

# Lecture 4

## Nationalism

# What is Nationalism?

- The expressed desire of a people to establish and maintain a self-governing political entity.
- It has been a dominant social force in recent history, leading to both the creation and destruction of modern states.

# Nationalism and Ethnicity

- Nationalism is commonly based on ethnic ties, but nationalism and ethnicity are not the same.
- Nationalism involves three themes: **autonomy, unity, and identity.**

# Autonomy and Unity

- These are crucial concepts that set nationalism apart from ethnicity
- Nationalism involves the desire to have a sovereign political community.
- Ethnic groups that seek distinct corporate rights for their group can be considered have nationalistic goals.

# Identity

- Cooperation across large social scales involves trust among complete strangers.
- Successful nations require a set of symbols that define who is and who is not part of the nation. Such processes facilitate the goals of autonomy and unity.
- This is often overlooked because we take it as a sociological “given” that identity exists. But how did the identity emerge? (Example of France)

# Construction of Nations

- Similar to ethnicity and race, nations are socially constructed entities, and are not natural and stable.
- How do people construct a nationalistic identity?

## Benedict Anderson (1983: 15)

*“It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. . . . The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. . . . It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm.”*

# “Imagined” National Communities

- Nationalism: ideology that links nation to state
  - Homogeneity of language
    - Printing press: advent of popular literature
    - School textbooks
  - Standardization of time
- Achieved through information: factual and mythical
  - **“invented traditions”**
    - Suggest continuity with ancient (and significant) past
    - Become essence of national “culture”

# Chinese Nationalism and History

- The Chinese government is restoring an ancient city known as Xanadu
- The city is destroyed, so they are building a replica
- What are their goals?



# Boundaries of Nations

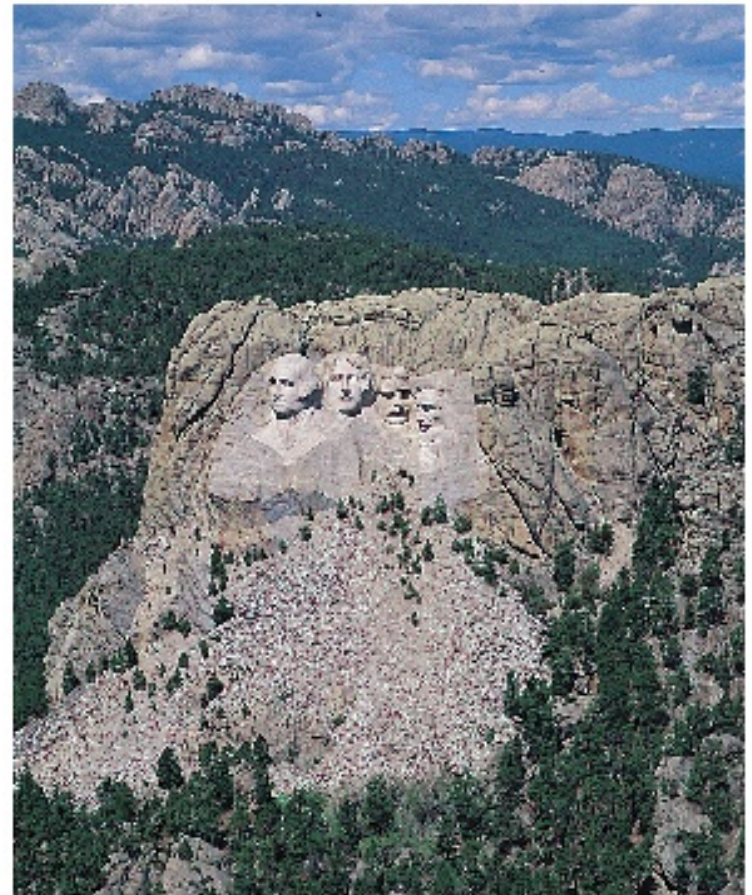
- Usually most visible where tight restrictions limit movement of people between neighboring countries
- Between the United States, nearly invisible in many places
- Even undefended borders are marked by boundary pillars and custom houses





# National iconography on the landscape

- The cultural landscape is rich in symbolism visual metaphor
- Political messages are often conveyed through symbolism
- In the United States flags and eagles convey clear messages
- Statues and monuments are important parts of the political landscape



# Ethnic separatism

- We live in an age of rising ethnic nationalism
- One ethnic minority after another demands independence or autonomy

Recent territorial ethnic problems reflected in:

- Attempted genocide by a ruling group
- Forced removal of ethnic population
- Successful secession of ethnic minority
- Ongoing ethnic separatist strife or civil war
- Largely nonviolent ethnic unrest





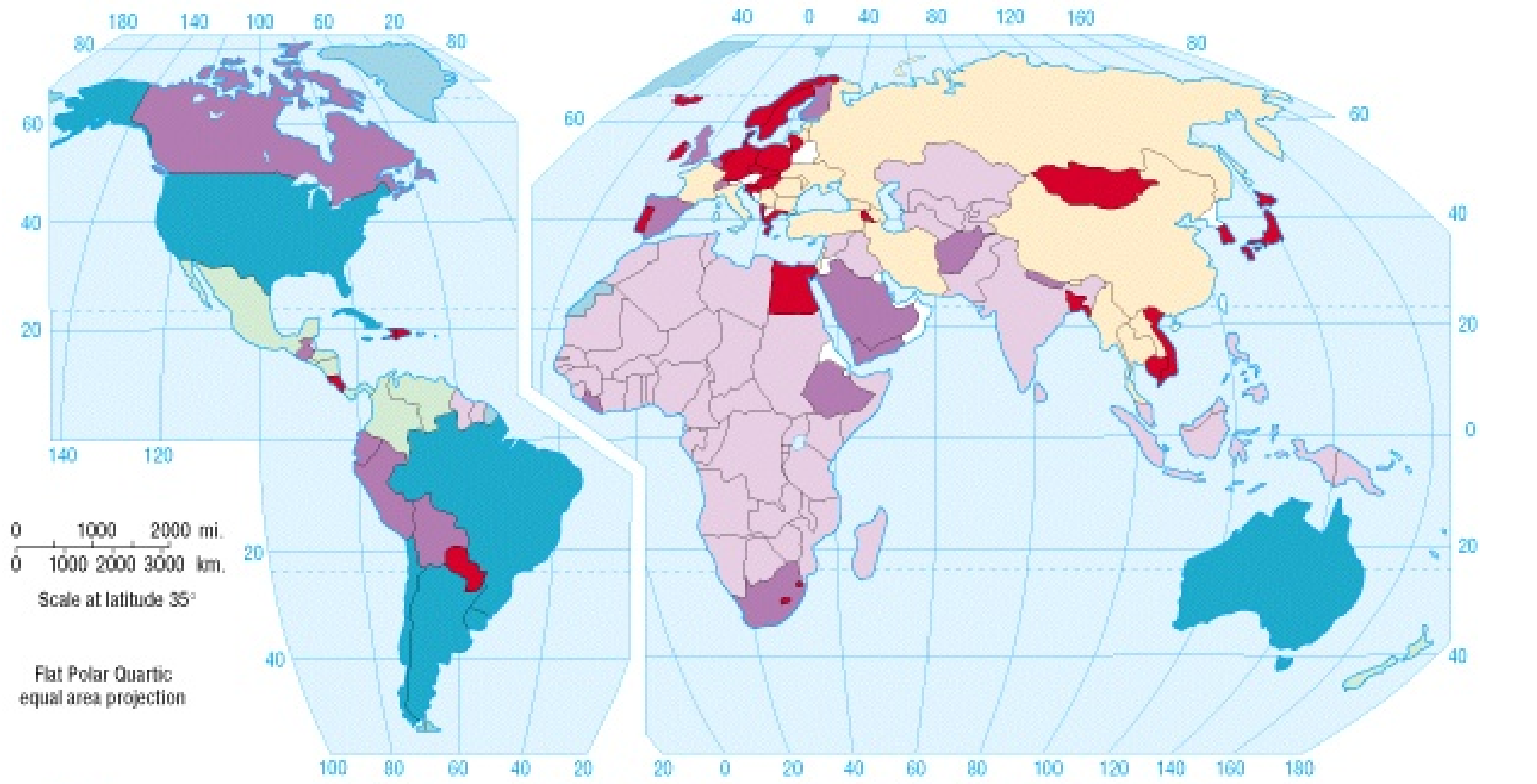
# Ethnic separatism









- Results of rising ethnic nationalism
  - Old stable multinational countries are feeling the effects — Canada, the United Kingdom
  - Some multinational countries have splintered — the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia
  - Ethiopia discarded its unitary government and adopted an ethnic-based federalism in hopes of preserving unity

# Ethnic separatism

- The impact ranges from:
  - Simple unrest to insurgencies
  - Forced deportations
  - Attempted genocides
  - Secessions





- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  Nation-states with relatively homogeneous populations                                |  Old multinational states  |  Immigrant states still multiethnic but evolving toward nation-statehood           |
|  Nation-states with sizeable ethnic minorities that are excluded from power structure |  New multinational or multitribal states, created in the collapse of empires |  Immigrant-indigene states, still multiethnic but evolving toward nation-statehood |
|  |  Dependent territories   |  Other   |

# Example 1: Yugoslavia

# Geography and Demographics

- 6 republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia
- 2 autonomous regions in Serbia: Vojvodina and Kosovo



# Geography and Demographics

- Many ethnic groups: Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, etc.
- Serbs largest in country, but not majority
- Complications: boundaries of ethnic groups not the same as boundaries of republics!



The word "Balkan" comes from Turkish: it means mountain and has been applied to the area since the early 19th century. The **Ottoman Turks** invaded the region at the end of the 14th century and the Turkish rule lasted for some 500 years. The **Austro-Hungarian empire** grew stronger in the north and loosened the grip of the Turks at the end of the 17th century. A major redefinition of the Balkan political boundaries was enacted by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. Serbia, Montenegro and Romania became independent, and the principality of Bulgaria was created. Slovenia, Croatia stayed under the rule of Austria-Hungary which also took control of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



After Austria-Hungary was defeated in World War I, the Versailles peace treaties defined a new pattern of state boundaries in the Balkans. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was founded. In 1929 King Alexander I changed the name of the state to **Yugoslavia** - land of the southern Slavs. The Serbs still dominated the government, which combined with an authoritarian monarchy gave rise to an anti-Serb movement. Many Croats in particular would have preferred independence and resentment led to Alexander's violent death in 1934.



Socialist Yugoslavia was declared by Marshall Tito in 1945. The communists were able to deal with national aspirations by creating a federation of **six nominally equal republics** - Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia. In Serbia the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina were given autonomous status. Communist rule restored stability and good relations with the west ensured a steady stream of loans. Later, however, national and **ethnic tensions** increased due to unequal development and a growing burden of debt. When Tito died in 1980 many expected the federation to break up but Yugoslavia was to survive for another ten years.



# Tito's Yugoslavia

- Inherited a tough situation:
  - Economic devastation
  - Bitter memories of civil war
  - Demographic snake pit: what to do about Serbia?



# Tito's Yugoslavia

- Happy Days:
  - Country experienced economic growth into the 1970s.
  - Peace!
- But: costs of stifling alternative political voices, vacuum when Tito died.

BY 1992 the Yugoslav Federation was falling apart. Nationalism had once again replaced communism as the dominant force in the Balkans. Slovenia and then Croatia were the first to break away but only at the cost of renewed conflict with Serbia. The **war in Croatia** led to hundreds of thousands of refugees and re-awakened memories of the brutality of the 1940s. By 1992 a further conflict had broken out in **Bosnia**, which had also declared independence. The Serbs who lived there were determined to remain within Yugoslavia and to help build a greater Serbia. They received strong backing from extremist groups in Belgrade. Muslims were driven from their homes in carefully planned operations that become known as '**ethnic cleansing**'.



In 1998, nine years after the abolition of Kosovo's autonomy, the **Kosovo Liberation Army** - supported by the majority ethnic Albanians - came out in open rebellion against Serbian rule. The international community, while supporting greater autonomy, opposed the Kosovar Albanians' demand for independence. But international pressure grew on Serbian strongman, **Slobodan Milosevic**, to bring an end to the escalating violence in the province. Threats of military action by the West over the crisis culminated in the launching of **Nato air strikes** against Yugoslavia in March 1999, the first attack on a sovereign European country in the alliance's history. The strikes focused primarily on military targets in Kosovo and Serbia, but extended to a wide range of other facilities, including bridges, oil refineries, power supplies and communications.



# Slobodan Milosevic

- Took the side of the nationalists.
- Famous words, addressing crowd:  
*“You will not be beaten again.”*



## Example 2: Quebec, Canada

- Contains most of Canada's approximately 7 million French Canadians
- Constitute a cultural-linguistic minority seeking autonomy or even secession
- Descended from French colonists who immigrated in the 1600s and 1700s
- Lived under English or Anglo-Canadian rule from 1760 until well into the twentieth century

# The problem in Quebec, Canada

- Laws of Quebec retain a predominantly French influence
- French is the sole legal language
- The visible use of English, illegal until recently, was expunged
- In several elections, a sizable minority voted for independence
- Many Anglo-Canadians have emigrated from Quebec

# Quebec, Canada



- Canada has two official languages, French and English.
- All provincial signs are supposed to be in both languages, yet this sign, welcoming visitors to Quebec's capital, is in French only.

# Quebec, Canada



- Contrary to national policy, Quebec has French-only laws and all signage, by provincial law, must be in French.
- Although the separatist Parti Quebécois was voted into power in 1994, the majority did not vote to separate.

# Quebec, Canada



- This implies that, at least for now, most Francophones want to actively preserve and promote their unique cultural heritage within the Canadian federal system.