa and went straight back to France.

Quebec has produced Liberal prime ministers of Canada from Sir Wilfrid Laurier<sup>16</sup> to Louis St-Laurent, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Jean Chrétien and Justin Trudeau, whereas the *indépendantiste* Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois gained importance in the late 20th century onwards (alongside the recent rise of the Coalition Avenir Québec). The relationship between these Liberal prime ministers and Quebec nationalists has been far from easy, though the Liberal Party maintained a predominant position in Quebec before the rise of the Parti Québécois and the

Bloc Québécois. For instance, the Liberal Party steadily gained ground, reaching 66 and 62 out of 75 seats in Quebec in the Canadian general elections of 1953 and 1957, respectively, while they won a majority in the federal Parliament in the former (171 out of 265 seats) and lost in the latter (104 out of 265), both under the leadership of St-Laurent.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, one of the most difficult moments came when Quebec nationalism became not only strong but also militarised and Pierre Elliot Trudeau took a forceful stand against it during his first government in 1968–1979. This is somewhat similar to Scottish politics, where the British Liberal Party and then the Labour Party had been predominant before the recent rise of the Scottish National Party both in general elections and elections of the Scottish Parliament, though Scottish nationalism has been less militant compared to the situation in Quebec in the 1960s and early 1970s. In addition, X. Hubert Rioux emphasised the similarities between Quebec and Scotland with regard to economic nationalism, particularly a high degree of state intervention, either direct or indirect, to stimulate the development of entrepreneurship and start-up businesses in technology-intensive sectors (Rioux 2020).

#### 9.4 Newfoundland

It is often said that the Island of Newfoundland (Terre-Neuve) was “found” in 1497 by Venetian explorer and navigator Zoane Caboto (John Cabot), to whom Henry VII of England had issued letters patent. Nevertheless,

[w]hether or not John Cabot’s *Matthew* entered Bonavista harbour [on the northeastern coast of Newfoundland] in 1497, his crew was certainly not the first to see Newfoundland. Basque, Portuguese, French, and English fishermen had gone ashore there to dry their catch on long racks, or “flakes”.

(Morton 2017: 62)

Newfoundland became England’s oldest extra-European colony established in 1583. However, England’s dominium was unstable until the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713. During the Seven Years’ War (called the French and Indian War in English, or the *Guerre de la Conquête* in French, in North America) in 1756–1763, France lost Quebec City (1759) and Montreal (1760), but made an offensive in Newfoundland (including the seizure of St. John’s) in 1762. However, the French were too few in number and duly surrendered to the British. Indeed, this was “the last incursion of French military power on what is now Canada” (Bothwell 2006: 88).

The Newfoundlanders, at least partly because of their strong Anglophilia and sense of interconnectedness with the British Isles by the sea, decided not to join the Dominion of Canada (which had just been established in 1867) in a referendum in 1869. Newfoundland then became a separate Dominion within the British Empire on 26 September 1907,<sup>18</sup> and eventually one of the seven founding members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. At the Imperial Conference held in London

in October–November 1926 that produced the Balfour Report, Walter Stanley Monroe represented Newfoundland as the prime minister, whereas William Lyon Mackenzie King, the prime minister of Canada, led the Canadian delegation.

In the summer of 1932, Newfoundland sent its delegation led by Prime Minister Frederick Charles Alderdice from its capital, St. John's, to the Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa. At the Ottawa Conference, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, the Union of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe, which became a self-governing colony with its own constitution within the British Empire under white settlers' minority rule in 1923<sup>19</sup>) and British India agreed to guarantee reciprocal preferential tariffs and formed the imperial preference system. Canada and Newfoundland separately agreed to guarantee mutual tariff preferences with Britain. Canada also signed three bilateral trade agreements with the Union of South Africa, the Irish Free State and Southern Rhodesia.<sup>20</sup> The Ottawa Conference was held largely by the initiative of Richard B. Bennett, the Canadian Conservative prime minister, as a countermeasure against US protectionism, which had been considerably strengthened by the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of June 1930. Indeed, the policies of the US – Canada's giant neighbour – pursued under President Herbert Hoover "were condemned as particularly uncooperative" and the Smoot-Hawley Act was considered by the Canadians to be "an act of economic warfare" (Robertson and Singleton 2001: 253).

Although it maintained its separate Dominion status, "the tiny Dominion of Newfoundland" experienced serious difficulties as a "small nation" during the turbulent first half of the 20th century, such as in the First World War, particularly the heavy loss of life on the first day of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916. The Newfoundlanders share this memory with Protestants in Northern Ireland, who experienced the "martyrdom" of the 36th Ulster Division at the Somme (Grey 2005: 246–247). During the First World War, in addition to the 2,000 Newfoundlanders who served in the Royal Navy, 6,173 men from Newfoundland enlisted as soldiers fought for the British Empire, and 1,204 were killed or died of wounds (Carrington 1959: 642). These were not small numbers compared to the modest population of Newfoundland. In 1925, Memorial University College – the predecessor of today's Memorial University of Newfoundland – was established at St. John's as a memorial to Newfoundland's war dead. In addition to the human and financial costs caused by the Great War, Newfoundland severely suffered from the Great Depression after 1929, which was experienced as an agrarian, more than industrial, crisis in many parts of the world as a result of the steep decline in prices of agricultural products (Cullather 2013: 196). Newfoundland's virtual bankruptcy led to the suspension of its autonomy as a Dominion, so that it was brought under the rule of a British commission (called the Commission of Government) in 1934. Alderdice, who was twice prime minister of Newfoundland, in August–November 1928 and June 1932–February 1934, became the last person to hold that office, because Newfoundland did not regain its autonomy after 1934 and eventually joined the Canadian Confederation in 1949.

After the Second World War, the Newfoundland National Convention was held at St. John's from 11 September 1946 to 30 January 1948. It was stipulated in Section 3 of the National Convention Act of May 21, 1946 that:

It shall be the duty and function of the Convention to consider and discuss among themselves as elected representatives of the people of Newfoundland the changes that have taken place in the financial and economic situation of the Island since 1934, and, bearing in mind the extent to which the high revenues of recent years have been due to wartime conditions, to examine the position of the country and to make recommendations to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom as to possible forms of future government to be put before the people at a national referendum.<sup>21</sup>

Kenneth Wheare, the Australian-born Gladstone Professor of Government and a Fellow of All Souls College, the University of Oxford, was a constitutional adviser to the National Convention of Newfoundland in 1946–1947 as well as the conferences on the formation of the aforementioned Central African Federation in 1951–1953.<sup>22</sup> Eventually, the “national referendum” held in Newfoundland on 22 June 1948 made it the tenth province of Canada on 21 March 1949. Newfoundland's incorporation into Canada – or the union between the two – was called “Newfoundland's entry into Confederation.”<sup>23</sup> Unlike Quebec, Newfoundland is not a member of the Francophonie. Though the French presence in Newfoundland dates back to the beginning of the 16th century and France's main settlement in Newfoundland was established at Plaisance (Placentia) in 1660, only a tiny minority of the population in modern-day Newfoundland use French as their mother tongue.<sup>24</sup>

According to the first Canadian decennial census conducted in Newfoundland in 1951, its population was 361,416, which constituted only 2.58% of Canada's total population of 14,009,429. The tenth province of Canada was the second smallest in population, just next to the tiny island province of Prince Edward Island (PEI), whose inhabitants were just 98,429 in number in 1951.<sup>25</sup> More recently, Newfoundland (Newfoundland and Labrador after 2001) lost some of its small population, which went from 579,644 in 1991 to 510,550 in 2021, as mentioned above.<sup>26</sup> In fact, Newfoundland and Labrador was the only Canadian province that experienced a drop in population from 2016 to 2021, despite slight recoveries recorded during the four consecutive quarters in 2021.<sup>27</sup>

### 9.5 Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon

The tiny islands of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon are a French *collectivité d'outre-mer* (COM)<sup>28</sup> which lies less than 20 kilometres off the Burin Peninsula in southern Newfoundland. It is now the last small remaining piece of *la Nouvelle-France*, the once extensive French territory in North America. In other words, it was beyond the reach of former British North America, and has not been absorbed by two huge

transcontinental states, the US and Canada. Therefore, Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, together with France's other tiny island territories scattered across many parts of the world, could be a very interesting case when we think about "small nations" not only in the colonial past, but also in a contemporary world almost entirely dominated by territorial sovereign states.

Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon was originally populated by the French in the early 17th century and then more French settlers (mainly those ousted from Newfoundland and Acadia) followed suit in the middle of the century. Even after its huge territorial loss in the Seven Years' War, France kept "a toehold" on Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon as well as access to the lucrative Grand Banks fisheries and the right to dry fish on the north coast of Newfoundland – the so-called French Shore (Bothwell 2006: 88; Coates 2008: 183). Finally, after the prolonged Anglo-French territorial disputes, it was stipulated by the Treaty of Paris of 1814 that Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon would be a French territory.

Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon was briefly one of the French *départements d'outre-mer* (DOMs) introduced by the Constitution of the Fourth Republic in 1946. DOMs are technically no different from *départements* in the French metropole, though there are some minor adaptations. Emmanuelle Saada, a historian of the French Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries with a specific interest in law, argued that:

Ironically, for many territories that constituted the remnants of the [French] "first" colonial empire, decolonization actually heralded a closer relationship to France, with the 1946 transformation of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion, and Guiana into "overseas departments" (*départements d'outre-mer*). This integrative process went furthest in matters of local administration and French law, although more substantial differences persisted, particularly in relation to public benefits. At the same time, other territories opted for a looser relationship with France, achieving some measure of autonomy as *Territoires d'outre mer*.

(Saada 2018: 91)

Original four DOMs founded in the aftermath of the Second World War were Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana (Guyane française)<sup>29</sup> and Réunion Island, whereas Mayotte<sup>30</sup> only recently became the fifth DOM in 2011 as a result of a referendum held two years previously. Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon has been a COM since May 1985 and provides the French with rich fishing resources at the Grand Banks that extend south of the Island of Newfoundland. According to Michael J. Parsons in his article dealing with "remnants of empire" in the contemporary world, "France has in many ways been surprisingly open about the interest that its overseas territories represent," though "public interest in mainland France for the overseas territories remains limited, except when they occasionally hit the headlines, for example, New Caledonia in the 1980s and, more recently, Guadeloupe" (Parsons 2018: 690–693).

Actually, France has the second largest maritime exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the world, just smaller than that of the United States, largely because of a number of overseas *départements*, *territoires* and *collectivités* in the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean, the Atlantic, the Mozambique Channel and so on. Most of these overseas *départements*, *territoires* and *collectivités* are *small* in both surface area and population, but collectively provide France with *large* maritime interests. In particular, about 93% of France's EEZ is located in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, or "the Indo-Pacific space."<sup>31</sup> These economic and strategic interests, together with China's rapidly increasing influence and presence in the Pacific and Indian Oceans as well as the East and South China Seas, could be considered major reasons why the French government under Emmanuel Macron – often in cooperation with the European Union (EU) and NATO partners – is involved in the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy.

## 9.6 The British Empire, the Commonwealth, states and nations

Once every four years, the Commonwealth Games, the second largest international multi-sport events in the world next to the Olympics, is held in various Commonwealth countries. It is originated in the British Empire Games, the first of which was hosted by Hamilton, Ontario, on 16–23 August 1930. At the 1930 Hamilton British Empire Games, athletes were sent from 11 "countries" – England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, the Union of South Africa, British Guyana and British Bermuda.<sup>32</sup> The British Empire Games was cancelled twice during the Second World War, but has been held every four years since it resumed at Auckland in 1950. When the Games was held in Cardiff, Wales, in 1958, it was renamed the Commonwealth Games.

It is noticeable that terms "empire," "imperial" or "British Empire" were replaced by "Commonwealth" in 1958 in several cases. In addition to the name change to the Commonwealth Games, Empire Day was renamed as Commonwealth Day, the Royal Empire Society became the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Imperial Institute was converted into the Commonwealth Institute in 1958, though seemingly without centralised or concerted instructions. "The fug of imperial nostalgia," as Saul Dubow put it, "began to be oxygenated by fresh draughts of post-colonial air" in these renamed "Commonwealth" organisations (Dubow 2017: 296).

All member "states" of the Commonwealth are independent sovereign states (unlike *états et gouvernements* of the Francophonie). In contrast, not only member states of the Commonwealth but also nine out of 14 British Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St. Helena and the Turks & Caicos Islands), three self-governing British Crown Dependencies (the Isles of Man, Jersey and Guernsey), an external territory of Australia (Norfolk Island) and two self-governing territories in free association with New Zealand (the Cook Islands and Niue) participated in the Commonwealth Games held at Birmingham in July–August 2022. In addition,

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were separately represented, and in all they constituted 72 member “nations and territories” (not “states”) at the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

In contrast, “Team GB” – a team of athletes selected from the entirety of Great Britain – participates in the Olympic Games, where athletes are sent from sovereign states, except for special cases such as Taiwan (though it is required to call itself “Chinese Taipei” rather than Taiwan or the Republic of China, in accordance with the “One China” policy staunchly pursued by Beijing). According to Tony Wright, “Team GB” at the 2012 London Olympics attracted much attention and was strongly supported by the British, at least partly because devolution to Scotland and Wales had strengthened their separate identities and threatened to “take Britain apart.” He argued that

[p]erhaps this is why the popular celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012, followed by national pride in the success of “Team GB” in the London Olympics of that year, could feel to many like a badly needed reaffirmation of a Britishness that had become much less sure of itself than it had been sixty years earlier.

*(Wright 2013: 12)*<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, in the run-up to the 2016 referendum on EU membership and Britain’s eventual withdrawal from the EU, English nationalism, with strong Eurosceptic and anti-immigration orientations, became more and more conspicuous and was considered to be one of the major factors which led to Brexit (Black 2018).

While the “nation” is a fluid concept with multiple meanings and in some cases can be used interchangeably with the term “state,” “state” also has different meanings even when its usage is limited to political entities. For example, a peculiar conception of “state” and “statehood” – a status of full self-government short of Commonwealth membership – was contemplated in the case of several small British colonial territories such as Malta and Singapore. The discussions within the British government on the future of Malta (which once contemplated integration with Britain on the lines of Northern Ireland or the Channel Islands) in the early 1950s briefly led to this idea of “Statehood.” However, Singapore turned out to become the only “State” in 1959 (McIntyre 2000: 163).

In Singapore, the Constitutional Agreement that granted self-government to the “state” was signed in May 1958. After the Legislative Assembly election in May the following year, an internally autonomous government of the State of Singapore (except for internal security, for which an Internal Security Council consisting of three Singaporeans, three Britons and one representative from the Federation of Malaya was responsible) was established in June 1959 under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the leader of the People’s Action Party, which had gained majority in the May 1958 election. As a result, Singapore became the only “State” within the British Empire, though it was to be included in the Federation of Malaysia formed

by the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak in September 1963 and then, mainly because of frictions between Malay and Chinese populations (about three-quarters of Singaporeans being of Chinese origin), became independent from Malaysia in less than two years. The Separation Agreement of 7 August 1965 (which entered into force two days later) stipulated that “Singapore shall become an independent and sovereign state and nation separate from and independent of Malaysia” (quoted in Crawford 2006: 392). Consequently, the Federation of Malaysia (including the Federation of Malaya which had gained independence from Britain and became a member of the Commonwealth in 1957), Malta and Singapore became independent sovereign states and members of the Commonwealth in 1963, 1964 and 1965, respectively.

The term “state” is also included – in its historical plural usage – in the titles of the legislative bodies of self-governing British Crown Dependencies in the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney).<sup>34</sup> For instance, the States Assembly (Assemblée des États) of Jersey is composed of 49 elected members from across the Isle of Jersey (l’Île dé Jèrri).<sup>35</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, one of the most prominent contemporary historians of political thought, has a mother born in the Channel Islands. Pocock himself was born in London in 1924 and migrated to New Zealand with his family at the age of three because his father was appointed professor of classics at Canterbury College, University of New Zealand (forerunner of today’s University of Canterbury). Pocock began the introductory chapter of his collection of essays titled *The Discovery of Islands* with “what Maori term a *whakapapa*, a record of one’s ancestors and the voyages by which they arrived,” and recalled that:

I studied classics, my father’s subject, since I was of the last generation to learn Latin because that was the way to become educated and had been for a thousand years; but of history, which was to be my main subject, I learned more than any school was able to teach from my mother, born Antoinette Le Gros (1889–1976), who continued as a teacher after she moved to New Zealand ... she was by birth a Channel Islander, the daughter of a French-speaking Methodist minister ... Of settler descent on my father’s side [migrated from Britain to South Africa and to New Zealand], I am on hers descended from an island people on the seas between the Atlantic archipelago [the British Isles] and the peninsula of Europe; a fragment of the ancient duchy of Normandy which conquered England in 1066, never fully incorporated in the United Kingdom which it now serves as a tax shelter. I recall visiting St Heliers with my mother and sister in 1950, and seeing engraved on the wall of some public building – perhaps that of the States of Jersey? – a couplet by the Norman chronicler Wace ...

(Pocock 2005: 3–4)

Pocock placed himself “in context as a transitory figure in the history of historiography” (Pocock 2005: 3), and his ancestors, parents, religion, migration, voyages, languages, education, the seas and islands are given as important

elements for connections and comparisons between small nations and small states (the Channel Islands, Maori and New Zealand) on the one hand, and their larger counterparts (Britain, France and South Africa) on the other hand, in this autobiographical introduction of his essays on a pluralistic and multi-layered “new British history.”<sup>36</sup>

## 9.7 Conclusion

Decolonisation of the British Empire and the parting of the ways among “small nations” under British colonial rule to become either parts of larger federations or separate small states have influenced the formation of contemporary states and international relations. In particular, the contemporary world, with as many as 193 member states of the UN as well as 56 member states of the Commonwealth, has been made partly because of the dissolution of colonial and postcolonial federations (including both merely planned and actually established ones) in the process of decolonisation of the British Empire. In contrast, we could also consider that there are *only* about 200 independent sovereign states in today’s world. For instance, Ernest Gellner pointed out some of the reasons why we have a *limited* number of territorial states:

there is a very large number of potential nations on earth. Our planet also contains room for a certain number of independent or autonomous political units. On any reasonable calculation, the former number (of potential nations) is probably much, *much* larger than that of possible viable states. If this argument or calculation is correct, not all nationalisms can be satisfied, at any rate at the same time. The satisfaction of some spells the frustration of others. This argument is further and immeasurably strengthened by the fact that very many of the potential nations of this world live, or until recently have lived, not in compact territorial units but intermixed with each other in complex patterns. It follows that a territorial political unit can only become ethnically homogeneous, in such cases, if it either kills, or expels, or assimilates all non-nationals. Their unwillingness to suffer such fates may make the peaceful implementation of the nationalist principle difficult.

(Gellner 1983: 2)

In any case, both postcolonial federations and small states are embedded in the globalised system of sovereign states and nation-states. On the one hand, policies of assimilation, discrimination, exclusion, marginalisation, oppression and even violence have been used in the formation and maintenance of colonial and postcolonial federations. The establishment of the Province of Canada in 1841 (and then the Dominion of Canada in 1867) and the South African War in 1899–1902 are some examples of such policies to form and maintain colonial and postcolonial federations. On the other hand, some small states and small nations (especially

microstates and micronations) are threatened by contemporary global problems such as poverty (and hence almost permanent dependence on overseas aid), inequality and sea level rise caused by climate change, and are problematically abused, for example, as tax havens, just as Pocock described the Channel Islands as “a tax shelter.” The parting of the ways among “small nations” to become either parts of larger federations or separate small states could be considered as one of the keys to understand not only the formation of contemporary states and international relations but also the global problématique observed in larger federations as well as small states and nations in the contemporary world.

## Notes

- 1 <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/small-states> (accessed March 29, 2023).
- 2 The question of small nations is discussed from conceptual, theoretical, historical and contemporary perspectives in Laniel et Thériault (2020).
- 3 In Southern Africa, Europeans called the Bantu-speaking mixed farmers (who owned cattle and sheep and grew cereal crops) “Kaffirs,” a derogatory term (Thompson 2014: 10).
- 4 James Belich’s article was included in a collection of essays, one of the earliest products of the “British World” studies which have tried, since around the turn of the millennium, to re-examine the history of Britain and the British Empire by placing the British diaspora and settler colonies – mainly Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa – at the centre. Therefore, “British” or “Anglo” elements are quite naturally emphasised.
- 5 [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hudsons-bay-company](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hudsons-bay-company) (accessed May 12, 2022)
- 6 <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/small-states> (accessed March 29, 2023)
- 7 [www.worldbank.org/en/country/smallstates/overview#1](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/smallstates/overview#1) (accessed December 1, 2021)
- 8 <https://thecommonwealth.org/charter> (accessed May 30, 2022)
- 9 [www.un.org/ohrlls/content/about-small-island-developing-states](http://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/about-small-island-developing-states) (accessed May 30, 2022)
- 10 All census data used in this chapter up to 2011 is based on *Canada Year Book 2012* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2012), 358–359. On the 2021 census, see [www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E) (accessed May 23, 2022)
- 11 Kundera’s arguments are originally from “Un Occident kidnappé ou la tragédie de l’Europe centrale,” dans *Le Débat* (novembre 1983) and dealt with in more detail in Laniel et Thériault 2020: 11, 15–16.
- 12 [www.expo70-park.jp/cause/expo/#caption5](http://www.expo70-park.jp/cause/expo/#caption5) (accessed June 7, 2022)
- 13 Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge, STWT9/7/40, Visit to Japan by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and Mrs. Stewart, Programme and Transport Plan, undated.
- 14 Regarding the roles of the Irish communities and allegations of treason and disloyalty against them during the conscription controversies in Australia and New Zealand, see McMahon (1999: 142).
- 15 In the aftermath of the Franco-German Armistice, E. H. Carr simply described it as “the French defeat” (Carr 1940: 5).
- 16 Laurier was the first French-Canadian prime minister and remained in office for 15 years and 3 months. This is the longest consecutive prime ministership in Canadian history. See Dafoe (1963: 43).
- 17 The United Kingdom National Archives, Kew, DO35/5269, Sir Saville Garner (United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada) to Lord Home (Secretary of State for

- Commonwealth Relations), June 19, 1957 (Canada fortnightly summary, Part 2, June 2–15, 1957).
- 18 Vineet Thakur and Peter Vale implied the smallness of Newfoundland by pointing out that dominion status was granted to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, and “even to Newfoundland” (Thakur and Vale 2020: 6, 17).
  - 19 Southern Rhodesia enjoyed “dominion-like status, but without full self-government” after 1923 (Darwin 2009: 11). Southern Rhodesia did not become a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations – and then the Commonwealth of Nations – until it became independent under Black African majority rule as Zimbabwe in 1980.
  - 20 *Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa 1932: Summary of Proceedings and Copies of Trade Agreements*, October 1932, Cmd. 4174 (London: HMSO, 1932); *Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa 1932: Appendices to the Summary of Proceedings*, October 1932, Cmd. 4175 (London: HMSO, 1932).
  - 21 “The National Convention Act, 1946,” in James K. Hiller and Michael F. Harrington, eds., *The Newfoundland National Convention 1946-1948, Volume 2: Reports and Papers* (St. John’s: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1995), 1–11.
  - 22 Max Beloff, “Wheare, Sir Kenneth Clinton,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/31822> (accessed May 14, 2022)
  - 23 “Notes on Legal Procedures to Effect Union, August 13, 1948,” in Paul Bridle, ed., *Documents on Relations between Canada and Newfoundland, Volume 2, 1940-1949: Confederation, Part II* (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1984), 1605–1606.
  - 24 *Acadian and Francophone Community Profile of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Ottawa: Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, 2000), 1.
  - 25 *The Canada Year Book 1952-53: The Official Statistical Annual of the Resources, History, Institutions, and Social and Economic Conditions of Canada* (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, 1953), 128.
  - 26 Newfoundland’s population increased and then decreased from 361,416 (1951) to 457,853 (1961), 530,854 (1971), 575,302 (1981), 579,644 (1991), 522,003 (2001), 510,578 (2011) and 510,550 (2021), while PEI’s population steadily increased from 98,429 (1951) to 154,331 (2021).
  - 27 Alex Kennedy, “N.L. the Only Province to See Population Drop since 2016, Says New Census,” February 9, 2022, [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/2021-census-nl-population-drop-1.6345087](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/2021-census-nl-population-drop-1.6345087) (accessed May 23, 2022); “Population Stood at 522,453 as of January 1, 2022,” [www.gov.nl.ca/fin/economics/eb-population/](http://www.gov.nl.ca/fin/economics/eb-population/) (accessed May 23, 2022)
  - 28 *Territoires d’outre-mer* (TOMs) have been replaced by “the more fluid category” of COMs since 2003 (Saada 2018: 99). New Caledonia has a “unique status” as a *collectivité d’outre-mer à statut particulier* (Parsons 2018: 691), where its independence was denied by three referenda based on the Noumea Accord of 1998 and held in November 2018, October 2020 and December 2021.
  - 29 French Guiana is the only French territory (and indeed the only territory ruled by a European metropole) in South America. The Kourou Space Center in French Guiana is particularly important for French and European projects for space exploration.
  - 30 Since the Comoro Islands gained independence from France in 1975, Mayotte has been claimed by the Comoros but administered by the French based on the result of a referendum held in 1974 in which the majority of the population of Mayotte voted against independence, in contrast to inhabitants of three other major Comorian islands (Grande Comore, Anjouan and Mohéli).
  - 31 [www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/asia-and-oceania/the-indo-pacific-region-a-priority-for-france/](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/asia-and-oceania/the-indo-pacific-region-a-priority-for-france/) (accessed January 24, 2022)
  - 32 <https://thecgf.com/games/hamilton-1930> (accessed May 12, 2022)

- 33 The Diamond Jubilee was to celebrate the 60-year reign of Elizabeth II, while the 2012 London Olympics was the third Olympic Games held in London following the ones in 1908 and 1948. Sixty-four years thus separated the second and third Olympics hosted by London.
- 34 See the entry of “state, *n.*” in *Oxford English Dictionary: The Definitive Record of the English Language*, [www.oed.com/](http://www.oed.com/) (accessed May 18, 2022)
- 35 <https://statesassembly.gov.je/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed May 16, 2022)
- 36 The autobiographical introduction was also impressive and effective in Hobsbawm (1987).

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# 10

## PHILOSOPHY IN HONG KONG AFTER 1949

Tang Chun-i, Lao Sze-kwang and  
Cheung Chan-fai

*Cheung Ching Yuen*

Let the state be small and people few;  
Let weapons of platoons and brigades be unused;  
Let the people respect death and renounce travel.  
*(Laozi 2008, 165)*

### 10.1 Introduction

Hong Kong (香港, Cantonese pronunciation *heung<sup>1</sup> gong<sup>2</sup>*), literally means the “Fragrant Harbour,” is one of the earliest modern harbours in East Asia. Japanese philosopher Kaneko Umaji (金子馬治 1870–1937), who visited Hong Kong during his trip to Europe, made an observation as follows:

I have never been to other countries. I launched a ship to Europe and left Japan. It put in at Hong Kong so I made a visit. I was surprised that all the things I saw were completely different from what I had learnt. Someone told me that Hong Kong was a small island. Many Chinese thought it was nothing special. Later it became a British colony, and the island became a harbour... In Japan, harbours are usually a part of the natural geographical landscape, but the harbour in Hong Kong was not natural but an artificial one.

*(Liang 1999, 26, translation mine)*

Watsuji Tetsurō (和辻哲郎 1889–1960), another Japanese philosopher who briefly stopped by Hong Kong, made an equally interesting observation:

Looking down from the ship moored at the Kowloon side, I saw innumerable Chinese junks clustering round the foreign ships, loading and unloading cargo. These junks were, it seemed, the home of any number of Chinese families; four or five little children romped on the deck; young women and old grandmothers worked away, clinging precariously to the halyards. The sight was truly placid. Yet these same junks, when you looked again, had a number of old-style cannon mounted both fore and aft. This was armament against pirates—who would attack these junks with the same type of weapon... No doubt, too, there were the links of a common territorial bond, which would prompt these junks to go to each other's assistance in the event of an attack. But beyond this there was nothing for their protection. State authority within Chinese territorial waters was nonexistent; they only had their own power to protect them. Here they were, then, living a life with no law to it, not entitled to hope for or demand any safeguard from the state.

*(Watsuji 1961, 123–124)*

When these two Japanese visited Hong Kong, the city was under the rule of United Kingdom. In “A Draft Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the future of Hong Kong” (dated 26 September 1984), the history of Hong Kong is explained as follows:

During the nineteenth century Britain concluded three treaties with the then Chinese Government relating to Hong Kong: the Treaty of Nanking signed in 1842 and ratified in 1843 under which Hong Kong Island was ceded in perpetuity; the Convention of Peking in 1860 under which the southern part of the Kowloon peninsula and Stonecutters Island were ceded in perpetuity; the Convention of 1898 under which the New Territories (comprising 92 per cent of the total land area of the territory) were leased to Britain for 99 years from 1 July 1898.<sup>1</sup>

In the “Sino-British Joint Declaration” (signed 19 December 1984), it is agreed that the People's Republic of China will resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong on 1 July 1997.

Currently the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong is small – 1,104 km<sup>2</sup> comparing to 2,188 km<sup>2</sup> of Tokyo; nonetheless, it has a population of over 7 million. In this sense, it has more population than the total population of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (around 6 million). While Laozi suggests that the ideal polity is a small state with few inhabitants, Hong Kong can be regarded as a small but densely populated

collectivity. Is there a Hong Kong philosophy or philosophy in Hong Kong? Traditionally, there are Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism philosophies (or thoughts) in Hong Kong. After Hong Kong became a colony of the British Empire in 1842, philosophy has been studied in the University of Hong Kong “for more than a hundred years.”<sup>2</sup> 1949 marks an important year in the history of Hong Kong philosophy. It was the year of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, and there were many people (including philosophers) went exile into Hong Kong.

In this chapter, I would like to discuss three philosophers: Tang Chun-i (唐君毅 1909–1978), Lao Sze-kwang (勞思光 1927–2012) and Cheung Chan-fai (張燦輝 1949–). They were all former professors at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Tang escaped from China to Hong Kong in 1949 and was one of the founders of New Asia College, a school devoted to promoting Chinese culture. Lao escaped to Taiwan after 1949, but he was not satisfied with the “white terror” of the Republic of China and came to Hong Kong. Unlike Tang and Lao, Cheung was born in Hong Kong and received his PhD in Germany. I would argue that for these three philosophers, philosophy is not only a vocation but also a way to react to contemporary issues.

## 10.2 Tang Chun-i

Tang Chun-i (or Tang Junyi) is one of the most prominent figures of New Confucianism, a contemporary Chinese philosophical movement. Tang is a prolific scholar who published various works on Chinese and Western philosophies. He is also the founding chair of the Department of Philosophy and Education of New Asia College in Hong Kong in 1949. New Asia College mentions her history as follows:

New Asia College was founded in 1949 at a time of extreme adversity by Mr. Ch’ien Mu and other scholars from mainland China. Their objective was to establish an educational institution which combines the essence of the scholarship of the Song and Ming academies and the tutorial system of Western universities. With humanism as its basis, the College also aimed to facilitate cultural exchanges between East and West and to promote peace and well-being of the human race.<sup>3</sup>

Later, Tang drafted the “Manifesto for a Re-Appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture” in 1958. As explained in the *Sources of Chinese Tradition*,

The manifesto begins with a strong rejoinder to certain Western critiques of Chinese civilization and proceeds to defend a Chinese spirituality embracing elements of Daoism and Buddhism along with a Confucian core, which have

enabled the Chinese people to survive repeated challenges and catastrophes of the kind they were experiencing when the manifesto was drawn up in the 1950s.

*(De Bary 2000, 2:551)*

The manifesto is also rendered as the “New Confucian Manifesto.” In a certain sense, Tang and other scholars who signed the manifesto could be regarded as a group of intellectuals who tried to revive Chinese culture in the modern world. However, Tang tried to avoid a narrow Chinese nationalism. With his many overseas experiences, Tang has a relatively open perspective on culture exchange. He also had a short stay in Kyoto from December 1966 to August 1967. This experience in Japan gave him an opportunity to understand and reflect on Chinese and Japanese culture.

During the Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945), Tang’s house at Chongqing was bombed by Japanese warplanes, and he lost most of his personal belongings (including two book manuscripts) as a result. In 1949, he escaped to Hong Kong and established the Department of Philosophy and Education of New Asia College. Later, he travelled to Japan several times for academic conferences and transits. From December 1966 to August 1967, he stayed in Kyoto for an operation for his retinal detachment. In an article titled “Ritual life in the East and its meaning to the world—From a hospital in Kyoto to the ritual cultural life of daily life in the East, and my expectation on Japan and the world (東方人之禮樂的文化生活對世界人類之意義——由京都醫院說到東方人之日常的禮樂文化生活，及我對日本與世界之期望)”, he recalls his memory of living in Japan after redrawn from Kyoto University Hospital. Tang writes,

For five years I have suffered from eye disease, and received medication in the US, Philippines, Hong Kong and Japan... but after staying in a hospital in Kyoto for three months and living in Kyoto for another four months, I cannot forget the experience of meeting ordinary people in Kyoto. It makes me understand more about Japanese life, which recalls my memory in mainland China when I was young... Japanese from the lower class respect their jobs and are content with their jobs. Japanese taxi drivers and waiters do not ask for tips. It shows the mentality of self-satisfaction. These trivial matters recall my memory of the sentiment and virtue of traditional Chinese life. It is not found any more in Europe, US, or even in Hong Kong where I live... What impressed me most on my 8-month stay in Japan was that feeling that I was never regarded as a foreigner. Although I can hardly speak Japanese, we greet, smile or communicate with body gestures... In this daily Japanese social-cultural life, I think it is exactly the ordinary ritual life in traditional China. However, this kind of ritual life is under severe criticism in modern times.

*(Tang 1991, 7: 202–204, translation mine)*

According to Tang, ritual life is not any kind of formalism. For example, being polite to the other is not an “ought” based on any moral law, but a moral feeling from one’s heart. Ritual life is shared by cultures in East Asia, where the traditional way of life is facing challenges in the process of Westernisation or modernisation. Tang suggests that Japan is a perfect example of “conservatism.” In other words, he argues that the project of modernisation can only be achieved through the preservation of traditional culture. Other confirming instances of conservatism are Jewish culture and British culture. According to Tang, people from these cultures are relatively conservative, but tradition was not an obstacle to progress (Tang 1991, 7: 34–35). For Tang, his stay in Japan was an eye-opening experience. He could immediately notice the vitality of Eastern traditions in Japan, but noticed a major difference between modern China and Japan. In the former, traditional cultures were criticised and demolished, while in the latter, they were respected and well preserved. He believes Japan is the luckiest country in the world, because modern Japan managed to preserve most of its traditional culture (Tang 1991, 8: 210). In Hong Kong, where Tang lived, it was a challenging task to preserve traditional culture. For Tang, it was the taste of “looking for rituals in a foreign country as it is lost.”

Tang’s view on the fate of Chinese culture can be found in his essay, “The Dispersal and Drifting about of the Flowers and Fruits of the Chinese Nation (說中華民族之花果飄零)”, published in 1961. Tang used the metaphors of a tree, flowers and fruits to explain the situation of modern Chinese culture. He writes, “[Chinese culture is like] a falling tree. Its flowers and fruits are dispersing and drifting about in the wind” (Tang 1991, 7:13). Shun Kwong-loi summarises Tang’s ideas as follows:

The three decades of political turmoil after 1949 proved them correct in their worries about the future of Chinese cultural values. In 1961, Professor Tang Junyi published a paper on “The Dispersal and Drifting About of the Flowers and Fruits of the Chinese Nation.” In it, he talked about how the rich cultural heritage of China was then like a fallen tree, with its flowers and fruits dispersed and drifting about with the wind, taking shelter under the trees of others in order to survive. His point was that the political climate on the mainland posed a serious threat to traditional Chinese cultural values, which had to find a home among overseas Chinese. At the same time, he also lamented what he perceived as a failure of overseas Chinese to take their own cultural heritage seriously, such as by preferring to speak in a foreign language or by opting for a foreign way of life. The tone in the paper was largely pessimistic, conveying distress over the erosion of traditional values on the mainland while also critical of the Chinese who resided outside the mainland.

(Shun 2013, 2)

As a Chinese intellectual exiled into Hong Kong, a British colony, Tang has mixed feelings. He explains,

Chinese society, Chinese culture and Chinese minds have lost their cohesive power. The situation is like a tree falling in a garden; the flowers and fruits are drifting about in the wind. Now the flowers and fruits can only survive in other's gardens, or fight for nurturance near the border. It is a tragedy for all Chinese people.

(Tang 1991, 7:12)

Tang was not satisfied to see the diaspora of Chinese people: they escaped to other countries and applied foreign passports, but they are proud of their achievement; Chinese intellectuals do not speak Chinese language at home, and they call their teachers "professors" but not "*sensei*"; Chinese universities prefer foreign scholars than Chinese scholars, and Chinese scholars put English literatures in front of Chinese literatures in their reference list. In short, Chinese culture is in a crisis.

Tang noticed the fact that people might not agree with his observation. His readers told him that many Chinese have been recognised internationally, such as Yang Chen-ning (楊振寧) and Li Tsung-dao (李政道) who received Nobel Prize in Physics in 1957 (Tang 1991, 7:39). However, Yang's and Li's research activities were both based in the United States. Borrowing Tang's words, they are in fact typical examples of "flowers and fruits in other's garden." Nowadays, one may claim that there are "flowers and fruits" in mainland China as a result of economic growth, but Tang's observation is still valid in many senses. Tang's idea is that Chinese people embrace new ideas but forget old traditions. Indeed, the world is always changing. We are forced to change, and will have to provide justifications for our actions. But Tang suggests that we can change only if we are equipped with universal values that do not change with time. One may regard Confucianism as a past ideology, but Tang insists that benevolence and righteousness are universal values. He writes,

I hope from today all of us, in the free world, do not only talk about progress. We will have to preserve culture in order to develop new ideas. It would be a huge achievement for us to protect the thoughts and values of humanities.

(Tang 1991, 7:32)

Tang's worry is that the modern people fail to preserve traditions, and hence lose the ground to create new values and ideas. In other words, it is like "willow losing its mind in the wind, paddles of peach flower getting lost in a river" (顛狂柳絮隨風舞, 輕薄桃花逐水流) (Tang 1991, 7:33).

Tang's view about Japan could be seen as a romantic *ressentiment*, but he did not simply look for a cultural nostalgia; rather, he is searching for the possibilities

of a deeper cultural exchange between China and Japan. In “Past, Present and Future of Cultural Relationship between China and Japan” (中國與日本文化關係之過去、現在、與未來), Tang mentions three stages of Chinese–Japanese relationship (Tang 1991, 8:379). We may not agree with his oversimplified view, but it is interesting for us to understand Tang’s point. According to Tang, the first stage is from ancient times to pre-Meiji period. In this stage, Japan imitates China. Japanese people did not understand China for the sake of knowledge, but for a deep understanding of the Eastern mind. Precisely speaking, Japanese adopted Confucianism and Buddhism from China and developed its own versions of Confucian and Buddhist thoughts and practices. In the second stage, that is, from Meiji period to the Second World War, Japan entered a new phase of leaving Asia and joining Europe. For example, Nishi Amane (西周, 1829–1897) coined the Japanese term *tetsugaku* (哲学) in 1874. Two years later, a chair of philosophy was established in the University of Tokyo, where the philosophies of Bentham, Mill, Voltaire and Rousseau were taught. We might say that Nishi’s invention of the word *tetsugaku* was more than a mere translation, but also a symbol of the transformation of the old motto of *wakon kansai* (和魂漢才), meaning Japanese spirit and Chinese knowledge, to the new motto of *wakon yōsai* (和魂洋才), which means Japanese spirit and Western knowledge. The new motto of *wakon yōsai* in the Meiji era still emphasised the importance of Japanese spirit. However, the guiding principle was no longer the old Chinese teachings; rather, it was the newly imported knowledge from the West. The third stage is the post-war period. Tang notices that now Chinese and Japanese conduct research about each other, but only for the sake of research. Researchers of sinology in Japan, for example, can understand Chinese philosophy and culture, but they do not transfer their research outcomes into the society. There are indeed many academic “meetings,” but not many of them are cultural “exchange” (Tang 1991, 8:389). Tang also blamed political leaders for their failures to contribute to cultural exchange and understanding. He writes,

As Mao Zedong tried to rule China with Marxism-Leninism, he told Prime Minister Tanaka not to believe in Confucius. On 12 June this year [1974], Deng Xiaoping told Saionji and others that “It is a pity that Kanji and Confucianism were imported to Japan.” I do not know if Saionji has a reply to Deng. Tanaka and Saionji could have expressed their thoughts in a polite manner, but it is unacceptable to remain silent. It is evident that Japanese politicians nowadays are corrupted. They are only interested in pragmatics but not in morality. There is also a lack of emphasis on Eastern cultural consciousness. It is a shame if one only uses table-tennis to represent Chinese-Japanese cultural exchange.

(Tang 1991, 8:399)

Table tennis as well as other kinds of sports could be the beginning of many meaningful cultural exchanges, but it is vital for the Chinese to learn how Japan

modernises itself without sacrificing traditional values. In “Answering questions on Chinese Culture and Modernization” (中國文化與現代化問題答問), Tang writes,

In principle, it is not justified to claim that Chinese culture is a hindrance to modernization. Japan is the best example. In Japan, most of the traditional culture is influenced by Chinese. There are many imitations of China in Japan’s ethics, religion, academic, literature, art and daily life. Japanese traditional culture is more or less Chinese on a smaller scale. It is well preserved and fits into modern life.

*(Tang 1991, 8:312–313)*

Tang emphasises the importance of understanding the Japanese culture, but he does not see Japan as a mere isolated one. It is important not only to compare the differences between Chinese and Japanese cultures, but also to look for common topics for China and Japan in the modern world.

In my opinion, Tang’s experience in Japan can be understood as a “Japanese dream” (東瀛夢). In this dream, Tang would hope to see Japan becoming one of the leading countries to preserve Eastern traditional culture. Tang noticed Japan’s error in justifying her leadership in the making of “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere” (大東亞共榮圈). However, he reckons that it was only a result of colonialism or militarism imported from the West. Tang wishes that all human beings (no matter of her/his nationality, socio-cultural background or religion) can live a ritual life, which is closest to human nature. Although Tang is a well-known admirer of Chinese culture, he does not follow a narrow nationalistic approach. Japanese can live a Chinese life, and vice versa. Tang shows that China and Japan have a common cultural-historical background. Facing similar problems and fate in the path of modernisation, the two countries have much to share.

Of course, this is only a dream. He did not provide a concrete agenda. However, we can empathise with Tang’s sincerity and open-mindedness about Japan. Tang emphasised the importance of intercultural exchanges between China and Japan. True exchanges are not to be found in academic dialogues, but in the friendship between people. Tang is a victim of war, but he did not see the Japanese as an enemy; rather, he believes that Japan can be a true friend. Tang’s appreciation comes from his own personal experience in Japan in the 1960s. Of course, after the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, Japan is no longer the same. It is in rapid economic growth, and the lifestyle is increasingly westernised. In the age of globalism, we have to admit that traditional culture in Japan is becoming more formalistic and less affordable. Nevertheless, Tang still believes that Chinese should learn from the other, and follow the other.

Although Confucius himself is not a descendant of the Chou dynasty, he admires Chou’s culture. The master says, “Chou had the advantage of surveying the two preceding dynasties. How replete was its culture! I follow Chou.” Tang’s lesson is meaningful in the sense that he follows Confucius’ non-nationalistic approach

to understand Chinese culture, and more importantly, he would provide us some resources to develop a transcultural reading of Chinese and Japanese philosophies and cultures.

### 10.3 Lao Sze Kwang

Lao Sze Kwang is regarded as “one of the most important and respected philosophers in contemporary cultural China.”<sup>4</sup> He is well known as the author of the four-volume *History of Chinese Philosophy*. Many of his works can be found in the New *Compilation of Professor Lao Sze-Kwang's Academic Works* (13 volumes), published by Chinese University Press. His later works include *Lectures on Philosophy of Culture*; *Illusion and Hope: On Contemporary Philosophy and Culture*; *New Reflections on the Future Developments of Chinese Culture*, etc. As mentioned in the preface of *Lectures on Philosophy of Culture*, Lao suggests there are three phases of his academic life: the first phase is his earlier philosophy and political essays (collected in *Early Writings*); the second phase is on his philosophical writings (mainly his *History of Chinese Philosophy*) and the latest phase is on philosophy of culture. He insists that critics should not use his earlier writings to conclude his thoughts (Lao 2002, xi).

Though he is recognised as a philosopher in modern China, Lao has never called himself a member of New-Confucianism or a representative of any particular school. The reason that Lao distances himself from New-Confucianism is clear: he supports the very idea that Chinese philosophy should not be developed as a dogmatic school.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, he was discontented with the philosophy of culture of many New-Confucian thinkers, such as Tang Chun-i. Rather than promoting Chinese traditional thoughts or ideologies, Lao urges Chinese philosophers to open themselves to the world.

“Philosophy of culture,” obviously, is related to philosophical reflections on culture. What is meant by culture? What is the difference between culture and nature? What are the characteristics of cultural and natural sciences? Here, one may need to distinguish philosophy of culture from other philosophical disciplines. In his earlier work *Introduction to Philosophy*, Lao suggests philosophy has the following sub-branches, namely, cosmology, metaphysics, moral philosophy, theology, methodology, epistemology, philosophy of culture, logical analysis and philosophy of mind-nature. For Lao, most of these philosophical theories are rather specific; but for philosophy of culture, it deals with a general problem. Borrowing Lao's own words, “‘philosophy of culture’ is a philosophy on the meaning of all cultural activities. It includes the so-called ‘philosophy of history,’ ‘political philosophy,’ ‘social philosophy,’ etc. However, the most important area should be philosophy of value.” He continues,

Chinese philosophers have been focused on philosophy of mind-nature. Their research is on the realization of a moral person in moral practice. They have a

clear view of the ground of cultural activities, but have never explained cultural activities in a comprehensive manner. China does not have a well-developed “philosophy of history”... Modern China is now facing the challenge of Western culture. Chinese intellectuals have been increasingly interested in “cultural problems.” “Cultural problem” is highly ambiguous; no matter how we understand the notion, when we are concerned about “whither Chinese Culture is going,” it faces more or less the problems of “philosophy of culture.” As a result, philosophy of culture is becoming a popular research topic. However, this research will not yield a concrete result in a short period of time. Hence, it is difficult to say whether Chinese philosophy has an established philosophy of culture. Nonetheless, we can say there is a tendency in modern China to research the philosophy of culture.

(Lao 1998a, 44)

From the quotation above, we can see that Lao has been well aware of the relationship between Chinese philosophy and philosophy of culture. However, in this early stage he did not provide us with a detailed explanation of his own philosophy of culture. As recalled in the new preface to *Aspects of Chinese Philosophy* (first edition 1965, new edition 1998), he admits that his earlier view on philosophy of culture can be understood with the framework of the so-called “Hegelian model” (Lao 1998b, xii). In his later years, there was a significant change in his position of philosophy of culture, when he suggested another approach to cultural problems, that is, the “Parsonian model.”

*Aspects of Chinese Philosophy* was originally a textbook for general education course in Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong. In this work, Lao applies the Hegelian model to explain Chinese culture. He begins by suggesting a twofold structure of culture: on the empirical level there are various cultural activities, but they are not necessarily determined by our free will. The other level is about our self-consciousness, which is not determined by environmental factors. He further explains two important concepts: cultural phenomena and cultural spirit. Anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists make observations or descriptions on cultural phenomena, which are facts about culture. However, when we study philosophy of culture, we no longer work on the empirical facts about culture; rather, we focus on the cultural spirit, which is the ground of all cultural phenomena. Lao writes,

On the level of empirical facts, there are researches on cultural phenomena; on the level of the activity of the self-consciousness, there are researches on cultural spirit. The former brings empirical sciences about cultural problems, while the latter brings philosophy of culture. These two have their own research areas. One cannot be substituted by the other; they are not incompatible. A researcher of cultural problems, as long as he is gifted and well trained, can supplement the two researches and form a complete theory of culture.

(Lao 1998b, 5)

Cultural spirit is the self-determining factor. It gives direction for self-consciousness. The activity of self-consciousness can change the world. It provides the values of the cultural subject. In order to explain cultural phenomena, therefore, we have to understand the cultural spirit (e.g. in ideas, attitudes, system and customs). In the case of Chinese culture, we have to understand the Chinese spirit in Chinese philosophy. In other words, we have to identify the mainstream philosophical thoughts that “externalise” to various aspects of Chinese culture.

This Hegelian way of understanding the culture has its meaning and validity, but Lao later realises that it cannot explain the modernisation of a non-Western culture. In the case of modern China, it has to face Western culture in the path of modernisation. How can Chinese people understand the West? According to the Hegelian model, it is necessary for a Chinese to become a Westerner (i.e. with Western spirit) so that he or she can have the ability to understand Western culture. In this case, the traditional Chinese spirit could be a hindrance for the understanding of the West. In the path of modernisation, Chinese will have to face a dilemma: to preserve the Chinese tradition or embrace the Western culture? Lao writes,

The problem of traditionalism and anti-traditionalism is not merely a realistic problem for Chinese people, but also an important movement of thought in the contemporary world. The biggest problem of modern China in the last century is about the new cultural direction of Chinese culture.

*(Lao 1996, 157)*

As is well known, the prevailing movement in modern China has been anti-traditionalism. May-fourth New Cultural Movement, Communism and Cultural Revolution are examples of this anti-traditionalist trend. Intellectuals who believed in either democracy or Marxism would agree to call for a radical demolition of the old Confucian schools. As for traditionalism, one of the most important figures is Tang Junyi, who escaped to Hong Kong in 1949 and founded New Asia College. Tang’s mission was to preserve traditional Chinese values, which was a difficult task in Chinese diasporas but impossible in mainland China. Lao criticises these two extreme approaches:

Traditionalists or anti-traditionalists make the same mistake—they oversimplify the problem. As seen in their actions, one discriminates the other. Anti-traditionalists claim the traditionalist conservative and pathetic, while traditionalists label the anti-traditionalists as naïve and blind. They blame and criticize each other, without understanding their theoretical grounds.

*(Lao 1996, 158)*

According to Lao, the disagreement between the two camps lies in their understanding of the essence of “tradition.” On one hand, anti-traditionalists presuppose tradition is temporally constrained. When a traditional value loses its

cultural force, it is necessary to replace it with new cultural values. On the other hand, traditionalists presuppose the values of tradition are eternal. They argue that in the case of learning a second language, it is necessary to build upon the first language; analogically, it is important to preserve the native traditional values in order to learn any new values from other cultures.

To further understand Lao's criticism, we may borrow the insight from Max Scheler's phenomenology of *ressentiment*. Scheler writes, "The formal structure of *ressentiment* expression is always the same: A is affirmed, valued, and praised not for its own intrinsic quality, but with the un verbalized intention of denying, devaluating, and denigrating B. A is 'played off' against B" (Scheler 1961, 68). Scheler notices there are two specific types of *ressentiment*, namely, those with apostatical *ressentiment* and those with romantic *ressentiment* (Scheler 1961, 66). Now we might divide Chinese intellectuals into two types. On one hand, those with apostatical *ressentiment* urged for radical reformation by introducing democratic and scientific thoughts, but it was simply based on the negation of the past. Probably the best example is Lu Xun, who criticised the Chinese traditional thoughts and demanded the change of mentality of Chinese by popular literature. On the other hand, those with romantic *ressentiment* tried to hide their weakness by claiming that Chinese were strong in the past. Tang is one of the romanticists, who would prefer the ideal Eastern nostalgia to a modernised China. In other words, both the traditionalists and anti-traditionalists share the same "logic": they support A not because of the intrinsic value of A, but simply to negate or deny B.

Lao emphasises that "I am neither a traditionalist nor an ant-traditionalist. Basically, I am a critic. From my position, I do not need to defend any positions" (Lao 1996, 163). Of course, Lao did not merely criticise without any position at all. In his later years, Lao tried to develop a non-Hegelian model of philosophy of culture. Reading Talcott Parsons' (1902–1979) *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) and *The Social System* (1951), Lao suggests that social action can be internalised into social system and culture. From this Parsonian model, we should not accept the spirit as the determining factor of a culture; rather, our experience in the lifeworld can constitute a cultural world. Lao further develops his idea with a pair of concepts, namely, "initiation" and "imitation." The Chinese spirit was essential in the initiation of Chinese culture, but in modern times, China has to face the other spirit from the West. Since it is impossible for a Chinese to become a Westerner with Western spirit, China should realise the potential of imitation as Japan perfectly showed in her path to modernisation. Lao observes,

In history of culture, the best example for imitation is Japan. Japan and China faced pressure from the West. Meiji Restoration and Self-Strengthening Movement were in the same period. However, Meiji Restoration in Japan did not call for a radical change. Japan did not condemn traditional beliefs and values. Japanese culture is well aware of her imitation.

(Lao 1993, 56)

Lao suggests Japan's experience in modernisation is an important reference for modern China. "Before WWII, some traditional cultures in Japan did not have significant changes during Westernization. Many Chinese were not satisfied with Japan's superficial and fragmented Westernization. But in terms of the learning process, Japan's approach is natural" (Lao 1993, 192).

It is worth noting that Lao did not immediately begin his project on philosophy of culture after finishing his project on Chinese philosophy. In a collection of essays celebrating his 80 anniversaries, Lao mentions his ongoing project on contemporary Western philosophy. He writes,

Since my early years, I have been facing the problem of "philosophical crisis" and "cultural crisis." The plan of my project is to study the traditional philosophical thoughts, followed by an inquiry into the philosophical trends of the world in the 20th century, and then propose a new philosophy of culture. Although I had spent many years on traditional Chinese philosophy, I had no intention of becoming an expert in Chinese philosophy. After finishing the writing project of *History of Chinese Philosophy*, it is natural for me to change my focus to the investigation of philosophical problems of the world in the 20th century.

(Lao and Cheung 2003, 276)

Indeed, Lao's project on philosophy of culture has never been completed. In his later years, he was focusing on the development of contemporary philosophy. One of his latest papers is titled "On a non-absolutistic new foundationalism" (論非絕對主義的新基礎主義) in which he discusses in detail the major trends in philosophy of the 20th and 21st centuries (Lao 2007). Lao praised the development of logical-mathematical philosophy, methodology and philosophy of language, but he was worried about the notion of "end of philosophy" suggested by Nietzsche and postmodern philosophers. Lao's worry of the crisis of contemporary philosophy is in the development of a kind of "negative thinking," which is self-defeating, paradoxical and non-constructive.

As an admirer of Jürgen Habermas, it is evident that Lao is against "postmodernism," which he understands as the end of philosophy. I would suggest that Lao might have missed the point here. Postmodern, as suggested by Jean-François Lyotard, is not an "ism" to embrace anything goes or to become "kitsch." Rather, it is a report based on Lyotard's observation in various fields of sciences and universities, or in his own words, in the field of "knowledge in computerized societies." Lyotard argues that modern science legitimises itself with reference to a metadiscourse appealing to some grand narrative, while *postmodern* is the incredulity towards metanarratives. The keywords for science are no longer knowledge (*savoir*) or learning (*connaissance*), but performance (*performance*) and efficiency (*efficacité*). Lyotard writes, "Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable" (Lyotard 1984, xxv). One may argue that

the focus on Lao's philosophy is not the postmodern condition, but the very project of modernisation in China. However, we may still identify another problem in Lao's philosophy of culture: Lao unconditionally accepts cultural essentialism in his narrative on culture. In many cases, we can see his nationalistic understanding of China: Buddhism is understood as an "invasion." Chinese culture is essentially different to the Western mind.

Lao reckons that Liang Shuming (梁漱溟 1893–1988) was a tragic figure in modern China, and he criticises Liang's *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* for its failure to capture the essence of Confucianism. However, Lao actually follows Liang's frameworks on the "three pillars" of cultures, namely, the West, China and India. In *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies*, Liang argues that the spirit of Western culture is the will of going forward (以意欲向前要求為根本精神), the spirit of Chinese culture is the will for harmony (以意欲自為調和持中為其根本精神) and the spirit of Indian culture is the will for going backward (以意欲反身向後要求為其根本精神) (Liang 1999, 33, 63). Lao, in other manner, claims that Western culture emphasises on intellect (重智精神), Chinese culture emphasises on morality (重德精神) and Indian culture emphasises on detachment (捨離精神) (Lao 2001b). Both Liang and Lao failed to observe the fact of "complex cultural traditions," as proposed by Elmar Holenstein. According to Holenstein, "Cultural traditions are not compact, discrete, homogeneous units, independent of each other. As a rule, they are structures that continuously merge into and overlap each other, and they are accordingly heterogeneous" (Holenstein 2010, 47). He continues,

Why are cultural traditions not as homogeneous as many philosophers have dogmatically claimed for centuries and as political ideologies still proclaim? Why are cultures, or, to use the word that in English is more current, why are civilizations so complex and multi-faceted? The explanation is obvious. The various dimensions of one culture will affect and influence each other. Their convergence, however, is never long lasting. The causes of changes to them are too diverse.

(Holenstein 2010, 47)

On a factual level, Holenstein tries to prove that homogeneous culture does not exist. He further argues that homogeneous cultures should not be rendered as ideals. We should not repeat the error of the purification of culture, either by peaceful means or by violence.

In my opinion, it is necessary not only to avoid any nationalistic reading of Chinese philosophy, but also to reconsider the very potential of a transcultural Chinese philosophy. In this sense, I agree with Fabien Heubel that we should overcome the cultural essentialism in the reading of New Confucianism, and re-evaluate the potential of contemporary philosophy in Chinese (Heubel 2007). Transcultural philosophical movement, which deals with the heterogeneity of

cultures (with keywords such as hybridity, creole identities, multilingualism, etc.), is not only a sound alternative to nationalistic academic philosophy in China, Japan or Europe, it is also an important way of understanding our contemporary cultural world. As noted by Nishida Kitaro, “I am what I am by recognizing you, and you are what you are by recognizing me; under me there is you, under you there is me” (Nishida 1966, 6: 381). The other culture is not an abstract concept; rather, it is impossible to understand a cultural self without the existence of the other. This understanding of culture, I believe, is crucial to the development of Chinese philosophy, or in general, philosophy in future.

#### 10.4 Cheung Chan-fai

Unlike Tang and Lao, Cheung Chan-fai was born and educated in Hong Kong in 1949. He used to be a student of architecture at the University of Hong Kong, but later he changed his major to philosophy and decided to study Heidegger’s philosophy at Freiburg University. He joined the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1992. He became professor and chairperson of the Department of Philosophy, and the director of General Education at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He was also the founder of the Hong Kong Society for Phenomenology. Cheung retired in 2012.

If Tang’s contribution is in Chinese philosophy and Laos’ contribution is in philosophy of culture, Cheung’s philosophical contribution is in his philosophy of life, death, love and desire. These topics seem to be universal and have nothing to do with “philosophy of Hong Kong.” However, Cheung shows his concern for Hong Kong in his philosophy of utopia. In his article “Another Place Another Time: Phenomenological Reflections on Utopia,” Cheung refers to Thomas More’s 1516 book *Utopia*. The word is well known for no place (*outopia*) and good place (*eutopia*). But Cheung notices that More’s concept of utopia is different from the concept of Plato’s republic. He writes,

So is the island, Utopia, for More. The book, *Utopia* (1516), was claimed to be a true report on a discussion in Antwerp between More, Peter Giles and Raphael Hythloday, who came back from Utopia. Not only are the geography and history of the island described in detail; also the social organization, political structure and education program are expounded. Hythloday convinces More that Utopia is the most perfect of all societies. Unlike Plato’s Republic, More’s Utopia was said to be a real place that existed in another space.

(Cheung 2019, 229)

Cheung argues that utopia is more than wishful thinking. It can be a heterotopia that can criticise or even transform our social and political world. “No one could deny the unreality of the island utopia, but precisely this unreality turns utopia into a reality. More’s utopia is a placeless place, in Foucault’s terms; hence, a

heterotopia” (Cheung 2019, 230). Comparing utopia and dystopia, as in the case of George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Cheung writes,

Both utopia and dystopia are possible ways of living in our societies, despite their “present absence.” They could nevertheless come into being in other spaces and times in our world... It is exactly by looking into the unrealities in the mirror of our reality that we understand the real potentials of utopia and dystopia. However, utopia is not a static mirror image of reality, but a becoming toward the future. Utopia is not just a placeless place, but also a timeless time: it does not only locate itself in another place as a heterotopia, but also points to the construction of a world to be realized in the future.

(Cheung 2019, 231)

In this sense, utopia is related to the concept of hope. By reading Ernst Bloch’s *The Principle of Hope* (1986), Cheung agrees that utopian thinking begins with “daydreams, and then myths, fairy tales, fantasy, escape attempts, and wishes to break away from the everyday world.” But it also brings us the “not-yet-consciousness.” In other words, utopia is not a random daydreaming; rather, it shows us the “possibility of another world.”

“World,” “Possibility” and “Otherness” are important topics in phenomenology. Cheung continues to conduct a phenomenological investigation on *topia*. He writes,

Firstly, “world” as a phenomenological concept is not simply the summation of all things, but as phenomenology shows, a plurality of worlds is intrinsic to the concept ‘world’, understood as a web of significations irreducible to an objectively true and, hence, unitary structure of meaning. World is not objectively situated against human beings but is constitutive as Being-in-the-world. As human beings we are thrown into the cultural and historical web of meanings interwoven with those of other people. Secondly, the idea of possibility is considered not metaphysically but existentially. “Rather, possibilities form the fabric of human existence, guiding our projects and actions in the world without standing for *teloi* to be fulfilled.” Through possibility, the human being opens him-/herself into the future, in spite of the fact that it is a thrown-possibility that is rooted in the primordial finitude of human existence. Thirdly, the concern for otherness is of utmost importance, as no single ego can be dominant and superior to others... The idea of existential utopia opens a new horizon for reflecting on utopian thinking, different from the traditional one beginning with More... In an age of dystopian thought, fatalism and pessimism, a renewal of utopian thinking along the lines of phenomenology could enlighten and brighten the future of humankind. The complete abolition of utopia is surely a symptom of the sickness of our contemporary world.

(Cheung 2019, 236–237)

However, Cheung does not only analyse utopia from a theoretical dimension. He has a unique lived experience in Hong Kong. During the 2014 Umbrella movement, Cheung observed that the occupied street and tent village (“Harcourt Village”) was not just a heterotopia, but a utopia. He recalls,

It was not a party but a protest. Everyone was free to express what he/she felt in words or in art forms. Most people went back to work during the daytime but came back to the village after work. There was always [an] assembly in the evening, at which reports were updated and speeches from various people were delivered. Of course, there were sometimes heated debates, but they did not turn into violent disagreement. There was an extensive study area with Wifi and desk lamps for students to study with volunteer tutors assisting them. There was a counseling booth, a small library, recycling and religious facilities, security patrols, various open lecture spots, and first-aid stations. It was a place where the French national motto. ‘Freedom, equality and brotherhood’ was realized.

*(Cheung 2019, 242)*

Cheung further explains his experience in Harcourt Village as follows:

No one would believe such a utopia could exist in reality. I have never had this utopian experience in my whole life. But it happened in front of our eyes. This utopian experience was far from unreal, but indeed surreal in the sense that it came precisely out of reality...Harcourt Village was a result of the call to our own consciences in face of political injustice and police brutality. The utopian longing for justice, democracy and freedom suddenly became realizable among many people who shared the same vein of thought and mentality. Harcourt Village, coming out of nowhere, became the ‘borrowed time, borrowed space’ for this utopia.

*(Cheung 2019, 242–243)*

However, Cheung also notices the fragility of Harcourt Village. The site was cleared by police on 15 December 2014 and disappeared.

The “borrowed place” was returned back to the normal road users; the ‘borrowed time’ was taken back by students and protesters returning to their everyday lives. Once again, utopia would retreat back to the hope of human beings and back to the possibility of being human. But without this utopian hope and possibility, there is perhaps no meaning in human life and history.

*(Cheung 2019, 243)*

Utopia became a dystopia. Cheung confesses that he has “been given the chance to learn, to think, to teach and to write whatever I wanted without any fear, in a university where academic freedom and integrity are values taken for granted.

But these happy days are gradually changing” (Cheung 2019, 246). Cheung told the press in 2017 that he “was told to avoid ‘sensitive topics’ in front of mainland academics”:

Former philosophy professor Cheung Chan-fai said that, since his retirement in 2012, he often represented CUHK when talking to groups on the mainland and abroad about the university’s General Education programme. Speaking at a campus forum on Wednesday, he said that a member of the school’s administration sent him a letter a few months ago: “It said: Professor Cheung, next time you [give a] talk, can you maybe not discuss sensitive subjects in front of our mainland scholars?”<sup>6</sup>

Situation changed radically in 2019, when Hong Kong experienced a social unrest for more than 6 months. In the next year, Cheung wrote a series of online articles under the series of the “Existential Crisis of Hong Kongers.”<sup>7</sup> In one of the articles, he mentioned Tang’s exile experience and the future of Hong Kong. He begins by quoting Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*,

To be, or not to be, that is the question,  
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them?

Cheung notices that Hong Kongers do not know the feeling of leaving the homeland.

We, the generation born in Hong Kong after 1949, do not know the hardships of war and do not understand the sadness of leaving our homeland. But at the same time, there were a large number of Chinese people in Hong Kong who had fled from the Mainland. They had gone through long years of war and hardship from the War of Resistance against Japan to the Civil War, with their lives in danger. In those times, countless people were faced with the existential question of staying behind in the Mainland to embrace the myth of a new Chinese communist utopia? Or move to Taiwan with the Kuomintang? To flee overseas as refugees or immigrants? Or come and live in this British colony?

(Cheung 2020, 43)

Tang and Lao faced this existential crisis: to stay on the mainland, or go into exile? Many businessmen and intellectuals chose to come to Hong Kong, a place where there is freedom and rule of law but no democracy. In the case of Tang Chun-I, he chose to go into exile in Hong Kong, but he never called Hong Kong his home. Cheung suggests that Tang lived in Hong Kong temporarily, hoping that China will

set things right and return to the motherland. Unfortunately, the political situation has not changed for the better, so he had to accept his status as a scholar in exile. Cheung recalls,

I had the privilege of attending Mr Tang's classes when I was at university, and I was deeply impressed by his magnificent philosophy and cultural ideas, although I never understood his Sichuanese dialect in class. However, it is a great pity that I did not embrace his idea of the "drifting of flowers and fruits", nor was I influenced by Neo-Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism has had a great influence on overseas Chinese and Western academics, but it does not seem to have been taken seriously in Hong Kong. This is because it is not directly relevant to our generation of Hong Kong people. I cannot feel his pain about the degradation of Chinese culture because I am a Hong Kong citizen.

*(Cheung 2020, 45)*

Cheung argues that Hong Kongers after 2019 are facing a new existential crisis:

Do we want to be the "new" Hong Kong people, accepting all the arrangements of the regime? Or do we bury our anger in our hearts and wait for an opportunity to explode? Or do we leave this place and go to a country where there is democracy, freedom and the rule of law, and become the new generation of "flower and fruit drifters"? Or do we go to any place that can take us in, and as long as there is freedom, forget about the past, forget about "Hong Kong", and integrate ourselves and the next generation into the culture of that society as soon as possible? Or maybe we feel that we cannot control our own destiny, that we can just take what comes our way, that we don't need to choose, that we just accept our fate? But one thing is certain: all the problems we face have their origins in the Hong Kong that has passed away, and so we have become conscious or unconscious "exiles."

*(Cheung 2020, 46)*

Cheung suggests one thing is for sure: all the problems we are facing originate from our departure from Hong Kong. All Hong Kongers become "exiles," consciously or unconsciously. However, Hong Kong exiles are different from other diaspora groups, for example, the Jewish people.

After 2,000 years of exile, no matter where and when they suffered, the Jewish people have been held together by Judaism and still believed that Israel was the promised land where all Jews were allowed to end their exile. In his exile, Professor Tang still had a Confucian culture in mind as a place to return to. What about us? Where is the original Hong Kong where we can settle?.

*(Cheung 2020, 47)*

## 10.5 Conclusion

“To be, or not to be, that is the question.” Cheung Chan-fai can be regarded as the first generation of Hong Kong philosophers (born and educated in Hong Kong). Philosophy of Hong Kong will continue to offer more questions, rather than answers, for all Hong Kongers, who are now facing an authentic existential crisis. Unlike Tang Chun-i or Lao Sze-kwang who are exile scholars who happened to have lived in Hong Kong, Cheung would have to philosophise Hong Kong. It is not because Hong Kong is a utopia, but because Hong Kong used to be his homeland (*Heimat*). Hong Kong people have been migrating to other countries since the 1980s for various reasons, such as the lack of faith in the future, and the hope for more opportunities in a foreign country. Philosophers in Hong Kong have to face this existential choice too. They may continue to stay in Hong Kong, or to leave their homeland forever. This is the contemporary Hong Kong philosophy – Hong Konger philosophers have to make their choices in the existential crises of their times.

## Notes

- 1 “A Draft Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great British and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the future of Hong Kong” (1984), 1.
- 2 “Philosophy at HKU: a Brief History,” University of Hong Kong, assessed August 26, 2022, <https://philosophy.hku.hk/dept/about/history/>
- 3 “History,” New Asia College, assessed August 26, 2022, [www.na.cuhk.edu.hk/en-us/aboutnewasia/history.aspx](http://www.na.cuhk.edu.hk/en-us/aboutnewasia/history.aspx)
- 4 “Obituary Professor Lao Sze-Kwang,” Chinese University of Hong Kong, assessed August 26, 2022, [www.phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/web/obituary-professor-lao-sze-kwang/](http://www.phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/web/obituary-professor-lao-sze-kwang/)
- 5 Lao explains why he did not sign the “New Confucian Manifesto” (1963): “Tang first told me about his idea [of the manifesto]. I thought a manifesto should be signed by a group, at least 20-30 local and overseas scholars who reach an agreement about the manifesto. If it is just a statement by 2 or 3 people, it is better known as an article but not a manifesto. Tang did not agree with my idea, so I was never involved in the making of the manifesto. As for the content of the manifesto, it is mostly Tang’s personal opinion. I do not have any comment on that.” (Lao 2001a, 110).
- 6 Catherine Lai, “Ex-CUHK philosophy prof. says he was told to avoid ‘sensitive topics’ in front of mainland academics,” Hong Kong Free Press, September 28, 2017. <https://hongkongfp.com/2017/09/28/ex-cuhk-philosophy-prof-says-told-avoid-sensitive-topics-front-mainland-academics/>
- 7 This article was originally published in 立場新聞 [*The Stand News*]. However, the internet news site shut down in 2021 after the editors and staff were arrested under the National Security Law. The quotation here is from *HK: Existential Crisis*, a private manuscript by Cheung Chan-fai (Cheung 2020).

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# 11

## “THE OTHER AMERICA” AND THE QUEST FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Race, gender and the struggle over guaranteed income in the late 20th century United States

*Kazuyo Tsuchiya*

### 11.1 Introduction

What constitutes “small nations”? According to Czech writer Milan Kundera, they are defined neither by “their size nor by their territory, but rather by their destiny.” Their “existence can be contested at any time, they can disappear and they know it” (Laniel, 2018: 1079). Political scientist Uriel Abulof calls them “small peoples,” paying particular attention to the cases of “ethnic communities characterized by prolonged uncertainty regarding their own existence.” According to Abulof, despite the growing body of literature on small states, other important polities, especially ethnic communities, have been unexplored. Thus, his work enlarges the scope of research on small nations by exploring “the existential uncertainty of ethnonational communities” (Abulof, 2009: 228, 231).

Small nations, or small peoples, have been defined as those in constant confrontation with what Kundera says “the arrogant ignorance of the mighty.” Yet “the mighty” has never been a monolith – it was (and is) full of contradictions where small peoples, who were relegated to the margins inside “the mighty” and faced existential uncertainty, fought for their survival. I enlarge the scope of research on the “smallness” of polities by exploring the struggles within “the mighty.” I focus on the case of the United States (US), the epitome of “the mighty” and the world’s superpower for more than a century. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the late 20th-century US became a contested space over social welfare, especially guaranteed income, where small peoples such as welfare activists raised their voices.

I also propose the intersectional analysis of small nations. While Abulof sought to broaden the scholarship on the “smallness” of polities by discussing the “existential fragility and uncertainty” of ethnic communities, I go a step further, illustrating how these same communities cannot be discussed without mentioning

class, gender and other interrelated and mutually shaping categories. I offer an intersectional approach to “small peoples,” demonstrating how welfare activists, of which the majority of them were women of colour, fought for economic justice and advanced both the Black Freedom Struggle and women’s liberation movement.

### *11.1.1 Social policy as a battleground over citizenship*

Social welfare policy, the largest policy in terms of spending in most advanced industrial societies, has played a critical role in the making of nations. It draws the boundaries between those considered deserving and undeserving, between the subjectively perceived “us” and “them.” Social policy has been both the “vehicle whereby common ideas can be expressed and the means whereby a society consciously reproduces its own identity” (Miller, 1995: 111; Béland and Lecours, 2008: 8, 12).

Small nations like Quebec are no exceptions to this historic trend. They are likely to deploy social policy for the advancement of political projects. In fact, in multinational countries, both the state and the sub-state governments use social policy to produce and promote competing national visions, and as a result social policy often becomes at once a prime focus and a point of departure<sup>1</sup> (Béland and Lecours, 2008: 8).

This chapter explores how social policy became a battleground over citizenship and national identity in late 20th century America, particularly in the late 1960s. In the highly influential study on welfare capitalism conducted by sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen, the US was classified as a “liberal welfare state,” along with Canada and Australia (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In the liberal welfare states, means-tested assistance, modest universal transfers and modest social-insurance plans usually predominate. Nevertheless, Esping-Andersen’s work on the three different types of welfare regimes has been challenged theoretically, empirically and methodologically<sup>2</sup> (Arts and Gelissen, 2002: 137–58; Bamba, 2006: 73–80; Scruggs and Allan, 2006: 55–72; Van den Berg et al., 2017).

In the case of the US welfare state, one needs to pay closer attention to the following three dimensions. First, the three-regime typology not only ignores differences within each regime, but also fails to address internal struggles forged within each welfare state. One needs to shed light on the competing visions within – in addition to how and why these visions became part of, or failed to be incorporated into – a national social policy.

Second, these internal struggles would not be fully understood without analysing the gendered dimensions of the welfare states. Comparative studies of welfare states, including that of Esping-Andersen, have been criticised for “falsely universalizing (implicitly masculinist) analytic frames” (Orloff, 2009: 317–343). Yet, at the same time, Esping-Andersen’s work on welfare regimes catalysed dialogue between gender scholars and mainstream scholars, leading to a reinterpretation of welfare states as “core institutions of the gender order.” Many scholars have analysed the

history of the welfare state with gender insights. For instance, Mimi Abramovitz — a scholar in the field of social work— explores the relationship between women and the welfare state based on two feminist concepts: the gender division of labour and the work of social reproduction (Abramovitz, 2018).

Third, many scholars have explored racial dimensions of welfare, alongside gender and class. The US federal government's shift from the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare occurred in the 1980s and the 1990s (Nadasen, Mittelstadt and Chappell, 2009: 64). The mass incarceration society was significantly expanded during this period. In fact, as historian Julilly Kohler-Hausmann argues, the welfare state retrenchment and the dramatic expansion of the carceral state were historically intertwined in the following ways (Kohler-Hausmann, 2015: 87–89). Both the War on Welfare and the War on Crime targeted low-income residents of colour, especially African Americans, employing racialised as well as gendered stereotypes. Tales of promiscuous, cheating and lazy “welfare queens” and discourses surrounding what legal scholar Katheryn Russell-Brown calls “criminalblackman” were created to justify the shrinking of the welfare state and the expansion of the carceral state (Roberts, 1999: 111; Russell-Brown, 2008: 2). The interrelated history of the US welfare state and the carceral state would not be fully captured without considering what Neubeck and Cazanave call “welfare racism” in the US history (Quadagno, 1995: 7–9; Neubeck and Cazenave, 2001: vi, vii, 12, 17–18; Tsuchiya, 2014).

### 11.1.2 *The rediscovery of “the Other America”*

During the second term of the New Deal, in January 1937, Franklin Roosevelt called attention to “one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.” This “one-third of a nation” was supposed to vanish by the 1950s when the US became an “affluent society.” Yet, according to journalist Michael Harrington, another America existed, where 40 to 50 million people lived in poverty. They were part of what Harrington called “the other America,” tens of millions of Americans who were “maimed in body and spirit, existing at levels beneath those necessary for human decency” (Harrington, 2012). Harrington’s book, which was referred by *Time* magazine as one of the ten most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century, uncovered the paradox of “poverty amidst plenty.” According to Harrington, they were, in a sense, a nation within a nation as there was “a language of the poor, a psychology of the poor, a worldview of the poor.” Harrington emphasised that one of the cruelest ironies of social life in advanced countries was that “the disposed at the bottom of society [were] unable to speak for themselves...they [had] no face; they [had] no voice” (Harrington, 2012: 6, 17). The women on welfare, however, got united, became visible and claimed their rights through a group called the National Welfare Rights Organization – otherwise referred to as the NWRO – in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With the assistance of civil rights activist, George A. Wiley, they

struggled for welfare rights, fundamentally challenging the notion of charity and “the undeserving poor.”

This chapter considers how the NWRO, which originated from the War on Poverty and the Black Freedom Struggle, extended the Civil Rights Movement to encompass the struggle for welfare rights (Bailis, 1972; Kotz and Kotz, 1977; Piven and Cloward, 1979: 265–266; West, 1981: xii–xv; Davis, 1996: 144–165; White, 1999; Nadasen, 2005: xiv, xvii; Kornbluh, 2007; Valk, 2008; Tsuchiya, 2011: 151–170; Triage, 2013). First, I will examine the nature of particular welfare rights that became the focus of the NWRO through an analysis of the daily life activities. These included the right to buy winter clothes, to attend school in cold weather, to the coverage of heating costs in the middle of winter and to resist eviction in the case of not being able to pay rent. I will also show that the ultimate goal of NWRO activists was guaranteed income. Guaranteed income was deemed indispensable so that all people – not just welfare recipients – could enjoy dignity, justice and democracy. By so doing, small peoples like NWRO activists asserted their rights and rewrote the meaning of welfare.

## 11.2 Struggles over clothing, food and housing

The shift from the Civil Rights Movement to the welfare rights movement cannot be described without mentioning George Wiley, who was the driving force behind the NWRO. After teaching at Syracuse University, Wiley, who worked for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a civil rights organisation, met Columbia University sociologist Richard A. Cloward at a meeting of people involved in the War on Poverty. Cloward, along with political scientist Frances Fox Piven, published a paper entitled “A Strategy to End Poverty” in May 1966 (Cloward and Piven, 1966: 510–517). Cloward and Piven argued that, if the poor were organised and became eligible to receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), municipalities and states would face a financial crisis – consequently pressuring the federal government for help and thereby working to realise guaranteed income. This idea captivated Wiley, who was seeking his next goal after losing the election for CORE chair.

Wiley believed the Civil Rights Movement to be losing focus. He stated that the “potential power” of the activists behind the Black Freedom Struggle had not declined, but the “power to develop effective strategies toward a common goal” had “seriously diminished.” Wiley believed that the first challenges the Civil Rights Movement had to address were poverty, inequality and welfare.

I felt, in 1966...that the basic issues confronting black people were going to be economic issues, and the failure of the United States to deliver to blacks the forty acres and the mule, the piece of the economic pie which would grant us a measure of dignity and independence.

*(Kotz and Kotz, 1977: 192)*

The Civil Rights Movement neglected to support poor Black people, especially AFDC recipients, so the avoidance of welfare was a core issue to be examined. Piven stated, “Nobody knew anything about welfare, and nobody wanted to know anything about it.” However, he also said, “George took our theory and immediately saw the possibilities... ‘The time is ripe,’ he said, for issues that affect people at the bottom, especially in northern cities.”

Wiley set a goal of liberating and advocating for the poor, especially AFDC recipients. Wiley stressed the significance of uniting “the efforts of people of all races and ethnic backgrounds into cooperative action against poverty and injustice.” Wiley, a male middle class activist, was the driving force behind this cause, and he was supported by a staff of white middle class civil rights activists who were losing their status amidst calls for “Black Power.” Under these circumstances, the NWRO was formed.

Of course, Wiley and his staff did not start the welfare movement singly. The movement began officially at the end of June 1966, with a protest march from Cleveland to Columbus, Ohio. Yet throughout the US, AFDC beneficiary mothers had already begun individual struggles for increased aid, improved nursery facilities and jobs that could support their families. The “novelty” of the June 1966 protest march lay in the fact that it generated a widespread struggle. A collaboration among the movements of poor Black women, who had been gaining visibility and power by participating in the War on Poverty, was established. This led to a nationwide movement.

For NWRO mothers, “citizenship” did not just mean that their children would attend a racially integrated school. It was also about eating before going to school, wearing a coat on cold days, wearing uniforms like other children and being provided with basic learning tools for daily learning. Here, I would like to focus on clothing, food and housing to discuss the details of their activities.

NWRO mothers considered clothing essential for children to survive to feel positive about learning at school.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, invoking the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which had been passed to advocate support for children in poor families, they fought for a clothing allowance.<sup>4</sup> The reasoning behind this allowance was that children do not attend schools with solely teachers and textbooks. School is a dynamic social and learning environment in which these children interact regularly with classmates.

Wiley stated, “Without adequate shoes and clothing, many poor kids will not go to school. Other children in ragged clothing will be defeated and depressed by the self-image that is radiated in the faces of their more affluent classmates.”<sup>5</sup> Wardrobe has the capacity to display indicators of both affluence and poverty, serving as a visual signifier of economic hierarchy to which the children respond. Children too poor to have a coat or even a sweater to wear in cold weather were ridiculed by classmates when they appeared in class in a frayed, ill-fitting shirt. Their self-esteem would plummet and eventually they’d turn their backs on school altogether. The situation was more serious for children about to enter junior high

school. How can one attend school when they cannot afford the school-designated white shirt and pants? ("School Clothing Rules Bar Some, Mothers Say," 1968). Some who wrote letters to Wiley said that clothing did not only affect children on the inside. Appearance was tied to lifestyle and it changed how the teacher looked at the child.<sup>6</sup> That, coupled with the gazes of classmates, emotionally affected poor children.

However, Secretary of Education Terrel Howard Bell argued that the first clause of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was for education, not for welfare. According to Bell, paying for clothing in the name of education expenses "would jeopardize the basic nature of the Title I program." Guidelines claiming that the Act's budget should only be used to maximise educational effects were published twice, in September and October 1970.<sup>7</sup>

There was a great gap between Bell's perspective on education and the thinking of the NWRO – the latter emphasising that the school environment calls upon children to manage issues of self-esteem, and that children are human beings who must constantly navigate spectrums of pride and shame in the "society" of school, which was not only a place for learning, but also a critical focal point of these children's lives as a whole. What and whose purpose do schools serve exactly? Schools were "our schools" for NWRO activists, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act budget should have been used to support "our children" and support learning.<sup>8</sup>

The NWRO expanded these anxieties, doubts and desires of mothers on welfare into "our story" – a school-wide issue in poor areas. In low-income areas,

There are fewer books than middle class areas across the street. They have fewer books, more broken windows, less heat, more children in each class, fewer full-time certified teachers, more substitutes and temporary teachers than the middle-class children on the other side of town.

While proclaiming the right of children to learn, they complained that public education in the US had undeniable disparities.<sup>9</sup>

During the cold season, from November to February, beneficiary families were forced to face the contradictions of American society. Every year, on Thanksgiving in November and Christmas in December, wealthy people donate used clothing and boxed food to low-income families. For the "donating side," Thanksgiving and Christmas may be special moments of holiday philanthropy; an opportunity to be considerate towards others and to share with disadvantaged people, but this was exactly what the NWRO, which advocated for welfare rights, resisted. During the "Winter Struggle" – which was held in more than 70 cities across the US for two months from January 1968 – Etta Horn from Washington, DC said: "We don't want anything from your closets." Here, the NWRO rejected "charity," burned donated used clothing, and asked for children's clothing and food.<sup>10</sup> According to Wiley, this struggle was meant to communicate "Thanks, but no thanks" for

the gestures of “giving” from the wealthy, who used charity as a performance to relieve their collective conscience and gain peace of mind during Thanksgiving and Christmas.<sup>11</sup>

The winter season was not just a charitable time of Thanksgiving and Christmas that ironically reminded welfare recipients of poverty and inequality. Utility costs were the most concerning issue for AFDC families during the winter. Heating costs were an essential living expense for people in large cities in the Midwest and Northeast, where the temperatures in the cold season could even fall below 14 degrees Fahrenheit, or -10 degrees Celsius. Heating was essential to prevent children from freezing to death, but as a result, money was insufficient for food, rent and clothing.<sup>12</sup> What should people do if they cannot afford to pay minimum essential living expenses from aid? The NWRO’s response was “spend the rent.” The NWRO proposed spending rent on daily necessities during the cold season. Those who could not pay rent could refuse eviction. Most of the recipients lived in public housing, and not paying rent became a message to local and state governments who denied recipients a quality human life (“Welfare Rights Group Approves A Militant Two-Year Program,” 1969). The NWRO appealed for “spend-the-rent” with the intention of championing policy changes which guaranteed a dignified life, while at the same time acknowledging the possibility of going to jail. NWRO Executive Director Johnnie Tillmon said, “We’re here for action, and we’re going to get action. Read ‘action’ as ‘a share of the action,’ a share of the affluence, and if you will, a share of the American Dream” (“Without Mother You’d Have No People,” 1969).

Without confronting the fundamental problems of poverty and disparity rooted in American society, the affluent were freed from guilt by gifting the poor with used clothing and surplus food. What can we do to mobilise these willing and charitable middle and upper-class people into the welfare movement? The NWRO had been working on the Live on a Welfare Budget project since the end of June 1969. This was aimed at helping middle class people understand the daily life of welfare recipients and at generating sympathy and support for the movement. Many politicians and their families participated.<sup>13</sup> In starting the project, Wiley said, “Try living for a week on a welfare food budget and prove for yourselves that welfare is government-sponsored poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.”<sup>14</sup> Here is an actual “menu.”<sup>15</sup> Breakfast was a glass of water, a slice of toast with margarine and a cup of coffee. Lunch was a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a glass of Kool-Aid. There were three types of dinners to choose from: macaroni and cheese and a cup of tea, collard greens and rice, or chili con carne and a cup of tea or a glass of Kool-Aid. What were the results of spending a week on this diet? A survey of 700 university students who participated in the project in the first week of February 1969 showed that some were tempted to steal food; most of them cheated, and some said they did not feel motivated to study because they were hungry.<sup>16</sup>

According to the NWRO, the purpose of this project was not to prove whether one could survive on a welfare food budget or demonstrate that nutritional adequacy

was possible with this sum of money. This project was not an experiment in social science either. Some of its purposes were to sensitise middle class people to some of the realities of the public welfare system, using “Live on a Welfare Budget” week as a way of building bonds between middle class people and local WROs, thus promoting the kinds of support the WROs needed.<sup>17</sup> The reality is that if you are hungry, you would not be able to study, as the above-mentioned survey of university students showed. The NWRO stated,

Our children are not deprived because they are not bright but because they are HUNGRY... They are deprived because they DO NOT HAVE PROPER CLOTHING... They are deprived because we have no money and they DO NOT HAVE SCHOOL SUPPLIES...and children who don't have books, paper, pencils, and other important supplies that the schools don't supply cannot learn.<sup>18</sup>

In response to those criticising the children for their inability to study due to “poor attitude” or “lack of sincerity,” and for their slow progress in learning, the NWRO explained that the reality of children who could not take a positive approach to learning owed this mindset to their poverty – their living environment, the inability to buy uniforms, their hunger and lack of school supplies.

The movement, which was rooted in the daily necessities of clothing, food and shelter, produced visible results and attracted new members.<sup>19</sup> However, even if they gained clothing allowances, utility bills for cold weather and other daily necessities through special and/or emergency grants, state and local governments often fixed or reduced their budgets. The greatest problem was that the recipients would leave the movement when a project ended. The Virginia Welfare Rights Organization wrote,

Getting on welfare, getting furniture, or getting school clothing are short term goals. In many Virginia communities, for example, such campaigns lasted from two to five weeks. Then it was over. People went home; perhaps with a greater sense of dignity and with the glory of a victory but, none the less, they went home.<sup>20</sup>

A greater goal and drastic reforms were needed to connect individual regional struggles and attract people to the movement for a longer period. This goal was guaranteed income. Subsequently, the NWRO confronted the Nixon administration with the aim of realising this objective.

### **11.3 Contestations over guaranteed income**

In the latter half of the 1960s, the idea of guaranteed income being a policy was advocated by a wide range of people, from NWRO activists to neoliberal

economists. A characteristic of the guaranteed income debate was that this goal was pursued by economists, politicians and activists from different political positions. Differences in these positions and divisions led to controversy, and the differences were sometimes swept under the rug, at least in the beginning.

Milton Friedman, an economist renowned as one of the proponents of guaranteed income, introduced the negative income tax concept in his 1962 book *Capitalism and Freedom*. With guaranteed income, the government would provide a fixed amount of money to those whose income was below a minimum standard. Friedman, who advised 1964 Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, advocated negative income tax from a libertarian viewpoint. The greatest attractions of this policy were that employment incentives would not be lost, and because the existing income security system was reorganised or abolished and unified into a negative income tax, the costs were clear and money could be saved by eliminating the “waste of tax funds” of poverty alleviation (Friedman, 1962).

However, contrary to Friedman, economist Robert Theobald argued that guaranteed income was needed to lead a dignified life, not to eliminate the “welfare bureaucracy.” While the existing system aimed for full employment, this was impossible and there were people who were stuck in poverty owing to unemployment and low wages. He argued that \$1,000 a year for an adult and \$600 a year for a child would be necessary to lead a dignified life, and this should be guaranteed as a constitutional right (Theobald, 1963; Theobald, 1966).

Social psychologist Erich Fromm agreed with Theobald. Guaranteed income does more than just guarantee a minimum income to people. He argued that if we do not have to work to survive, we do not have to tolerate demeaning treatment. Workers would have the freedom to quit their job and think of different jobs and different lives, which would force employers to treat them better. Fromm argued that a person could gain freedom and independence only after being freed from the threat of starvation by a guaranteed income (Fromm, 1984: 91–101).

Including these differences in interpretation, guaranteed income attracted the attention of economists and business people. On 9 December 1966, the United States Chamber of Commerce held a symposium on guaranteed income with nearly 500 participants, inviting experts such as Friedman and Theobald (“Guaranteed Income Plan to Be Topic,” 1966). Moreover, on 28 May 1968, more than a thousand economists expressed their support for this concept. They were led by five economists, including Harvard University professor John Kenneth Galbraith, and they stated,

This country has long recognized a public responsibility for the living standards of its citizens, yet our present programs of public assistance and social insurance exclude millions who are in need and meet inadequately the needs of millions more, and the costs are within the Nation’s capacity.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, not everyone agreed with the idea of this type of income. Journalist Henry Hazlitt, who attended the December 1966 symposium with Friedman and Theobald, said it would cost more and discourage workers from working, resulting in lower Gross Domestic Product. He expressed his opposition, stating that the poor might use this income on "things like horse races, prostitutes, whiskey, cigarettes, marijuana, and heroin" (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1967: 13).

Considering the above, why did guaranteed income, which was criticised by opponents for degrading the "American tradition of labor and individual initiative," gain widespread support? "The long, hot summer" had a great impact on the Johnson administration and civil rights activists. Business owners in big cities also thought that measures were urgently needed to prevent further "urban riots." Unlike the approach of increasing wages, guaranteed income did not carry the concern of inflationary risks for such business owners. It was attractive to them in that it would lead to market expansion by increasing individual disposable income and stimulating consumption.

Countermeasures for the uprisings occurring in rapid succession in large cities were an urgent issue for local government officials and state governments (Steensland, 2008: 22). In addition, state and local government officials were concerned about the rapid increase in the number of AFDC recipients. Supported by the NWRO, which advocated welfare rights, the number of AFDC recipients, which was one million households in 1965, reached 2.5 million in 1970 (Nadasen, 2005: 173). If guaranteed income were realised, the federal government would be responsible for assistance that was previously the responsibility of state and local governments. In addition, if a unified standard were set nationwide, it would raise the amount of AFDC benefits in the Southern states, which was extremely low compared to that of the North, and it would keep the poor in the South (they would no longer migrate to the North searching for more generous benefits) ("Mayors to Lobby on Assured Wage: Lindsay & Stokes Slated to Speak at Conventions," 1968). Thus, guaranteed income became a long-awaited policy even for local and state government officials, along with business leaders, as they faced the financial crisis associated with "the long, hot summer" and the rapid expansion in cash welfare.

However, economists, business people, and state and local government officials were not the only people who advocated for guaranteed income. AFDC recipients who claimed welfare as a right and civil rights activists who interrogated the issues of poverty and inequality were the ones who pushed guaranteed income to the policy agenda level. According to the NWRO, guaranteed income emerged as a policy agenda because the recipients who were previously silent began to fight for their rights, and the NWRO made welfare a political issue ("Up the Nixon Plan," 1970). Martin Luther King and other Southern Christian Leadership Conference activists advocated for "an annual income of \$4,000 for all American families" in 1966, and the Black Panther Party also listed guaranteed income or full employment as part of its Ten-Point Program (Nadasen, 2005: 169).

#### 11.4 Divergence over the Family Assistance Plan

The Nixon administration established the Council for Urban Affairs in January 1969, soon after President Nixon took office. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy Planning and Research under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, served as counsellor. Moynihan's particular emphasis on dealing with the "urban crisis" was the restoration of paternity (mainly in Black families) and support of the working poor (mainly in white families).

Moynihan believed that the current "urban crisis" was caused by the collapse of the traditional family unit that underpinned authority. According to the report (commonly known as The Moynihan Report) that he compiled and published in 1965, unemployment in Black families prevented men from fulfilling their roles as patriarchs. The result was a pathological entanglement in which Black families collapsed and single-mother families increased. According to Moynihan, welfare was the cause of this "crisis." Because AFDC was for single-mother families, unemployed fathers would leave their families so that they could receive AFDC. These views strengthened the idea that AFDC was the cause of the dispersal of Black families and "welfare dependency."<sup>22</sup>

Another problem Moynihan considered was the feelings of antipathy and unfairness held by low-income white people towards AFDC. He thought that implementing policies to benefit the working poor would ease the division and conflict between the (mainly Black) AFDC recipients and the (mainly white) working poor. For Nixon, who advocated support of "the forgotten Americans," meeting the expectations of the angry, low-income white demographic was of utmost importance.<sup>23</sup>

However, some in the administration objected to making the working poor recipients. For example, Arthur Burns, who chaired the Council of Economic Advisors under President Eisenhower and who became an advisor to Nixon, warned that payment of wage supplements was "placing...people in a state of dependency." According to Burns, if we wanted to respond to the anger of low-income whites, we should have first imposed labour on AFDC recipients (Burke and Burke, 1974: 72; Steensland, 2008: 113–15). Although there were disagreements over whether the working poor should be included in the scope of assistance, the administration widely recognised that reforms were urgent because the current system was causing the collapse of families and discouraging work.<sup>24</sup>

On 8 August 1969, in a televised speech, President Nixon proposed a plan to pay \$1,600 to families of four. Nixon stated that the proposal, later called the Family Assistance Plan (FAP), would allow a total income of up to \$3,920, including working income, if the family included workers. According to Nixon, AFDC "breaks up homes," "penalizes work," "robs recipients of dignity," and "it grows." AFDC was nothing more than a "colossal failure," Nixon said. The then current welfare system would therefore be discontinued and a new family support system would be created.<sup>25</sup> "The program now called 'Aid to Families

with Dependent Children’ — the program we all normally think of when we think of ‘welfare’ — would be done away with completely.” Nixon stated that in place of this, the incentive to work would be strengthened.<sup>26</sup> The claim that the FAP’s primary purpose was to eliminate AFDC — whose operations encouraged family separation and resulted in “dependency on welfare” — underpinned the FAP debate.

On 3 October, Nixon sent the Family Assistance Act of 1969 to Congress. The bill was deliberated twice in Congress between 1970 and 1972 (Moynihan, 1973; Burke and Burke, 1974: 151–187; Steensland, 2008: 120–181). The first bill would provide a nationwide uniform income of up to \$1,600 for a family of four with children, if their income remained below a certain standard. In addition to single-mother households and households headed by unemployed fathers, low-income households would also be eligible. If a family had a wage earner, they could obtain up to \$3,920 a year, in addition to working income. \$1600 would be borne by the federal government, but state governments would supplement the difference between the current level of benefits and this amount. In addition, fathers who were physically able to work and were unemployed, and mothers who were not working and whose children were already in school would be obliged to participate in employment training. This first bill passed the House of Representatives on 16 April 1970 by a vote of 243 to 155. However, questions were raised by the Finance Committee in the Senate, which led to a rejection by a 10 to 6 vote on 20 November.

The second proposal was deliberated in the House of Representatives from January 1971 as part of Bill HR1. HR1 divided those eligible for assistance into three categories: (1) single-mother families supporting children under the age of three, (2) the aged, blind and disabled, and (3) families with one or more employable members. The plan would provide \$2,400 to a family of four, which at first glance seemed to be higher than the amount suggested in the FAP I proposal. However, combined payments with food stamps were prohibited. Moreover, according to the FAP I proposal, states with FAP amounts that had previously exceeded the AFDC payment level were obliged to make supplementary payments to maintain that level. The FAP II proposal, however, deleted that important item. It was also characterised by stricter employment requirements than those mentioned in the FAP I plan, such as including mothers supporting children aged 3 and over (6 years and over until 1974) as subject to employment. This second bill was passed by the House of Representatives on 22 June 1971 by a vote of 288 to 132, and was deliberated by the Finance Committee in the Senate from July, but it encountered a roadblock there again (*Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1971: 519–526; Burke and Burke, 1974: 180–184; Steensland, 2008: 170–172). This was ultimately settled by removing the FAP from HR1. HR1 without the FAP passed on October 17, 1972. Deliberation on the FAP was thus concluded, and the plan became an illusion.

What problems had the Senate Finance Committee encountered which led to the bill’s failure? First, there was a conflict over whether the working poor should be eligible for benefits. Arch N. Booth, Executive Vice President of the US

Chamber of Commerce, wrote to President Nixon that he should not support three million families with full-time fathers. It was because “in its total effect, this part of the program...would impair the nation’s productivity.”<sup>27</sup> Russell B. Long from Louisiana, who served as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee and was said to be its most conservative member, argued that if the working poor were eligible for assistance, the “welfare crisis” would not end; rather, the “disorder” would continue.

Second, Booth recommended providing AFDC recipients with employment training and daycare centres rather than supporting the working poor, and suggested that provisions be enacted to increase employment incentives. This opinion – that rather than making the working poor welfare recipients, the government should instead make welfare recipients work<sup>28</sup> – was repeatedly expressed during deliberation of the second bill.<sup>29</sup> Long said at a hearing the following year that if guaranteed income was realised, “I can’t get anybody to iron my shirts.” This statement, in its reference to a specific “anybody,” evokes the image of a Black woman who had been working for many years as a nanny or domestic worker at a low wage for a wealthy white family in the South (Nadasen, Mittelstadt and Chappell, 2009: 55). These words directly expressed the fear that once the FAP were passed, it would be difficult to exploit based on the triple discrimination of race, class and gender.

The Southern states, which were based on agriculture and reliant upon low wage labour, were wary of the expansion of welfare by the federal government. The average income of farm workers in the South was only \$1,034 in 1969. A significant impact on the Southern racial hierarchy was inevitable, given that the FAP would provide at least \$1,600 to a family of four, including low-income African-American families (Moynihan, 1973: 388).

Following criticism of the FAP, the Nixon Administration turned to excuses. In response to voices saying that helping millions of people would not solve the welfare problem, they pointed out that families were collapsing under AFDC, and that it was possible to prevent welfare from promoting the separation of families by making the working poor recipients. Moreover, in reply to those objecting to the concept of guaranteed income, the Administration emphasised that the FAP was absolutely not “guaranteed income,” but was workfare (a coined word that combines “work” and “welfare”), and that its greatest characteristic was that it obliged welfare recipients physically capable of working to work or participate in employment training.<sup>30</sup>

### **11.5 From “Up the Nixon Plan!” to “Down with FAP!”: The NWRO and the Family Assistance Plan**

Initially, the NWRO considered the FAP under the Nixon administration a stepping stone to the realisation of a guaranteed income, and sought to revise the bill and increase the benefit amount under the slogan “Up the Nixon Plan!”<sup>31</sup> They started the guaranteed income campaign in June 1969. Using data from the Bureau of

Labor Statistics in the Department of Labor, they claimed that a family of four needed at least \$5,500 to stay healthy, raise children and participate in community activities and presented an alternative proposal of up to \$10,000 in benefits along with income from labour (Nadasen, 2005: 167, 179–180).

According to the NWRO, these were the problems with the Nixon project. First, the FAP food programme should be acceptable, according to the Department of Agriculture, "only in short-term, emergency, and very special circumstances." (On the other hand, the NWRO alternative was by no means extravagant and was based on Department of Labor statistics). Second, eight states paid recipients less than \$1,600. These were Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. These eight states contained only 15% of all AFDC recipients. In other states, special benefits would be lost, and even if prices and living expenses rose (even if the state provided supplementary benefits at the current level), there would be no possibility of the benefit level being raised any further. Third, compulsory participation in employment training was being touted without guaranteeing sufficient income<sup>32</sup>. Above all, what could not be overlooked was that the FAP debate occurred in the absence of the poor. The NWRO criticised the Nixon Administration, stating that poor people had again been ignored in the months of "research" and inside debate. Tillmon and Wiley wondered why all the experts had been consulted but welfare recipients and poor people whose lives were most directly affected had "again been left out." For whom exactly was welfare reform?<sup>33</sup> Tillmon and Wiley warned the Administration, saying, "[w]ithout serious and substantial commitment to adequate income, dignity, justice, and democracy, the war at home can only escalate."<sup>34</sup>

While lobbying lawmakers, the NWRO entered the office of the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare on 13 May 1970 and conducted a sit-in for seven-and-a-half hours. However, as discussions continued without the recipients, the NWRO adopted a resolution against the FAP at its annual convention in July 1970. Subsequently, "Zap FAP!" became the new slogan.<sup>35</sup> They thought that the Nixon plan really meant to destroy AFDC under the pretext of supporting the poor. They stated, "We must expose Nixon's welfare lie."<sup>36</sup>

The NWRO did not just want to destroy the FAP bill. The acronym GAI now meant "guaranteed adequate income" instead of "guaranteed annual income," and GAI would "provide an adequate income for all Americans, to assure to every person a decent standard of living with dignity, justice, and democracy." According to the NWRO, "It is the intent of this Act to insure that every American will have at least the minimum income required to freely express the fundamental rights and liberties expressed in the Constitution."<sup>37</sup>

To show that the FAP, said to be a "revolutionary and progressive welfare reform," was fraudulent, the NWRO held an informal inquiry (a "people's inquiry") in the Senate building with the help of Eugene McCarthy ("Hearings Turn the Tide," 1970–1971). On behalf of the 300 members who attended the hearing, Beulah Sanders, Vice-Chair of the NWRO, delivered the following speech. "You

can't force me to work! ...I heard that Senator Long said as long as he can't get his laundry done, he's going to put welfare recipients to work... Those days are gone forever!" (Burke and Burke, 1974: 162). Here, Sanders questioned the unequal relationship in which the poverty of Black women was exploited as a natural fact of daily life, reminiscent of the historical fact that low-income Black women supported wealthy white families as domestic workers.

In the second FAP bill, the manoeuvring of the FAP to abolish AFDC in the guise of guaranteed income became obvious to NWRO activists. The NWRO severely criticised the second bill, stating that it contained "devastatingly regressive amendments."<sup>38</sup> According to the second bill, states would no longer have to provide supplementary benefits, so there would be a substantial reduction in benefits in many states. As far as Wiley was concerned, the FAP would lock people into the \$1,600 level by relieving the states' fiscal pressure and thereby reducing momentum for welfare reform.<sup>39</sup> It was possible that special grants won would be completely lost. The measure would eliminate all additional benefits, such as food stamps and Medicare programmes, over the \$2,400 basic grant for a family of four, and it had no cost-of-living increase provision. They could never accept such "regressive" amendments.<sup>40</sup>

The NWRO positioned itself as a legitimate narrator on behalf of the poor and launched a campaign to abolish the FAP. Some of the liberals who supported the FAP bill questioned the NWRO's militant stance of trying to destroy it under the slogan "Zap FAP!" The FAP's current level of benefits was a problem, but at least it guaranteed a minimum income, it would benefit the Southern states, and some saw it as having room for improvement in the future (Kotz and Kotz, 1977: 269–270). However, in the eyes of Wiley and others, given that Nixon had appealed for the abolition of AFDC and openly attacked the welfare recipients, there was no room for improvement, and on the contrary, the FAP strengthened workfare and therefore seemed to perpetuate poverty. The NWRO opposed the FAP because it reduced daily food benefits under the pretext of guaranteed income, and instead strengthened workfare and deprived recipients of their rights. Guaranteed income was the ultimate goal of the NWRO, which advocated welfare rights, but it was used to exploit recipients in a racial and gendered manner. Welfare was about to be dismantled in the name of welfare reform. Sensing this change, they expressed opposition because they saw that the FAP would not lead to recipient support.

Additionally, the NWRO movement was not the only obstacle to the realisation of the FAP. The quieting of the uprising in the ghetto called "the long, hot summer" since 1969 had weakened the sense of urgency of local governments and businesspeople. In addition, with the House of Representatives approving a budget of \$53 billion for revenue distribution from the federal government to state governments in April 1972, the momentum for state and local governments to implement guaranteed income diminished. Furthermore, because of the reduction and tightening of AFDC expenses by state governments from around mid-1971, the growth in the number of recipients slowed, and there was a growing belief that

strengthening AFDC employment requirements would be sufficient, rather than taking the drastic measure of abolishing the programme. These changes in urban and welfare situations from the end of the 1960s to the beginning of the 1970s also affected the fate of the FAP.

It should be noted that there were contradictions and cracks in the debate over guaranteed income from the beginning. Regarding the FAP, the intentions of liberals, who wanted to realise guaranteed income as a right, and those of conservatives, who wanted to eliminate welfare dependence and streamline it into cash benefits to remove the wastage of tax funds, hid in the background. It was a programme of equivocal nature. The dispute between the two was barely resolved, and the difference was (at least initially) obscured. The FAP was a turning point from Great Society liberalism to the War on Welfare. It was a change in course, one geared towards the reversal and dismantling of the welfare state. The NWRO was sensitive to changes in trends, so they headed for the “Zap FAP” movement.

## **11.6 Conclusion**

Social welfare policy became a contested terrain in the US during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Welfare recipients, most of them women of colour, fought for their right to core livelihood needs such as clothes, food and housing – and in the process, they invented the concept of welfare rights. One of their ultimate goals came by winning guaranteed adequate income as a basic constitutional right. The idea of guaranteed income, however, was advocated not only by NWRO activists but also by neoliberal economists and politicians who sought to abolish AFDC and eliminate the “welfare bureaucracy.” Controversy over the FAP demonstrated how social welfare became a battleground over citizenship and national identity.

“The other America” was far from silent. Welfare activists raised their voices and pursued economic justice with a passion, challenging the policymakers who had relegated them to the margins. Their movement developed out of the War on Poverty and the Black Freedom Struggle, and significantly expanded the scope of the women’s liberation movement. Their radical vision should be taken into account in the history of the US “liberal welfare state.” An intersectional analytical framework is necessary to understand the individual stories and the larger history of the welfare rights movement in late 20th century America.

For the past few decades, the idea of basic income, a regular cash income paid to all, on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement became the object of great interest in many countries. According to scholars Philippe Van Parijs and Vannick Vanderborght, this shift was due to the conjunction of “growing inequality, a new wave of automation, and a more acute awareness of ecological limits.” Recently, both small nations and big powers are expanding programmes to give their citizens financial assistance to cope with the economic turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Maizland, 2020). As universal basic income was increasingly discussed as a measure to mitigate economic impact, the NWRO’s

visions, as well as the forgotten history of their fight for guaranteed adequate income, became all the more significant.

## Notes

- 1 For example, Québécois nationalism utilised polices like subsidized \$7-a-day daycare and public drug insurance programmes to foster Québécois identity. (Béland and Lecours, 8).
- 2 Many scholars, for instance, have criticised his three-regime typology on the grounds of oversimplification, pointing out that significant differences exist within each regime. Scholars Wil Arts and John Gelissen conclude that real welfare states are hardly ever pure types and usually present as hybrid cases.
- 3 “The Title I Situation, 1971,” June 2, 1971, File 6, Box 33, George A. Wiley Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (hereafter cited as Wiley Papers).
- 4 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Public Law 89-10, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 79 (1965): 27–58.
- 5 Memo, George A. Wiley to Friend, September 21, 1970, File 6, Box 33, Wiley Papers.
- 6 Memo, September 21, 1970, File 6, Box 33, Wiley Papers.
- 7 Memo, T.H. Bell to chief state school officers, September 15, 1970, File 6, Box 33, Wiley Papers.
- 8 “The Title I Situation, 1971,” June 2, 1971, File 6, Box 33, Wiley Papers.
- 9 “The Title I Situation, 1971.”
- 10 “NWRO Winter Action Campaign Ideas,” n.d., File “Executive Committee Jan. 24-27, 1969,” Box 2024, Records of the National Welfare Rights Organization, Manuscript Department, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NWRO Papers).
- 11 *NOW! News*, November 12, 1968, File 8, Box 36, Wiley Papers.
- 12 “How to Organize A Utility Campaign,” n.d., File “Utility Rights,” Box 2043, NWRO Papers.
- 13 Memo, George A. Wiley to Friend, September 16, 1969, File 9, Box 24, Wiley Papers.
- 14 *NOW! News*, June 24, 1969, File 9, Box 24, Wiley Papers.
- 15 “How to Do A “Test the Nixon Welfare Budget” Week,” n.d., File 9, Box 24, Wiley Papers.
- 16 “Students–welfare rights,” n.d., File 9, Box 24, Wiley Papers.
- 17 “How to Do the NWRO “Live on A Welfare Budget” Week,” File 9, Box 24, Wiley Papers.
- 18 NWRO, “Making Title I Work for Your Children,” n.d., File 6, Box 33, Wiley Papers.
- 19 “NOW!: Organize Individual Problems into An Action Campaign,” File “NWRO 70,” Box 2193, NWRO Papers.
- 20 Virginia Welfare Rights Organization, “A Strategy for Guaranteed Adequate Income,” February 4, 1971, Records of the National Welfare Rights Organization [the collection is unprocessed, November 1, 2004], Manuscript Department, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as NWRO Papers Unprocessed).
- 21 The statement was sponsored by five giants of the profession: Paul A. Samuelson of M.I.T., John Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard, James Tobin of Yale and Harold Watts and Robert Lampman of the University of Wisconsin. “A Guaranteed Income: Idea Gains Ground Among Leaders, But to Many People It’s a ‘Handout’, ” 1968; “Economists Support Income Guarantees”, 1968.
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# 12

## PEOPLE OR NATION?

### East European Jews' struggle over their categorisation before the Holocaust

*Taro Tsurumi*

#### 12.1 Introduction

With reference to Israeli sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt, Laniel (2017) argues that small nations have represented multiple modernities, and Israel, a result of the Zionist movement, is one such example. Israeli Jewish society today constitutes a mixture of Western modernity and religious traditions which are representative of a small nation. However, as Laniel implies, again with reference to Eisenstadt, early Zionist ideologists strove for a standardised, modern conception of a nation. Why did they do so?

The Jewish population, with more than five million people, constituted approximately 4 per cent of the Russian Empire's entire population. At that time, the Empire was the largest Jewish population centre in the world, followed by the Habsburg Empire's two and a half million Jews. The largest group in the Russian Empire was ethnic Russians (in Imperial terms, "Great Russians"), who constituted around 44 per cent of it, followed by Ukrainians (officially called "Little Russians") (18 per cent), Poles (6 per cent), Belarusians (5 per cent; also counted officially as Russians) and Jews (4 per cent). As an ethnic group, Jews were by no means a tiny minority, especially in urban areas in the European part of the Empire. In several Belarusian cities such as Minsk and Grodno, the Jewish population constituted more than half of the city population. Many Jews felt at home in the Empire, and Jewish national or collective movements such as the Bund (a Jewish socialist movement) and Jewish Liberalism and Autonomism emphasised that Jews should be liberated in Eastern Europe rather than migrate or create a Jewish national home elsewhere.

However, with the advent of modernisation and reformation of East European political and socio-economic environments, Jews who came out of traditional,

religious communities had to establish their group identity and show others what Jews were – a religious group, nation, caste or something else. Jews were not forced into any category (aside from estate) until the establishment of the Soviet Union. Unlike the Habsburg Empire, the Russian Empire did not have a unified category for governing ethnic groups into states. In the middle of the 19th century, the Habsburg Empire, the cradle of ethnic nationalism, reduced the languages for bureaucracy to nine, which directed the subjects' focus to the category of nation as a bureaucratic unit (Stergar and Scheer 2018). The Soviet Union also used the concept of the nation or nationality as a basic unit of governance. Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Tatars and Jews among others were categorised as a national group, and an education system for each group was established. However, the Tsarist government did not believe that the ethno-national category was significant. For example, while at some point it differentiated Belarusians and Poles, at another point it made a distinction between Orthodox Belarusians and Catholic Belarussians and equated the latter with Poles, who were mostly Catholic, and thus suspicious for the government (Weeks 2003). Along with Central Asian peoples, the Jews were categorised as *inorodtsy* (people of a different clan), which connotes inferior, primitive people. While religious distinctions continued to make sense in daily life, with the emergence of nationalist movements in Eastern Europe, the secular ethno-national concept began to be highlighted. In this context, the East European Jews began to discuss which category Jews fit into and to what extent they should discuss Jewish collectivity in general terms.

After the persecution of the Eastern European Jewish population in the Holocaust, Israeli and American Jews became the two representative Jewish populations in the world. Israeli Jews, including Zionists overseas, define themselves as a nation, or, in this volume, as a small nation, whereas American Jews tend to associate their collectivity with the concept of peoplehood, constituting a good size of a minority group in the United States. Each conception had its roots in Eastern Europe before the Holocaust, especially during the imperial collapse. With the focus on the Zionist movement, which has emphasised the concept of nation, this chapter traces the conceptual history and determines what the concept of nation implies in the context of Jewish history.

## 12.2 Variation in Jewish collective movements

By the early 20th century, all major actors, who were mostly secular, attempted to redefine Jewish collective existence in new situations. The earliest were liberals, although they did not define themselves as such in its early period. In the mid-19th century, the Jewish Enlightenment movement (*Haskalah*) emerged in the Russian Empire and was mostly affected by its German counterparts. However, Russian Jewish Enlighteners were more collectivist than their German counterparts, who accelerated Jewish assimilation into German society. Together with the Tsarist government policy of modernising the Jewish population, they tried to reform the

Jewish community. They attempted to make Russia's Jews good Jewish citizens of the Empire (Nathans 2002; Bartal 2005). The pogroms that occurred in Southern Ukraine in 1881–1884 shocked them, and some of the Russian Jews established a Zionist group called the *Hibat Zion*. However, many continued the policy of being good Jewish citizens of the Empire. During the 1905 Revolution, which established a constitutional autocracy based on the Duma (parliament), this trend crystallised as liberals became involved in the Russian Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadet), the largest liberal party in Russia. While they put forward their culture in public and engaged in activities to improve their legal status in Russia, they tried to not overemphasise it and had a strong sense of being Russian citizens, and believed that a good Jew would be a good Russian (Horowitz 2009; 2017; Tsurumi 2022).

Perhaps even more prominent actors would be the Bundists. The General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland and Russia, known as the Bund, was founded in Vilnius in 1897. It strove to solve two problems faced by Jewish workers: class oppression and ethnic discrimination. As the socio-economic structure surrounding Jews changed due to the industrialisation of the Russian economy, many traditional Jews lost their jobs as traders and handicraftsmen and became proletariats. This was the background from which many Jewish socialists, some of whom like Leon Trotsky had little Jewish identity, emerged during the Empire. The members of the Bund – the Bundists – focused on the fact that Jewish workers were not only discriminated against but also did not necessarily understand Russian or Polish socialist discussions. They promoted Yiddish publications for Jewish workers in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, after post-war independence and established a Yiddish education system (Tobias 1972; Frankel 1981: 171–257; Zimmerman 2004).

Although limited to intellectual circles, Autonomists were an important group in this context. Just like the Bundists, they believed that Eastern Europe should be the homeland of its Jews, and they deserved cultural autonomy within the framework of the existing Empire. Although they regarded Yiddish as the central language for East European Jews, they were not interested in socialism but were rather liberal in their orientation, promoted cultural works such as historiography and ethnography on Jews on East European lands, and created a new secular Jewish culture (Veidlinger 2009; Rabinovitch 2014).

While these groups did not regard land as essential for their projects, the following two groups believed that the survival of Jewish people rested on their own territorial land. As mentioned above, the Zionist movement began in 1881 to encourage Jewish settlements in Palestine in order to create a Jewish homeland, if not a Jewish state. Although, Zionists in the Russian Empire did not believe that the majority of Jews had immigrated to Palestine and thus attempted to improve Jewish status in the Empire, their emphasis on Jewish immigration as a solution for Jewish suffering distinguished themselves from the aforementioned movements that opposed it. They chose Palestine or *Eretz yisrael* (Land of Israel) as the destination for Jewish settlement, as it is supposed to be the birthplace of the Jews,

**TABLE 12.1** Secular Jewish movements of early 20th-century Eastern Europe

	<i>Non-Territorial</i>	<i>Territorial</i>
Collectivist	Bundists, Autonomists	Zionists
Individualist	Liberals	Territorialists

and traditionally Jews yearned for their return to the land, although in traditional Judaism they could only return there once the Messiah appeared.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, another group that preferred a territorial solution to the question on Jewish settlement are Territorialists. The Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO) was established in 1905, when there was a schism among Zionists over the destination for Jewish settlement. When Theodor Herzl, the German-speaking head of the World Zionist Organization, proposed the establishment of a Jewish homeland in East Africa, offered by the British, a majority of Zionists from the Russian Empire opposed it. Herzl's supporters established the ITO to realise his plans. Territorialists believed that Jews suffering from economic distress should be supported immediately and that the East African plan appeared realistic, while Palestine was under the Ottoman rule, which was suspicious of the Zionist project. In this sense, Territorialists concentrated on individual needs, such as economic issues, rather than on collective issues, such as Jewish culture (Alroey 2011).

Table 12.1 classifies secular Jewish (more or less nationalist) movements of early 20th-century Eastern Europe. What led to such difference among these trends? The following sections review the Zionists' reasoning for highlighting the concept of the nation and compare it with other Jewish movements.

### 12.3 Zionists' "nation"

For Zionists, Jews had to be defined as a nation just like Germans and Poles, not necessarily because they emulated them as a model but more essentially because that definition had the following four merits for Jews living in the Empire.

#### 12.3.1 *Improvement in the Jewish Status*

This first point is evident from the period of the *Hibat Zion*. As the major events that incited Zionism were anti-Jewish riots and legislation in the 1880s, it may have appeared to represent an evacuation from the Empire. However, in foreseeing the continuance of the Jewish presence in the Empire, the Zionists of the *Hibat Zion* believed that the establishment of the Jewish stronghold in Palestine would lead to the reintegration of Jews in the Empire *qua* a nation, not just as individual Jews, or a special group like *inorodtsy*. At this point, they did not expect the Empire to dissolve. Considering the reason why only Jews were persecuted, Leo Pinsker – a prominent leader of *Hibat Zion* – writes in his monumental pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation* (1882)

that the Jew was “regarded as neither a friend nor a foe, but an alien [*Unbekannte*], the only known thing about whom is that he has no home.” Consequently, “the nations never have to deal with a Jewish nation [*jüdischen Nation*], but always merely with *Jews* [*Juden*]” (Pinsker 1882: 2, 8; emphasis in original). Pinsker posited that Jews were discriminated against because they were considered inferior; moreover, they were considered *themselves* inferior. He asserts that if Jews were recognised as a nation equal in value to other nations, and not as an inferior group called “Jews,” their position in the Empire would have improved.<sup>2</sup>

Russian Zionists broadly shared this view. Their presumption of a multinational Russia is evident in the Helsingfors Program, which Russian Zionists adopted in 1906 as their basic policy, advocating for the democratisation of Russia with national rights, including autonomy for each nationality and the recognition of Jewish nationality. Julis Brutzkus, a main contributor to Russian Zionist periodicals, wrote in 1904, “The establishment of the center [of the Jewish nation] (...) is the shortest way to the recognition of the Jewish nationality by the entire world” (Brutzkus 1904:211). Russian Zionists foresaw that without such a recognition the pejorative attitudes towards Jews among the Russian people would continue.

With regard to Jewish self-esteem, Idelson, the editor of the Russian Zionist official weekly *Rassvet*, noted in 1911:

Rather than restrictive laws and orders [on Jews] but the accumulation of tiny cavils, various persecutions, and the desire to give pain, to disgrace, and to make us aware that we are unequal to others create the looming desperate situation in which we are put. This probably creates moral suffering rather than actual harm.

(Davidson 1911: 4)

In the Zionist mind, self-esteem was important for the sake of self-satisfaction and self-defence. Pasmanik, *Rassvet*'s second most prominent contributor after Idelson, argued that Jews were not servants of the ruling nation, nor did they creep on minorities to form a coalition, instead they concentrated their energy for fighting suffering and attaining the national ideal. Pasmanik believed that “the more we become strong, the more we will be taken into consideration” by any type of anti-Semite, including racists (Pasmanik 1912: 13).

Thus, the focal point was not Palestine. While noting that even if the “attempt to achieve Jewish autonomy in Palestine” failed, Idelson stated the following in his article “Palestine and Equal Right”:

The claim for Palestine is the highest manifestation of the inner consciousness of our equivalency, and clearly, it is the proclamation of ourselves as a nation [*narod*], which has the right to a fragment of land on the earthy sphere, as Poles, a huge number of whom are living outside Poland and are not denied the full rights in the places of “dispersion.”

(Davidson 1914: 33)

The point here is the recognition of Jews. In 1915, Pasmanik notes that the fundamental cause of contemporary antisemitism was Jewish rightlessness, or “not enmity against the enemy but mockery of the defenseless” (Pasmanik 1915: 7).

### 12.3.2 *Demonstration of the unity of Jews as a political entity*

This emerged in the milieu established during the 1905 Revolution when politics based on national lines became more prevalent. The position as a nation – a collective political entity – became crucial to gaining a seat in the Empire’s sociopolitical arena. At the time of the 1905 Revolution, Zionists expected the Empire to grant more rights to its nationalities, apart from establishing a constitutional democracy.

One of the most important issues for Zionists was Jewish assimilation, or more specifically, the *fear* of Jewish assimilation,<sup>3</sup> which clouded the existence of independent Jewish interests. Many Russian officials and intellectuals did not believe “harmful” Jewish traits to be genetically inherited, but changeable through “enlightening” or Russification. Thus, Russians theoretically accepted and encouraged Jewish assimilation (Weinerman 1994). Unlike German nationalism, Russian nationalism is often said to be imperialistic or inclusive (Rowley 2000; Sergeev 2004). This is also evident from Petr Struve’s reply to Jabotinsky’s criticism, which we will review later. Under such conditions, where the identity of the Jewry was disparaged in the intergroup sphere of the Empire, the implication in the eyes of the Zionists was that Jews as collectives were not considered relevant.

In the first issue of the Russian Zionist weekly *Evreiskaia Zhizn’*, Brutzkus contributed “The Jewish Question in the Russian Publications.” He indicated that even the most progressive Russian liberal intelligentsia, while approving of the struggle for the rights of other nations such as the Czechs and the Poles, proposed Russification of Jews. According to him, they considered the Jews and their culture as deficient; he also asserted that “if we do not raise our own nation to the level equal to other nations in value, we will be left behind and become extinct” and that “only the struggle for our national interests will make others recognize our national equivalence among the nations of the world” (Brutzkus 1904:195–202).

In *Khronika Evreiskoi Zhizni*, a predecessor of *Rassvet*, the article “Zionism and National Autonomous Activity [*samodeiatel’nost’*]” (1905) argued the necessity for *Gegenwartsarbeit*, particularly in the organisational form that attracted the masses. The author indicated the merits of organising and unifying the entire Jewry, in the sense that it would strengthen the solidarity of Jews, along with another point:

Only by standing upon a strong organization and adhering to the consciousness of our own national rights can we seize a worthy place in the political life of states in the Diaspora, appeal to people in a sense that is desirable to us, and represent ourselves as a completely real political power with which governments will have to reckon if they wish to utilize it for their political aims.

(Gepshtein 1905: 9)

Boris Goldberg, an editorial member of *Rassvet*, wrote about the necessity of organising Jews as a unified political entity. He claimed that nowhere has the bureaucracy succeeded in mercilessly putting the principle of “divide and rule” into practice than in the Jewish case. The Russian Jews were separated from municipalities and state-wide autonomy and were deprived of the possibility to form a united institution for their inner lives; furthermore, even in cities (where Jews often constituted the majority), “law does not recognize the Jewish population, as a certain group, united by whatsoever common interests; in the law, a Jewish commune does not exist” (Goldberg 1905: 15; emphasis in original).

The 1905 Revolution, which also accelerated politics based on national units, highlighted the importance of nationhood in Russian politics. In 1906, Pasmanik wrote that in “democratic Russia,” the first thing that Jews should demand is the recognition of their nationality. He argued that if Jews did not unite now, they would be treated similar to Austrian Jews, who were forgotten by the government when creating the electoral law (Pasmanik 1906b). In fact, with regard to the electoral reform in November 1905, the Austrian government declared that it did not consider the Jews as a nation (Rechter 2007: 101).

Russian Zionist leaders such as Idelson, Pasmanik and Vladimir Jabotinsky drafted the aforesaid Helsingfors Program. It advocates in its first article “the democratization of the state institution based on strict parliamentarism, broad political freedom, the autonomy of national regions, and guarantee of the rights of national minorities.” In its fourth article, it claims “the recognition of Jewish nationality as a unified wholeness with the rights of self-government in all affairs of the national mode of life” (*Evreiskii Narod*, 1906, no. 7: 52). The Zionists foresaw Russia’s future institutional reorganisation into a multinational state; in preparation for this, they believed that the recognition of Jewish nationhood would be crucial for the survival of the Jewish population.<sup>4</sup>

However, the Zionists faced a dilemma: the more they participated in local politics, the more Jewish communities diverged. Pasmanik (1907: 4) warned in 1907, this divergence contradicted the identity of the world Jewry. However, Haim Grinberg, a younger Zionist, criticised Pasmanik’s argument, stating that without political activity, it would be impossible to achieve a cultural resurgence among Jews. “We cannot deny that the politics, for instance, of Russian Jews has no *immediate* meaning to [all Jewry], but we need to consider that it *indirectly* has a significant meaning for the world Jewry” because “the reinforcement of a part of some entirety is simultaneously the reinforcement of the entirety” (Grinberg 1907: 7–8). It may be partly because of this dilemma that Zionists’ commitment to Russian politics was partial compared with other Jewish nationalists such as Autonomists.

### 12.3.3 *Guarantee of neutrality within the multi-ethnic environment*

In the eyes of non-Jews, the oneness of Jews in the form of a nation was presumed to be more significant in multi-ethnic environments. This aspect was

not as obvious in nation-states allegedly ruled by an absolute majority nation, such as the French in France and Germans in Germany. As mentioned in the Introduction, Russians (“Great Russians”) constituted only about 44 per cent; in the Pale of Settlement, overlapping present-day Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, more Eastward of which (i.e. the territory of present-day Russia) Jews could hardly reside, and Congress Poland, where a great majority of the Jewish population resided, the percentage of non-Russians – such as Poles and Ukrainians – was even higher.

In *Khronika Evreiskoi Zhizni*, the article “Germans, Poles, and We” appeared in January 1905. The author argued that while Jews in the 19th century played the role of a buffer within multi-ethnic environments like those in Galicia and Poznan, such a political “negativism” was risky in the contemporaneous scene, because it would lead to the distrust of other nations. In Poznan, for example, because of Polish antisemitism, while the Jews allied with the Germans, the former were exploited by the latter to Germanise the Poles. Consequently, Poles began to perceive Jews as their enemies (Zaidenman 1905). The article stresses that to be truly neutral in a multinational environment, the Jews must present themselves as an independent nation that was never a puppet in the hands of other nations. Pasmanik also refers to the history of Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and considers the Jewish support for any dominant nation to be a mistake. The enlightened and liberated Jews “gained certain human rights but had to pay a heavy price for supporting the Germans, which led to enmity with all the other peoples in a condition of conquered and enslaved nations” (Pasmanik 1906a:75).

A similar argument that directly discussed affairs within Russia began to emerge. In 1909, Brutzkus argued that anti-Semitism in Russia began to increase because of Jewish assimilation (Brutzkus 1909a). He asserts that within the Duma, the Jews did not form a united party but dispersed into several parties, mostly to the Kadet (Constitutional Democratic Party). Although Jewish deputies struggled for equal rights, any activity that appeared to conceal their true aim – namely, to raise the status of Jews – evoked the distrust of other members. He maintained, “Only our own *open national politics*, as our *national Jewish literature*, can save us from the exacerbation of antisemitism” (Brutzkus 1909b; emphasis in original). The *Khronika Evreiskoi Zhizni* published reports claiming a similar view in relation to the Jewish experience in Poland with regard to Ukrainian nationalism, which was on the verge of experiencing growth (e.g. Leshchinskii 1912).

Similar reasoning was used to convince Russian nationalists to refrain from the Russification of Jews. In January 1911, Jabotinsky published an article on Jewish political trends in *Russkaia Mysl'*, a leading monthly for Russian liberals. The journal was edited by Petr Struve, Kadet’s right-wing leader. Jabotinsky opposed the assimilation of Jews into the “Russian nation” as proposed by Struve. He argued that in all areas of Russia, except Poland, the Jews lived amidst the Little Russians (Ukrainians), Belarusians, Poles, Lithuanians and Moldovans. The least in number of the neighbouring nationalities were the Great Russians (ethnic Russians); hence,

if Jews were “Russified,” it would mean that they would be assimilated into a minority nation in the region. However, this would result in the following:

In such a mixed environment as every province in the Pale of Settlement, joining a specific culture among the neighboring ones would imply provoking anti-Semitism among other neighbors; it would be still more dangerous to take the role of the perfect carrier of the Great Russian culture almost exclusively; this would be equal to a provocation to all the local populations abandoned at once.

According to Jabotinsky, Ukrainians, Poles and Lithuanians had already severely protested the role of Russification by Jews (Zhabotinskii 1911: 112–113).

As a typical example of Russian liberal stance towards Jews, Struve refused Jabotinsky’s demand to recognise the national rights of Jews and to make Russia a “state of nationalities,” and not a “national state,” on the grounds that, except for the Poles and Finns, there was no nationality that had a culture that was superior to that of the Russians (Struve 1911: 184–187). However, for Jabotinsky, this assimilation pressure was dangerous for the Jews once they accepted it.

Zionists also considered the antisemitic accusations of Jewish conspiracies. As is obvious from the point mentioned in Section 12.3.2, on the one hand, the demonstration of Jews as a nation implied that Jews had collective interests. On the other hand, it can be understood from this section that the declaration of their nationhood connoted that their concern was *limited* to the boundaries of the nation. In 1905, Jabotinsky advocated the necessity of winning Jewish autonomy – the self-governance of the nation internally, and the defence of its interests externally – in the Diaspora, in order to achieve the following: “instead of our present mythical ‘world Kahal [a Jewish communal organization in Russia]’, instead of the present unconscious and chaotic ‘a state within a state,’ an actual, real unified Jewry, a nation among nations (...) will be created” (Zhabotinskii 1905: 18–22). In the article “Russian Antisemitism,” Pasmanik also pointed out that in Russia, the “overestimation” of Jews was the cause of antisemitism as well, which was epitomised by the accusation that “all Jews are revolutionary” (Pasmanik 1915: 8).

Bearing such circumstances in mind, Russian Zionists believed that “*Splendid isolation*” (Pasmanik 1912: 14), or recognition as a single, solid entity independent of any other nation, would be the least risky option in a multi-ethnic environment. In the Zionist mind, by acquiring the intergroup identity of a nation, Jews would be recognised by non-Jews as having their own interests and, simultaneously, *no other* interests.

#### 12.3.4 *Securing a free space for Jews*

The previous subsections focus on the inter-group identity of Jews. By identifying Jews as a nation, were the Russian Zionists attempting to change the Jewish *intra*-group identity? To be sure, they began to change their inner lives to immigrate to

Palestine and build a secular homeland, which traditional Rabbinic Judaism forbade, and revive Hebrew, which very few spoke as a daily language. Nevertheless, in many cases, they avoided defining the intra-group identity or “Jewishness.” In fact, it is difficult to find articles discussing “Jewishness” in a positive way in *Rassvet* (Tsurumi 2010).

Except for the Religious Zionist faction, most Zionists in that period were secularists, particularly against traditional Judaism. Some attempted to create a new Jewish culture to replace the traditional Jewish identity. One of these, Ahad Ha’am, was a famous spiritual (or cultural) Zionist born in Ukraine, who was popular in the 1890s and early 1900s. Other Zionists, however, went so far as to state their antipathy towards defining “Jewishness” in essentialist terms. Among them, Hebrew writers Michah Y. Berdichevsky and Yosef H. Brenner, who demonstrated sympathy for Nietzscheanism, are well known today (e.g. Harshav 1993: 17–23, 33–39). Similarly, the Russian Zionists also maintained this attitude towards “Jewishness.”

The response of Idelson to what is known as the “Brenner Affair” is a clear example of this attitude. The affair began in 1910 and concerned Brenner’s essay, which completely denied the significance of the Jewish religion in contemporaneous Jewish life; it asserted that the new Jew could have a Christian ideal. This criticism was leveled at Ahad Ha’am’s essay, which appeared in the same year and focused on the difference between the spirits of Judaism and Christianity. Ahad Ha’am severely criticised Brenner’s laissez-faire stance towards Jewishness (Zipperstein 1993: 235–244; Shimoni 1995: 300–302). Idelson’s criticism is that, in reply to Brenner’s article, Ahad Ha’am “explicated a new national-religious creed. (...) Even from the viewpoint not of nation [*natsiia*] but of religion, the attempt to establish an obligatory moral-philosophical dogma is inadequate. In the Jewish religion, no dogma exists” (Davidson 1912b: 10). That is, Idelson was against the fixation of any creed; what he discovered in Ahad Ha’am’s case was the consequence of those who “carve a path to cultural nationalism, and search for the essence of the nation in definite ideas of the past” (Davidson 1912b: 12).

Outside the context of this criticism for Ahad Ha’am, Idelson also expressed the liberty of Jewish intragroup identity. This is most strongly epitomised in his article, “Palestine and Equal Right.” We recall his statement: “The claim for Palestine is the highest manifestation of the inner consciousness of our equivalency, and clearly, it is the proclamation of ourselves as a nation.” In the subsequent part of the article, he writes that “we also require [equal rights] to live in the Pale finely, so that ‘I wait for the Messiah every day,’ so as to think of emigration” (Davidson 1914: 33). This implies that the aspiration for Palestine had no relation to how Jews lived or how they identified themselves, whether in the *status quo*, in the traditional ways of Rabbinic Judaism, or in the new world. Pasmanik also refused the fixation to any essence of Jewry. In the brochure *What Is the Jewish National Culture?* (1912),<sup>5</sup> Pasmanik attacked Jewish nationalists such as Bundists and other Diaspora nationalists who promoted Yiddish culture. He wrote “The national culture is not

religion, not language, not spirit, but the whole life of all the people” and “[w]e are a nation not because we *already* possess a national culture but because we *strive for* our independent life” (Pasmanik 1917: 5–6; emphasis in original).

In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Moshe Perlmann defines Idelson’s idea as follows: “The goal should not be the rigid conservation of fixed values, but to secure a framework for the free development of the ever-changing human creativity” (Perlmann 2007: 709). Idelson criticises Ahad Ha’am, who, in his view, first put forward the problem of national self-preservation as a preservation of a “cultural type” (Idelson 1908a:6).

A nation does not desire the preservation of its national culture but its flexible use and change according to its present needs. This is because what the nation creates, and by itself, fits it better, while it cannot be satisfied with what is forced by external powers. (...) What is important is that the nation always has the option of having its own culture.

(Idelson 1908b:5–6)

In the article criticising Ahad Ha’am, Idelson writes, “Jewry [*evreistvo*] is not a religion but the being of the nation [*sushchestvovanie natsii*], and the nation’s further development which has been liberated from dependence on any *definite* belief, dogma, and obligatory religious thoughts” (Davidson 1912a, p. 8; emphasis in original). The Zionists adopted the concept of “nation” in a general sense with a connotation of territoriality and considered Palestine – a territory that could be neutral with regard to the culture of the nation – the foundation of Jewish nationhood.

Generally, the establishment of a new, secular Jewish culture and identity, which are significant for Jews in the modern period, is considered one of Zionism’s most important achievements (Almog 1987: 84–176; Shimoni 1995: 269–332). However, what we can discern as a characteristic of Russian Zionism is its reluctance to define its essence.

#### 12.4 Is “nation” Jewish?

Some scholars have argued that there are affinities between Jews/Judaism and the concept of nation. Steven Grosby (2002) indicates that, in the history of ancient Israel, belief in the existence of a trans-clan/tribal people (Israel) and in the existence of a trans-local territory (Israel) are closely associated with the notion of nation. In nationalism studies, Anthony D. Smith placed Jews as a model that developed from an *ethnie* (an ethnic entity) in the ancient period to a nation in the modern period (Smith 1986, 1995; see also Shimoni 1995: 5–11). For us, who know well that the Zionist project has been realised, perhaps more thoroughly than the Zionists of the early 20th century expected, such an argument might appear convincing.

However, opponents and rivals of Zionism in the early 20th century believed otherwise. Simon Dubnov, a famous Jewish historian and the main ideologist of Autonomism, criticised the Zionists' political conception of the nation<sup>6</sup>. He developed his own theory of nationalism in a series of articles titled "Letters on the Old and New Jewry" in the Russian Jewish monthly *Voskhod*. It was the foundation for his idea on Jews as a "spiritual nation" and his view on cultural autonomy. In the seventh instalment of the "Letters" series, he described Jewish history as follows. First comes "isolation" in the Middle Ages as the "thesis," "assimilation" in the modern West as its "antithesis" and "autonomism" (meaning cultural autonomy) as their "gin thesis" (Dubnov 1901: 5–9).

But is "autonomism" possible? Dubnov was pessimistic about its early feasibility under the circumstances of his time (Ibid., 30). Nevertheless, he offered a long-term perspective from the viewpoint of the power politics of the Russian Empire. Although the slogans "Germany for the Germans" and "France for the French" were advocated by the reactionary camp, in a multi-ethnic state [such as Russia], such a regime could not be maintained without threatening the existence of the state. This is because a policy based on the oppression and forced assimilation of the subjugated peoples by the dominant peoples will have one of two consequences: "constant disturbances and rebellions among the oppressed peoples, constant 'civil wars' that will destroy all the foundations of order and law in the state," or "internal disturbances that will fundamentally dismantle the state and lead to the formation of separate federations of nations based on nationalities." Governments that wish to maintain internal peace and territorial unity must avoid such outcomes. Thus, the multi-ethnic state must grant internal national and spiritual freedom to the historical people who have entered its folds. The direction of history is towards the freedom of individuality of the peoples, and if "the last century [the nineteenth century] was an era in which the principle of individual freedom was established in the state law if not thoroughly, the coming century will see the principle of freedom of national individuality take root in the legal consciousness of society" (Ibid., 37–8). In other words, like the Zionists, Dubnov predicted that the Russian Empire would be organised into national units while maintaining its imperial framework and territory, and he discussed Jewish nationalism under this premise.

According to Russian Jewish historian Benjamin Nathans, Dubnov's most important innovation in Russian-Jewish historiography was "to displace tsarist legislation from the center of the narrative (without removing it entirely, however) and to give pride of place to the history of Jewish communal life" (Nathans 1999: 413). This point is closely related to the notion of the "Jewish people" as distinct from Zionists' view on Jews. Nathans points out that the frustration of emancipation (civil liberation) was the catalyst for Dubnov's re-envisioning of the Jewish past; in looking at the past, his view of the future of Russian Jewry differed fundamentally from that of the Zionists (Ibid., 415).

Autonomism denied Jewish territorial autonomy while holding that cultural autonomy should be granted to all nations. One might understand Dubnov's

perspective as consistent with the multi-ethnic situation in Russia and Eastern Europe, for if territorial autonomy were granted to all ethnic groups, the Empire would be divided into smaller territories. This was convenient for both the status quo of a multi-ethnic state and for Jewish national identity, and his focus on Jewish cultural capital, equal in value to the hegemonic culture, appealed to many Jewish intelligentsia (Silber 2005: 92–99).

However, Dubnov's theory was also derived from Jewish uniqueness. As Nathans pointed out, this was based on his understanding of Jewish history up to his own time. The most important feature of this theory is the formulation of the evolution of nations. According to the "First Letter" (1897) in the earlier series of "Letters on Old and New Jewry," the nation is basically primordial. However, it evolves through the following four stages: (1) racial, (2) political (i.e. territorial), (3) cultural and historical and (4) spiritual, especially religious.<sup>7</sup> In other words, he asserted that a nation that does not have a geopolitical territory or even cultural traits but still maintains unity is the most highly developed nation (Dubnov 1897: 10). He asserts that the Jewish nation stood at the highest stage (i.e., the fourth) and that neither state independence nor common cultural traits were necessary for its survival. He claims that it could sustain its nationhood only with its spirit: "We are tied together more solidly than [through mere] political unity" (ibid., 16–20).<sup>8</sup> In other words, Dubnov was convinced that a form of nationhood – whether to have territory or not – should be related to the particularities of Jewish people.<sup>9</sup> The uniqueness of this formulation is contrasted with the contemporaneous doctrines of German and Polish nationalism, which held that the most genuine and developed nations must be organically united with their own states (cf. Meinecke 1908; Shelton 1995: 267).

In so defining Jews, Dubnov hardly referred to common definitions of the nation of the time, with their connotations of territoriality and statehood, by which many theorists, including liberals and socialists, denied that the Jews were a nation. Rather, he modified the concept of nation so that it could be applied to people without their own territories. In other words, he made this modification in order to make it consistent with Jewish uniqueness. According to him, the essence of Jewish individuality is Judaism and other cultural, historical, and spiritual elements. "Judaism (...) is not only a religious system in a narrow sense, but also a complex of religious, moral, and philosophical systems, on which every Jew, even the free-thinking [non-traditional] Jew, bases his worldview" (Dubnov 1897: 16–20). Hence, Dubnov criticised Zionism as an imitation of the "state nation," namely, "an external assimilation" (Dubnov 1899: 14–15).

The Bundist conception of Jewish people was also embedded in East European Jewish reality, although its concept evolved as the surrounding situation and generations of the Bund changed. Vladimir Medem, one of the central figures of the Bund in its early stage, advocated the notion of "Neutrality," standing for a policy between assimilation and nationalism. It was opposed to the forced assimilation of Jews into the surrounding population, but it did not emphasise the collective

and unassimilable nature of Jewishness either (Tobias 1972: 167), and criticised the Zionist territorial solution as well as the non-territorial but more nationalistic programmes of other Jewish political trends as separatism.

However, as both Russian and Polish socialists tended to assimilate Jews into their nationalities, the Bundists' resistance to assimilation and the notion of Jewish particularity continued. After the end of the First World War, the newly independent Poland became the centre of its activities. While they attempted to maintain the distinctiveness of Jewish people within the framework of the Polish state, their criticism of Zionism continued. According to Beinish Michalewicz, one of the prominent Bundist figures of the 1920s, the Jewish nation was a cultural organism sharing an economic and political superstructure with other nations. The Zionist notion of Jewish autonomy, even if it presupposed autonomy within the framework of the Polish state, was an anachronistic replica of Jewish autonomy in the Middle Ages, isolating Jews from society and reinforcing xenophobic Judeocentrism (Blatman 2003: 59–60).

The Bundists looked for pragmatic ways to fit their policies in local and quotidian contexts. As a result of Jewish and Polish trade union negotiations, Yiddish was recognised as the official language of the Jewish trade unions in Poland. Under the influence of modernisation, the role and status of Jewish women and mothers changed radically in independent Poland. The Bund established its women's organisation and tried to adapt its policy to women's needs, although it turned out that the active involvement of women in the labour movement was not easy, partly due to the social conservatism of Jewish women (Ibid., 62–69).

As discussed elsewhere, Russian Jewish Liberals, while criticised as assimilationists by Zionists, conceived reciprocal relationships between Jews and Russians, defining Jews and Jewish collectivity in relation to Russia and Russians and never decoupling Jews from Russian contexts (Tsurumi 2022). In contrast, the Zionist conception of the nation was inclined to decontextualise Jewish collectivity from any local context and make Jews a sovereign nation whose fate would never be defined by any other nation. This was a significant break away from Jewish tradition in which Jews tried to reconcile their existence and culture with their surrounding population and the state on a daily basis.

## 12.5 Conclusion

The contrast between Zionists' and Dubnov's and others' "nation" illustrates the dilemmas and possibilities that East European Jews faced in the changing political milieu. The Zionists redefined Jews as a nation in a rather general sense and foresaw that the attainment of recognition would improve the status of Jews, in intra-imperial politics. Similar to the Zionists, Dubnov expected that the concept of nation would be key in the new situation, but he, for instance, modified the definition of the nation concept to reconcile it with the Jewish historical reality in Eastern Europe.

By the end of the First World War, the Russian and Habsburg Empires had collapsed. The Soviet Union adopted the territorial concept of nation as its basic political unit. Although Jews were exceptionally counted as nationalities, the government created the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (region) in the Far East as a Jewish territorial base. In the socialist state, there was no space for Jewish Liberals. The Habsburg monarchy was dissolved into several small- and middle-sized nation-states, where Jews were placed as second-class citizens. Although these collapses were also unexpected for Zionists, the Zionist conception of the nation easily fit the new situation, and they began collaborating with the British Empire in post-Ottoman Palestine.<sup>10</sup> Although Bundists and Autonomists were active, especially in independent Poland, antisemitism became stronger in the 1930s, and the Holocaust destroyed the fruit of their activities.

Nonetheless, Zionists have, by no means, monopolised the definition of Jews. In the United States, where the Jewish population is almost equal to that of Israel (around six million), the controversy over the definition of Jews has continued. The term that would be interesting in this context is “peoplehood.” Jewish peoplehood is the abstract-noun variant of the Jewish people, which neither rests on Judaism as a religion nor on territory as *Eretz yisrael*, although it includes religious and secular Jewishness. It develops after the establishment of the State of Israel and does not contradict with Zionism, as its advocate Noam Pianko writes: “Peoplehood offered safe conceptual vocabulary with which to integrate Zionism into American-ness without directly confronting the question of whether Jews constituted a religion or a nation” (Pianko 2015: 1136/4311). However, as Pianko argues, the concept has evolved, and it seems to be reconciling with Jewish reality in local contexts:

...peoplehood reflects two distinctions from its European antecedents. First, peoplehood develops against the backdrop of American nationalism and the unique politics of pluralism that emerged in the United States. Second, peoplehood materializes as a key word just as political Zionism and its statist aspirations gain widespread support. One of the factors differentiating Jewish peoplehood from its functional and linguistic antecedents is that peoplehood must contend with a far more established definition of nationhood that more closely aligns nation and state.

(Pianko 2015: 688/4311)

The Zionists’ dream of transforming Jews from a relatively large ethnic group to a sovereign nation was realised in the State of Israel, although with huge sacrifices of Arabs or Palestinians, and Jews. The non-Zionist practices of being Jewish in a somewhat unique way suffered great setbacks in the interwar period and, due to the Holocaust. However, their endeavour to look for a form of collectivity that would best fit the Jewish reality has continued, especially in the United States. While Israeli Jewish society has become a small nation because its features and paths are different from those of typical modernity, it has not abandoned its aspiration to be

sovereign – not being defined by or in relation to others – from the inception of the Zionist movement. This aspect contrasts with the conceptions of Jewish collectivity of Bundists, Liberals, Autonomists and proponents of Jewish peoplehood, which have mixed not only with Jewish religious tradition but also the surrounding non-Jewish culture, economy and political frameworks.

## Notes

- 1 For the overview of the history of Zionism in the Russian Empire, see Maor (1986).
- 2 For such a mindset of the *Hibat Zion* ideologists, see Tsurumi (2008: 371–373).
- 3 The word “assimilation,” which Russian Zionists used very often with a political connotation, is not self-evident (cf. Stanislawski 2001: 7). When they used this term, they meant the loss of belief in Jewish communal ties.
- 4 Mintz (1996) demonstrates that the Zionist movement in Russia envisaged the multinational order of Russia and strived for the improvement of its Jews as a collective entity; however, he does not focus on the conceptual aspect.
- 5 This booklet was originally published in 1912, as it was referred to in the 1912’s issue of *Rassvet* (no. 22, p. 31), but I have been unable to find an original copy.
- 6 The following part in this section is a translation with some modification of the following: Tsurumi (2012: 138–141).
- 7 Generally, his formulation is explained as three stages, with (3) and (4) combined. Similarly, in the book that compiled the Letters, he appears to have combined them. Nonetheless, his distinction between the two is evident; for (3), he indicates the German and Italian nations prior to achieving independence in the nineteenth century. After a long period of nationhood without territory – i.e., the test of national consciousness – a nation reaches stage (4) (Dubnov 1897: 14–16).
- 8 For a brief introduction of his theory of nationalism and Autonomism, see Pinson (1948), although it does not differentiate stages (3) and (4). For his life and work, see Frankel (1991).
- 9 Nathans (1999: 415) indicates that Dubnov’s engagement with Jewish past in Eastern Europe shaped his views on the Russian-Jewish future in a manner fundamentally different from that of the Zionists.
- 10 For the development of Russian Zionism after the pogroms during the Civil War, see Tsurumi (2021).

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# EPILOGUE

## Size matters: Small nations' existential pursuits of power, happiness and purpose

*Uriel Abulof*

Does an emperor know his empire? In Italo Calvino's (1974: 75) *Invisible Cities*, Kublai Khan listens to the Venetian explorer Marco Polo narrating his empire and comes to realise that he hardly knows it. Polo tells him of

Octavia, the spider-web city... There is a precipice between two steep mountains: the city is over the void, bound to the two crests with ropes and chains and catwalks... Below there is nothing for hundreds and hundreds of feet: a few clouds glide past; farther down you can glimpse the chasm's bed.

Small nations, like Octavia, lead life on the brink, and most people, like Kublai Khan, are oblivious of it. Like Octavia's inhabitants, the members of small nations weave a multi-threaded safety net but through its many holes, behold their collective fall. Should we care? *Does size matter? Should we study the "smallness" of nations?* After all, most nations, Billig (1995: 8) observes, are rather "banal" and tend to "have confidence in their own continuity": habituated, reproduced, beliefs and practices that sustain the self-evident presence of the nation in daily life. Small nations seem like a rare, almost irritable, exception to a ubiquitous rule. Why should we bother?

The obvious answer is that size matters to the members of small nations. Socio-historical, comparative and theoretical analysis of small nations should help them better understand their own predicament, and perhaps suggest partners for this otherwise lonesome journey. Here I want to suggest that the study of small nations far exceeds this obvious merit and submit that it has much to teach us all, since small nations reveal what we often seek to conceal, awakening us all to realities hidden in plain sight. *The predicament of small nations, I argue, unearths the human condition like very few socio-political realities can.* Small nations are thus a prime

subject of inquiry for what I term “Political Existentialism,” fusing the existential (life/death) with the existentialist: mortal, free humans’ search for meaning in, of, by and for, politics. Small nations show that the existential(ist) undercurrents of our humanity are not only personal and universal but also political and national.

Specifically, I contend, “*size matters*” *materially, emotionally and morally. Small nations face the dark triad of death – frailty, fatalism and futility – by pursuing power, happiness and purpose, respectively.* I first outline this Sisyphian model of small nations and then expound on each of the three facets. Studying small nations for over a decade now, I will draw on previous publications (Abulof 2008, 2009, 2014b, 2014c, 2015a, 2019b, 2020a, 2021b), integrating new findings and insights, not least from this volume.

In Plato’s *Apology*, Socrates provocatively likens himself to an incessant gadfly disturbing the horse-like Athens (Schlosser 2014: xiv). Wittingly or not, small nations perform this ungrateful service to humanity. If we are to follow Socrates’ injunction that “the unexamined life is not worth living,” small nations – by offering such self-examination – help us make human life worth living.

### A Sisyphian model of small nations

If small nations can help us understand the human condition, the reverse is surely true too, and few works can introduce the latter as well as Albert Camus’s (1955 [1942]) *The Myth of Sisyphus*, which starts in a most starting way: “There is only one really serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide.” Implicitly, Camus foregrounds “human exceptionalism”: what are the qualities that set our species apart? Mortality awareness is one; only humans know their ultimate fate, how deadly their frailty is; we are all bound to die. Being born unto death (Heidegger 2010 [1927]), we may feel sickness (read despair) even unto death (Kierkegaard 2013 [1843]).

Still, in the face of frailty and fatalism, humans have a choice. We don’t get to birth ourselves, nor live forever, but we can determine our death. Should we? It all depends, Camus argues, on how we handle the Absurd: we inhabit a godless, thus silent, universe, offering no absolute meaning to help justify our lives. Like the mythical Sisyphus we are condemned to apparent futility: rolling a boulder up the hill only to see it rumbling down, chasing it to roll it up again, and again, and again.

While *The Myth of Sisyphus* is all about the human condition, it might just as well be about small nations. After all, *small nations too, more than any other nations, are prone to grasp, thus dread, the three facets of death: frailty, fatalism and futility.* Facing death’s dark triad, what can small nations, indeed any human, do?

Perhaps they can take a cue from the myth of Sisyphus. The latter had a lifetime dance with death, that is, Thanatos, whom Sisyphus, the king of Corinth, twice tricked, to hold on to his corporeal life, and his political power. Can power keep frailty and death at bay? Here, too, *small nations lead a Sisyphian life, exploring the extent and implications of their relative weakness.* In the “Frailty and Power”

TABLE E.1 A 3×3 Sisyphian model of small nations

<i>Source (Death)</i>	<i>Resource/Reaction</i>	<i>Recourse (Pursuits)</i>
<b>Frailty</b>	Fear	Power
<b>Fatalism</b>	Bad Faith	Happiness
<b>Futility</b>	Freedom	Purpose

section, I investigate this interplay, decoding how *the fear of frailty drives small nations to pursue “pathetic power”* – not merely the “power of the powerless” (Havel 1985 [1978]) but powerlessness as power.

*The Myth of Sisyphus* also hints at how one meets the challenge of preordained fate. Sisyphus, the defiant trickster, who repeatedly fooled people and gods, was at last outwitted, or rather overpowered, condemned to a living hell, quite literally so, his fate sealed to the underworld, to that mountain, to that rock. And yet, Camus strikingly concludes his treatise, “One must imagine Sisyphus happy.” Small nations, perhaps more than any other nation, find themselves bound to their lot. Frustrated with their “small” fate, can small nations nonetheless pursue happiness? Discussing the fatalism-happiness duo, I suggest that *fatalism may breed “bad faith” (relinquishing freedom) to turn that “rage against the dying of the light” into apparent happiness.*

Finally, all humans can exercise their freedom to end their “misery.” As Camus knew well, suicide is such a serious philosophical problem, precisely because it wasn’t just philosophical but also heavily personal and, moreover and less obviously, political. It is not only individuals who may end their personal lives; it is groups who may exercise freedom to end their political lives, their polities. Camus’s second *Myth* sentence clarifies the first: “Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.” This is precisely the existentialist task before small nations. *Facing not merely the inevitability of death but the availability of suicide (an “auto-politicide,” if you will), small nations can search for meaning – a purposeful, justifiable existence.*

This, then, is the existential 3X3 matrix that the myth of Sisyphus foregrounds. As Becker (1973, 1975) forcefully argues, we all dread death, and try to flee it. Here I suggest that death dread is made primarily of frailty, fatalism and futility; that we react and find resources in fear, bad faith and freedom; and that we seek recourse by pursuing power, happiness and purpose, respectively.

Small nations are not a breed apart, humans are. And the things that set small nations apart, as collectives, bring us together, as humans. Small nations are the tip of the iceberg, bringing to the observable – thus more scholarly accessible – surface an important but under-studied phenomenon. *Living on the edge, small nations show us the edge of humanity.* The narratives of small nations can thus serve as a “magnifying glass” onto the existential frontiers of humanity.

## Frailty and power

Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges (1964: 114) once commented: “To be immortal is commonplace; except for man, all creatures are immortal, for they are ignorant of death.” This is not entirely true. Some animals notice death, and a few, notably elephants, seemingly grieve (Anderson 2011; King 2013). But if mortality means not merely death awareness, but being cognizant of its inevitability, availability, and indeterminacy, then it is a uniquely human feature. We know that death is bound to happen, but its exact timing is unknown, unless we choose to bring it on. Only humans have this penetrating realisation, which we start developing in early childhood, consolidate around the ages of 5–6 and typically master before puberty (Kenyon 2001; Slaughter 2005). Can this realisation help us understand nationalism?

I believe it does. Mortality is a driving force of intellectual, and political, imagination (Cave 2012). Ernst Becker (1975: 4; 1973: 170; 1975: 63) suggested that “what man really fears is not so much extinction, but extinction with insignificance,” and thus seeks to “earn his immortality” in a meaningful perpetuation project, a *causa-sui* (a “cause of itself”), to gain justification and purpose in the semblance of eternity.

Like all abiding collectivities – such as civilisations, religions, and tribes – nations, which I read as “self-determining peoples” (Abulof 2015b; 2018) endow their members with “symbolic immortality,” a way to transcend their transient individual existence. Several scholars have noticed the symbolic immortality of nations, but mostly in passing. For example, in his seminal *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (1991: 10–12) stresses that nations, much like traditional religions, “always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future,” thereby alleviating man’s troubling sense that “mortality is inescapable.”

Yet scholarship has not substantially engaged with this existential function of nationalism. It makes sense. After all, nations typically go about their business without contemplating their own demise, unaware of the awaiting abyss. Their collective existence seems to them a given, a constant, not a vulnerable variable. Small nations are less fortunate; they behold their own demise, sense their own collective mortality. The gaze of small nations unearths this abyss; they stare at theirs and remind us of ours.

*Nations usually help us forget about our own mortality, but small nations – mortal nations – recall that disturbing reality back into awareness.* And awareness is indeed at the heart of what small nations are all about. According to Kundera (1993: 226), “the concept [of small nations] is not quantitative; it points to a condition,” to a subjective, or rather an *intersubjective*, *realisation about collective frailty*. Small nations, he writes, “see their existence as perpetually threatened or with a question mark hovering over it; for their very existence is the question” [my translation]. The contributions to this volume often underscore this subjective

aspect. Hubert Rioux (Chapter 4), for example, draws on Katzenstein's important observation that "Small size was a code for something more important... What really mattered politically was the perception of vulnerability, economic and otherwise."

*But what is the "smallness" question all about? I propose three aspects: survival, status and selfhood. Survival* is about the nation's existential prospects; will it abide? *Status* is about how the nation compares to other, especially neighbouring, nations; thus juxtaposed, is it considered (by itself and by others) small? *Selfhood* is about the nation's sense of collective identity; is it valid and viable or do its members doubt that such a collective even exists?

This volume vividly illustrates the three dimensions. As for *survival*, Félix Mathieu (Chapter 3) discusses Québec's myth of fragility, of endangered endurance, citing, for example, François Legault, the Premier of Québec, effectively framing multiculturalism as an existential question, possibly an existential danger, for the Québec nation facing immigration.

Regarding the smallness of *status*, François-Olivier Dorais (Chapter 2) taps into the comparative aspect in discussing the experience of Québécois studying abroad, where a student, "once immersed in the intensity, abundance and power—symbolic, cultural and intellectual—of 'great nations,' found himself experiencing a form of vertigo." Of course, the very smallness of Japan, which captures an important part of this volume, is driven by comparison. However strong, Japan is weaker than the US and China. And of course, as Taro Tsurumi (Chapter 12) well reminds us, the "nation" designation is in and by itself a prominent status, an admittance into the family of "big" communities, indeed to the *international* community.

Regarding the smallness of *selfhood*, Jean-François Laniel (Chapter 1) dwells on aspects of identity insecurities in the context of Québec. And Kazuyo Tsuchiya (Chapter 11) examines the "other [poor] America" to offer an intersectional approach to small nations, highlighting how the "existential fragility and uncertainty" of the Self goes beyond ethnicity and nationalism to include "class, gender, and other interrelated and mutually shaping categories."

Since the "smallness" is mostly subjective, identifying it requires a study of social expressions intimating the nation members' beliefs and sentiments, often through discourse. Of course, one must be very attentive to nuances. As I reveal elsewhere, even scholars who theoretically focus on political discourses on "existential threats" often flounder at the empirical task of finding them (Abulof 2014a).

Granted, *objective data may be useful for looking for small nations in the right places*. Susceptibility to global problems, including financial exploits and climate change, is one such objective criterion, as Hiroyuki Ogawa (Chapter 9) illustrates in the cases of Newfoundland and Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon. Intractable conflicts too often drive ethnonational existential insecurity (Bar-Tal 2013; 2000: 175–181). Clear defeats should presumably heighten anxieties, as they have in the case of Québec. Demographic weakness, whether being a minority or featuring low fertility,

may also heighten the perceived frailty. Indeed, *three of the key cases in this volume feature very low fertility: Hong Kong (0.87), Japan (1.34) and Québec (1.58)* – well below the global population replacement level, which stands at 2.1 births per woman. Such objective components of smallness can coalesce. Persecuted ethno-religious minorities, such as Copts, Druze and Yazidis, as well as many aboriginal peoples, seem prone to entertain such views (Lear 2006; Russell 2014).

Still, not all defeated, or demographically small, nations “see their existence as perpetually threatened,” and not all peaceful, or victorious, or demographically big, nations are free from such anxieties. *Israel has been militarily victorious throughout its history, its fertility is the highest among developed countries (2.90), but is deeply immersed in existential anxieties* (Abulof 2015a). And as Cheung Ching Yuen (Chapter 10) points out, the densely populated Hong Kong can be regarded as a small nation. The effects of the Russo-Ukrainian War on both parties’ intersubjective sense of collective frailty remain to be seen.

*The distinction between “small” and “big” nations is not binary but spans a spectrum.* There is no perfect big nation, whose members have never doubted their collective survival, status and selfhood. Likewise, there is no ideal small nation, whose members, as one, have always doubted their collective survival, status and selfhood. However, on the continuum between the biggest and the smallest of nations, some are closer to the latter than to the former.

That we readily read “big” as “mighty” shows both that *we equate ‘smallness’ with weakness, and that we expect the small to try becoming bigger by gaining power.* And this is indeed often the case. For example, Laniel (Chapter 1) stresses Québec’s “recurring desire to outgrow the nation’s ‘smallness’ and join one of the main currents of modern normality.” Rioux (Chapter 4) shows Québec’s “economic nationalism, inducing strong preferences for the state-led orientation of public and private capital towards strategic sectors and initiatives.” Date Kiyonobu (Chapter 5) reveals this thirst in Japan’s pre-war drive to become a great power, both internationally and domestically, the latter through the transcendental authority of the Emperor.

But something else is going on, less obvious, and far more fascinating: *seeing the smallness of nations not as a frail existence to be avoided but as something to cherish, even covet.* Deliberating the predicament of Czechoslovakia under communism, Vaclav Havel (1985 [1978]) astutely dissected “the power of the powerless.” Here, we take a step further: not merely the power of the powerless but powerlessness *as* power, smallness as empowerment.

While Napoleon was of average height, the public ridicule of his vertical attributes has engendered the “Napoleon complex”: Arguably, shorter men (Knapen et al. 2018), like smaller non-human males (Just and Morris 2003), tend to initiate aggression; they also feature more the Dark Triad traits of psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism (Kozłowska et al. 2023). *Small nations, perhaps like small men, may be especially prone to pursue power to overcompensate for their inferiority complex* (Adler 1998). I call this “pathetic power.” This may seem

like a seeming oxymoron: how can the pathetic be powerful? Still, on a deeper look, the “pathetic,” Ancient Greek for an “impassioned sufferer,” adds a theoretically neglected facet of power. *Pathetic power does not require force or fear, the facets of hard power* (control via material superiority) (Wrong 1995), *nor the persuasion of soft power* (Nye 2004). *It finds comfort and strength in weakness.*

Hiroki Tanaka (Chapter 6), for example, analyses Kōtoku’s “Small-Nationism,” an ideology that sees small nations as the ideal form of nationhood. And if that was the case before the Second World War, it became even more so afterward. Date (Chapter 5) analyses how, for some Japanese writers, “aspiration to be bigger can turn out to be small, barbaric and particular, while we could find in the smallness what it is really great, human and universal.”

*Pathetic power may help small nations deal with the three facets of their smallness: survival, status and selfhood.* Consider how Calvino concludes his Octavia parable: “Suspended over the abyss, the life of Octavia’s inhabitants is less uncertain than in other cities. They know the net will last only so long.” Indeed, if a road sign warns “Attention! Danger ahead!” – does this not make navigation safer than roads with no such warning? Paradoxically then, *for their keen constant awareness of their frailty, small nations might survive better.*

Status too can be served by smallness. The inferior rank assigned to a small nation vis-à-vis “big nations” might be reversed by joining *this rather exclusive club that extolls the stature of nations that exist against all odds*, not unlike the “handicap principle” (Zehavi and Zahavi 1997). Finally, the small nations club can help redefine its members’ Selfhood by *turning fragility, especially victimhood, into a flag, vindicating the collective.* This is how pathetic power turns shame into pride, a source of dignity, and sometimes of conceit, for its holders. We shall resume these emotional and moral aspects of pathetic power in the “Futility and Purpose” section.

### Fatalism and happiness

*Kundera’s reading of small nations entwines fatalism and sadness: small nations suffer from “a condition; a fate; small nations lack that happy sense [la sensation heureuse] of an eternal past and future”* [my emphasis]. For Kundera, a nation does not become small; it *is* one. It is a prison-like fate, a lot without the liberty to truly change it. Like Kafka’s K, a small nation is punished, without having done anything wrong, and lacking the big nations’ “eternal past and future,” it also lacks their happiness.

*Kundera’s fusion of fatalism and essentialism hearkens back to the romantic genesis of nationalism itself, and the search for authenticity—individual and collective.* Romanticists since the late 18th century prescribed intuition, emotion and a return to nature as a necessary corrective, even an antidote, to Enlightenment’s “cold” reason (Engell 1981). Both permeated nationalism, which fuses rational and emotional elements into an imagery of a collective, which is concomitantly an

engine of scientific progress and a genuine expression of feelings and thinking. The imperative of authenticity has a special appeal to small nations. *Engulfed in deep existential uncertainty, they may seek solace in the certitude of authenticity*: “We may be living on the edge, but at least we are being true to ourselves.”

Authenticity, however, is elusive. Its calling – being true to oneself – deceptively conceals the deep chasms between its divergent interpretations. After all, what is the “self” that authenticity speaks of, and what constitutes truthfulness to it? *Romantic authenticity is essentialist, calling upon us to find and follow our destiny, to align our thoughts and conduct with our innate nature, our inborn core* (Milnes and Sinanan 2010). Essentialist authenticity resonates with “ontological security,” our protective identity patterns, the narratives that boost our self-esteem and mitigate our fears and anxieties, especially about mortality (Giddens 1991: 35). We may, however, lose confidence in our identity. Gradual or sudden attacks, through both changing circumstances and reflective processes, may produce “fateful moments” that unearth the dormant anxiety and foster ontological insecurity, undermining our sense of self.

*For Kundera, small nations’ authenticity lies in their fate of existential frailty – and unhappiness, a destiny, a lot which must be followed through to its sweet-bitter end.* Thus, in the wake of the Soviet clampdown on the 1968 Spring of Prague, Kundera (1968) urged his compatriots to take comfort in “the Czech lot” of a “small nation” prospering in spirit while inevitably and invariably under threat from powerful neighbours. Later on, Kundera (1984) grew far more pessimistic about “the Czech lot,” believing that Czechoslovakia would be subjugated by Russia “for ever and ever.”

Kundera was wrong about the fate of Czechoslovakia, not least as it no longer exists. But was he also wrong about small nations’ unhappy lot? Perhaps, one wonders, a small nation can pursue happiness precisely by fleeing freedom (Fromm 1941) to bad faith, by resigning themselves to their lot. After all, if the equation of happiness is what you have divided by what you want, the surest way to become happy is not to want much and seek it, but to settle for less. *Small nations that accept their fate are seemingly well set to find well-being in lowering expectations* – of themselves and the world around them. This, however, we shall see, is easier said than done.

That happiness is an important goal, for some the most important, is occasionally made explicit. Hiroki’s analysis of Kōtoku’s “Small-Nationism,” for example, indicates that for the latter, “socialism and democracy are two wings of a bird or two casters of a wagon, so to speak. Both have the same purpose: to pursue—one economically and another politically—common, shared, and equal happiness.” The study of small nations, however, has yet to deeply analyse their happiness. Here I merely sketch this new line of inquiry, drawing on recent findings from the science of happiness to review this volume’s two main cases – Japan and Québec – and two minor cases: Hong Kong and Israel.

The case of Québec is indicative of the presumed correlation and causation between material comfort, physical health and mental well-being. Québec and

Canada seem to possess this magical triad. Canada features very high economic performances, including excellent housing and skills, and is also the first among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in self-reported health (OECD 2020). It should thus come as no surprise that in the 2023 World Happiness Report, which the UN and Gallop run annually, Canada ranks 13 among 109 countries in its subjective well-being (Helliwell et al. 2023). Within Canada, Québec leads the provinces in life satisfaction, before Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island (Statistics Canada. 2023), though its least happy city is its biggest, Montreal (To Do Canada 2023).

Prima facie, then, *Québec seems to defy Kundera's expectation*. This small nation seems to be quite happy. And yet, politics quickly surface: is it partly because Québec is nested within the bigger Canada? Granted, Canada too – Voltaire's "A few acres of snow" – has its own smallness complex, not least vis-à-vis the US, but it does shelter Québec.

The next two cases, Japan and Hong Kong, bear resemblance. Japan, somewhat like Canada, is big and prosperous but "small" compared to the US and China, while Hong Kong is nested within the immense China. Moreover, both societies feature remarkably advanced economies, with very high standard of living, exceptionally high rates of employment, skills and safety, and, alongside San Marino and Monaco, the world's highest life expectancy.

And yet, in the 2023 World Happiness Report, Japan ranks only 47, lower than, say, Nicaragua (44) and Kazakhstan (47); and Honk Kong ranks even lower, at 82, less happy than Tajikistan (80) and Algeria (81) (Helliwell et al. 2023). Why? Partly because Japanese suffers from low rates of social interaction, gender equality, social support, voter turnout and leisure (Peiró-Palomino and Picazo-Tadeo 2018), *inter alia* manifesting in high rates of suicide and *karōshi* (death by overwork) is quite prevalent. Japan is also vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons. Hongkongers suffer from some of the Japanese ailments, especially burnout and work–life imbalance, and are often ill-affected by their politics, including the China-led autocratisation (Chau 2023). Tellingly, Japanese people experience high levels of anxiety, not least about their physical health (OECD 2020).

*The unhappiness of Japan and Hong Kong seems to corroborate the sad-small-nations thesis: However advanced, a society fated to see itself as small will falter at the pursuit of happiness too.* Yet, for some, this might be just "one big (cultural) misunderstanding": Japanese may actually be quite happy, just differently, more along a scale of "interpersonal harmony, ordinariness and quiescence" (Martin 2022). That culture, not just size, matters is clearer yet in the case of China. According to Ipsos (2023) survey, which asks directly about "happiness," while China was overtaken by India as the biggest (most populated) nation, it is clearly the happiest, and by a considerable margin (followed by Saudi Arabia and Netherlands – and India). Tellingly, *while people typically say they are happy for feeling their life is meaningful and under control, Chinese consider family and*

*friends as their main sources of happiness.* Is that the source of small nation's sadness, does belonging to a big nation make one happier for being less concerned (read depressed) with life's "big questions"? More succinctly, and bluntly: *the less existential(ist), the happier?*

If so, we might expect our last small nation and its state, the Jewish people and Israel, to be miserable. But the World Happiness Report reveals the exact opposite: *Israel is one of the happiest nations, worldwide, and has been since the report was launched in 2011.* In the 2023 World Happiness Report Israel has stood fourth in the world, before such small but far more peaceful and prosperous countries like Netherlands (5), Sweden (6) and Norway (7), and bigger OECD nations like the US (15), Germany (16) and France (21) (Helliwell et al. 2023).

This makes little sense considering not only the country's ongoing conflict, but also its precarious politics and subpar social achievements, including extremely low levels, compared to the OECD average, of social equality (especially in education, the lowest in OECD), housing, skills and work–life balance. The few aspects that seem to be playing well for Israel are its high life expectancy, high employment and quality of support network. Still, I propose, there is another factor: existential fear, amplified through political fearmongering. *Worrying about the very survival of your people might dwarf any other concerns you may have; one should be grateful, and gratefully happy, that one's alive* (Abulof 2019a; Abulof and Le Penne 2021). It does not, however, make one truly joyful. Israelis may be satisfied with life – indeed, I would suggest, with being alive – but they also report high, daily, negative emotions. To complete a circle, Canadians too experience far less joy than their self-reported well-being suggests (OECD 2020). Happiness is an elusive pursuit.

Should we then paraphrase Tolstoy to suggest that "All big, happy nations are alike; each unhappy small nation is unhappy in its own way"? Perhaps, but either way, *these "paradoxes of happiness" further show how small nations help us unearth the strange and wonderful intricacies of the human condition, and its politics.*

### **Futility and purpose**

Though supposedly destined to their lot, we can imagine Sisyphus, and small nations, happy. Can we also imagine them seeking purpose amidst life's futility? Only, I propose, if they can end their life. Surely, small nations' sense of frailty, fatalism and futility should be enough to make anyone go for the exit. But then much, including the pursuit of purpose, depends on whether you see the Exit sign. As Camus points out, the question of suicide boils down to "judging whether life is or is not worth living." *The nexus between suicide and purpose goes both ways: plainly, when life seems pointless, way me choose to kill ourselves; implicitly,*

*our freedom to kill ourselves motivates us to seek purpose, to somehow justify to ourselves that we should stay alive.*

Both, however, are conspicuously lacking for Sisyphus. It is peculiar that Camus chose him, of all mythical figures, to exemplify that single “really serious philosophical problem.” After all, Sisyphus was effectively condemned to be buried alive; he could not end his life in the underworld – Fatalism negating suicide even amidst futility, and again, even more intriguing, this possibly impaired Sisyphus’s drive to seek moral meaning, a justificatory purpose for his life, which is going to abide forever no matter what he does. In that sense, *had Camus sought purpose, he should have asked us to imagine Sisyphus committing suicide.*

But for the rest of us, non-mythical creatures, suicide *is* an option, though often quite concealed. Let us reconsider Calvino’s Octavia, the spider web city, whose inhabitants retain their safety since they are so acutely aware of the abyss beneath. There is a presumption that adds to their resolve: they see no choice, no other place to go to, and collective suicide is no option either. This aspect of Octavia suits a world where identities and polities were mostly deemed predestined. Octavia is not one city among many but the only city available to its inhabitants. Anyone born there is likely to live there for the duration of his, or the city’s, life – and the city’s end spells his end as well.

Sometimes, however, people move beyond such a preordained world to realise there is always a choice. Arguably, modernity has augmented this realisation, and the political implications are profound. The higher “degrees of freedom” you see before you, the higher the chances you will choose different identities and polities. *In modernity, Octavia is one city among many, each with its own distinct abyss; leaving one for another is possible, and easier.*

From the fictional Octavia to the nation, big or small, above we briefly mentioned the latter’s role as a *causa-sui*: a meaningful perpetuation project, endowing the people and their polity with justificatory purpose and a semblance of eternity. But this project is partly driven by the nation’s members realising that its existence is an option, indeed, a choice, not least since there are typically other, competing projects, other *causae-sui*, that one may opt for – some operating on the individual level, some on the collective.

This sense of choice distinguishes essentialist authenticity (above) from existentialist authenticity (Abulof 2017a; Golomb 1995). Submitting that “existence precedes essence,” Sartre (2007 [1945]) strongly rejected the notion that we are born with a certain innate nature we must follow. Unlike a paper knife, for example, which is first mentally conceived with a designated purpose, read function, and only then manufactured, a godless universe does not instil in humans any preordained essence, which they can (let alone should) find and follow. Instead, *existentialist authenticity prescribes “determine your destiny!”*

This sense of choice, of freedom, is where small nations part ways with Sisyphus to seek purpose amidst seeming futility, and where Vaclav Havel parted ways with

Kundera's take on the Czech lot: "I do not believe in this fate," Havel (1969) retorted to his compatriot,

I think that first and foremost we ourselves are the masters of our fate; we will not be freed from this by pleading selfishness nor by hiding behind our geographic position, nor by reference to our centuries-old lot of balancing between sovereignty and subjugation... if we accepted this kitschy notion of our "lot,"... we would furthermore fall into national self-delusions that could paralyze us—as a national community—for decades. (See also Herman 2012)

*While Kundera subscribed to essentialist authenticity, Havel countered with its existentialist reading. Both are required if we are to grasp the altering states of small nations.* Kundera was astutely aware of the question mark hovering over small nations; Havel stresses they can choose how to answer.

Here too, in pursuing existential purpose—justifying life in the face of futility—small nations underscore our unique humanity through morality (Abulof 2016; 2017b). *Facing fear, humans do not merely fight, flight, or freeze, but (can) also freely reflect, practically and morally.* To wit, morality here signifies the creation of, and subscription to, categories of good and bad/evil, involving conscience and feelings of shame, guilt and remorse. Thus defined, morality is not "goodness," and moral acts may be both virtuous and vicious. Nazism, however abhorrent, harboured a moral worldview by constructing categories of good and evil (Gossman 2009; Koonz 2003). Morality also does not equate with benevolence, cooperation, fairness or "reciprocal altruism," which some non-human species exhibit (Boehm 2012; De Waal 2013, 2006; Field 2001; Katz 2000; Krebs 2011; Rowlands 2012). While "animals feel empathy for each other, treat one another fairly, cooperate towards common goals, and help each other out of trouble" (Bekoff and Pierce 2009: 1), they do not construct, or profess to act according to, categories of good and evil.

In the lives of individuals and nations – especially small nations – mortality and morality entwine: *Mortal nations seek moral standing.* Like Octavia, a small nation weaves its safety net above the abyss; spying existential threats through the "holes in the net," it knits "existential threads" of moral fabric to prevent its fall.

All nations, not merely mortal ones, seek some moral standing, look for legitimacy. Still, scholarship on political legitimation suggests that publics rarely dispute the morality of their own collective existence, e.g., people debate "what might legitimate the American invasion of Iraq?" not "what justifies the US?" (Hurrelmann et al. 2007; Jost and Major 2001). Moral contestation typically revolves around authority (e.g. should we topple the regime?) and policy (should we occupy this land?), and less on identity (ought "we the people" exist as such?) and polity (ought our state survive?) (Fitzmaurice 2014; Hutchinson 1987).

*However, while every nation seeks morality, small nations resort to existential self-legitimation: By the nation, of the nation, and for the nation's very existence.*

They construct and construe justificatory virtues and values—endowing their existence, identity and polity alike, with righteousness, rights and *raison d'être*. The right of self-determination has been especially prominent among modern small nations (Abulof 2020b; 2021a), as Sana Sakihama (Chapter 8) demonstrates in the intellectual history of Okinawan people since 1945 vis-à-vis both the US and Japan. A sense of righteousness is especially appealing for small nations, who may regard themselves as “chosen peoples,” entering a covenant with God or involving a divine mission on earth (Abulof 2014c).

Notably, the existential threads with which small nations seek to earn their place under the sun are subject to considerable wear and tear, to heterogeneous adoption and dynamic adaptation. A small nation depends on its material and moral safety net. If the net withers and existential options become available and viable, members of a small nation may resort to these alternative *causae-sui*. This may well be the case of certain groups in Hong Kong, as discussed by Cheung Ching Yuen (Chapter 10) discusses.

In their moral pursuit of purpose, small nations not only evince that “*mortality makes morality*,” but may reverse the trite dictum “*might makes right*” into Lincoln’s (1860) “*right makes might*.” “If you have your ‘why?’ in life, you can get along with almost any ‘how?’” claimed Nietzsche (2005: 157). Small nations test that hypothesis.

On the one hand, *pathetic power can be morally and emotionally empowering, indeed uplifting*, much like the ways the biblical story of David and Goliath has inspired weak people/s for aeons. In this volume, Tanaka (Chapter 6) effectively shows that to be the case of Kōtoku Shūsui’s proposition for creating a “small Japan” that relies on “morality as its sole pivot,” revealing and repairing the immorality and jingoism of the Empire of Japan.

But there are troubling sides to the story. One is that *small nations that seek power yet realise they cannot gain enough of it to stop being small may start seeing power per se as abomination*. They can then relate to Kundera’s depiction of “the arrogant ignorance of the mighty” not as something to envy, but as something to abhor, treating “big nations” as bullies. Tracing *The Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche (2007 [1887]) argued that the weak, knowing they could never defeat the strong, turned their inferiority to righteous resentment, deprecating the strong as innately wrong.

Nietzsche has a point. If we think of power imbalance as the ultimate abomination, the weak become innately righteous, victims deserving of justice through equity. But “power-imbalance” is pleonasm: power always means imbalance. Power, by definition, is the capacity to control others, which presumes power’s unequal distribution. Pursuing power to repair imbalance only affirms power’s psychological and practical potency: people want power, which is why we typically end up replacing one imbalance with another. Indeed, *a small nation might end up “belittling” other people/s, sometimes their own*. In this volume, Tanaka (Chapter 6) shows how Kōtoku’s “Small-Nationism” underestimated

the “existential precariousness” of actual small nations in Japan’s immediate neighbourhood. And Hirano (Chapter 7) well points out the ways these dynamics played out in Japan’s settler colonial policies towards the indigenous Ainu of Hokkaido.

From here, it is but a small step *for a small nation to find its vocation in self-sanctification, becoming a (self-)chosen people, negating the very freedom that engendered it*. Freedom can only flourish on the fertile ground of critical reflections, of doubts, self-doubts included. *Substituting divine-like certitudes for existential doubts effectively forgoes human freedom*. And yet, here too, small nations reveal us to ourselves: the daily “crimes against humanness” we all commit.

Of course, one might take a lighter approach to freedom, and laugh, perhaps with God, at the impotence of human freedom, concluding that all our choices are for naught. *Small nations might then be unhappy but laughable, their “lot” revealing the Unbearable Lightness of Being small* (Kundera 1984): Everything, our dear *causae-sui* included, are laughable. Small nations thus suggest not only existentialism, but nihilism too, which Camus saw as mode of philosophical suicide, a wrong answer to that most serious problem.

## Conclusions

“I met a traveller from an antique land,” begins Percy Shelley’s (2016) famed 1818 poem, written after the British Museum acquired a head-and-torso fragment of a statue of pharaoh Ramesses II from the 13th century BC:

*And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

We are all Ozymandias, seeking godlike qualities that allow us to escape our human limitations: becoming immortal, omnipotent, righteous, and independent. We are not, can never be, and small nations are there to remind us. The attempt to defy death through monumental structures did not end with the ancient pharaohs. *Nations are modern pyramids – constructs of symbolic immortality, built for masses, not just monarchs. Small nations are the falling bricks that reveal the tomb, and the best, and worst, in us*. They unearth what sets us apart and brings us together as humans.

In this chapter I followed the myth of Sisyphus to focus on three such “dark” human qualities – frailty, fatalism and futility – and showed how small nations try to address each by pursuing power, happiness and purpose. Small nations thus distil key aspects of political existentialism, where mortality, morality, authenticity and freedom intertwine to shape our social life. Studying small nations is a taxing

and rewarding journey to the realm of death and doubt, of life and legitimacy, of freedom and bad faith. It demonstrates that even under extreme duress, the human spirit seeks, and occasionally finds, meaning.

But if small nations are the gadflies of humanity, humanity itself has increasingly been teetering on the edge of the abyss. Anxieties and fears are pervasive, replete with apocalyptic imageries (Abulof et al. 2021; Scheffler et al. 2018; Subotić and Ejodus 2021). With *homo faber* taking unprecedented risks with its own existence, we have descended from the post-cold war “age of optimism” into an “age of anxiety” or an “age of fear” (Rachman 2011; Rothkopf 2014). If our modern pyramids start to crumble, it is the chronicles of small nations we should look at for guidance. Small nations open a window for scholars to walk through and learn humanity’s undercurrents. It is our choice whether to walk through it. I hope we do.

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