Introduction

Though the term 'ethnicity' is recent, the sense of kinship, group solidarity, and common culture to which it refers is as old as the historical record. Ethnic communities have been present in every period and continent and have played an important role in all societies. Though their salience and impact have varied considerably, they have always constituted one of the basic modes of human association and community. The same is true of the sense of ethnic identity. Though more elusive, the sense of a common ethnicity has remained to this day a major focus of identification by individuals.

Ethnic community and identity are often associated with conflict, and more particularly political struggles in various parts of the world. We should observe, however, that there is no necessary connection between ethnicity and conflict. Quite apart from isolated examples, relations between ethnic communities and categories may be, and frequently are, peaceful and co-operative. That is indeed the image and ideal for which many in contemporary Europe have been striving under the slogan, *l'Europe des ethnies* (Heraud, 1963). At the same time, as Horowitz (1985) suggests, the basis for conflict exists in the inclusion of two or more ethnic communities within a territorial state. In what follows, the conflict potential of ethnicity will be highlighted. At the same time, the functions performed by ethnic community and identification for social integration and individual adaptation should not be overlooked.

Ethnic conflict can be considered under several headings. Here we are mainly concerned with the political impact of ethnicity, and conversely, the impact of political conflicts on ethnic community and identity. There are, of course, many other forms and sources of ethnic conflict. Economic inequalities and transformations are particularly important. Quite obviously, the perennial struggle for scarce resources exacerbates cultural differences; when economic inequalities are superimposed on ranked ethnic groups, severe conflict often results, especially when societies are undergoing rapid industrialization.

There are, however, other major sources of ethnic conflict. One is associated with cultural, notably linguistic and religious, differences. A second is concerned with the distribution of political rewards within polyethnic states; these often give rise to particularly bitter conflicts. Closely linked to such conflicts are those associated with the creation and maintenance of nations and national states in the modern world; here the influence of nationalist ideology is paramount. Finally, there are international conflicts triggered by ethnic differences: conflicts between national states which are caused or

exacerbated by ethnic movements of secession and irredentism. These are the dimensions of ethnicity and ethnic conflict that our readings attempt to illuminate.

Ethnicity and ethnic identity

The term 'ethnicity' first appeared in the 1950s in the English language. It is first recorded in a dictionary in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of 1953, and one of the earliest compilations of articles under that heading states: 'Ethnicity seems to be a new term' (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975: 1). The meaning of the term is equally uncertain. It can mean 'the essence of an ethnic group' or 'the quality of belonging to an ethnic community or group', or 'what it is you have if you are an "ethnic group"' (Chapman *et al.*, 1989: 15), generally in the context of (opposed) other ethnic groups. Alternatively, it may refer to a field of study: the classification of peoples and the relations between groups, in a context of 'self–other' distinctions (Eriksen, 1993: 4).

The term 'ethnicity' is, quite clearly, a derivative of the much older term and more commonly used adjective 'ethnic', which in the English language goes back to the Middle Ages. The English adjective 'ethnic' in turn derives from the ancient Greek term *ethnos*; it was used as a synonym of *gentile*, that is, non-Christian and non-Jewish pagan (itself a rendering of the Hebrew *goy*) in New Testament Greek. In French, for example, the Greek noun survives as *ethnie*, with an associated adjective *ethnique*. As the English language has no concrete noun for *ethnos* or *ethnie*, the French term is used here to denote an 'ethnic community' or 'ethnic group'.

The ancient Greeks used the term *ethnos* in a variety of ways. In Homer we hear of *ethnos hetairon*, a band of friends, *ethnos Lukion*, a tribe of Lycians, and *ethnos melisson* or *ornithon*, a swarm of bees or birds. Aeschylus calls the Persians an *ethnos*, Pindar speaks of the *ethnos aneron* or *gunaikon*, a race of men or women, Herodotus of *to Medikon ethnos*, the Median people, and Plato of *ethnos kerukikon*, a caste of heralds. All this became, in the New Testament writers and Church Fathers, *ta ethne*, the gentile peoples. (Liddell and Scott, 1869; see A. D. Smith, 1986: ch. 2; Tonkin *et al.*, 1989: Introduction).

What these usages have in common is the idea of a number of people or animals who share some cultural or biological characteristics and who live and act in concert. But these usages refer to *other* peoples who, like animals, belong to some group unlike one's own. Hence, the tendency to characterize non-Greeks—peripheral, foreign barbarians—as *ethnea*; Greeks tended to refer to themselves as *genos Hellenon*.

This dichotomy between a non-ethnic 'us' and ethnic 'others' has continued to dog the concepts in the fields of ethnicity and nationalism. We find it reproduced in the ways in which the Latin *natio* was applied to distant, barbarian peoples, whereas the Roman term for themselves was *populus*.

We find it also in the English and American (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) tendency to reserve the term 'nation' for themselves and 'ethnic' for immigrant peoples, as in the frequently used term 'ethnic minorities'. However, in what follows the terms *ethnie* and 'ethnic' will be applied to majorities and minorities, host and immigrant communities, alike.

From these terms certain key concepts for a study of ethnicity (conceived as a field of social phenomena) emerge. Apart from *ethnie* (described more fully below), we have such concepts as 'ethnic identity', 'ethnic origin', 'ethnocentrism', and 'ethnicism'. 'Ethnic identity' and 'ethnic origin' refer to the individual level of identification with a culturally defined collectivity, the sense on the part of the individual that she or he belongs to a particular cultural community. 'Ethnic origin' likewise refers to a sense of ancestry and nativity on the part of the individual through his or her parents and grandparents; although the concept may also have an even more problematic collective dimension, referring to the (usually diverse) cultural groups and migration origins of *ethnies*.

'Ethnocentrism' is often used in social psychology on an individual or interpersonal level as a synonym for disdain of the stranger. But it can also have a collective historical referent, as the sense of uniqueness, centrality, and virtue of an *ethnie* in its relations with other *ethnies*. This has been an important feature of most *ethnies* in history, helping to sustain their members in times of adversity. The term 'ethnicism' is more rarely used. It refers to movements of protest and resistance by and on behalf of *ethnies* against oppressive or exploitative outsiders; and again such movements have frequently punctuated the historical record (De Vos and Romanucci-Rossi, 1974; A. D. Smith 1986; chs. 2–3).

While each of these concepts may be used on both individual and collective levels, it is important to bear the distinction between them in mind and avoid the problems of attempting to read off individual ethnic behaviour from the collective character or trajectory of *ethnies*, and vice versa. This is very clearly illustrated by the fate of diaspora groups such as the Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and overseas Chinese. It is, after all, quite possible for large numbers of individuals of a diaspora *ethnie* to assimilate to their host societies, and yet leave the *ethnie* in question intact. Conversely, the *ethnie* may experience political destruction and cultural marginalization, yet, as occurred with so many minorities like the Frisians, Wends, and Huguenots, individuals bearing the culture may persist for many generations (Armstrong, 1982: ch. 7; Sheffer, 1986).

The concept of ethnie

The key term in the field is that of 'ethnic group' or 'ethnic community', but it is one for which there is no agreed stipulative or ostensive definition. The

issue is complicated by the levels of incorporation which named human culture communities display. Handelman has distinguished four such levels: that of *ethnic category*, the loosest level of incorporation, where there is simply a perceived cultural difference between the group and outsiders, and a sense of the boundary between them. In the next stage, that of *ethnic network*, there is regular interaction between ethnic members such that the network can distribute resources among its members. In the *ethnic association* the members develop common interests and political organizations to express these at a collective, corporate level. Finally, we have the *ethnic community*, which possesses a permanent, physically bounded territory, over and above its political organizations; an example would be an *ethnie* in command of a national state (Handelman, 1977).

In fact, most people would tend to equate the latter with what are termed 'nations', and to simplify these levels by opposing the *ethnic category* to the *ethnic community*. The former is much as Handelman describes, but the latter conflates the *ethnic network* and the *ethnic association*. An *ethnic community* or *ethnie*, then, is one where the members interact regularly and have common interests and organizations at a collective level.

Handelman's typology is useful, but it fails to capture the specifically 'ethnic' content of an 'ethnic community' or *ethnie*. We need to consider other elements, and Schermerhorn's well-known definition points us in the right direction:

An ethnic group is defined here as a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group. (Schermerhorn, 1978: 12)

If we drop Schermerhorn's insistence that ethnic groups are only to be construed as 'parts of a larger society', and exchange his long list of symbolic elements for 'elements of common culture', we arrive at the following definition of the term *ethnie*: 'a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members.'

In other words, *ethnies* habitually exhibit, albeit in varying degrees, six main features:

1. a common *proper name*, to identify and express the 'essence' of the community;

2. a myth of *common ancestry*, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an *ethnie* a sense of fictive kinship, what Horowitz terms a 'super-family' (Horowitz, 1985: ch. 2);

3. shared *historical memories*, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events, and their commemoration;

4. one or more *elements of common culture*, which need not be specified but normally include religion, customs, or language;

5. a *link* with a *homeland*, not necessarily its physical occupation by the *ethnie*, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples;

6. a *sense of solidarity* on the part of at least some sections of the *ethnie's* population (A. D. Smith, 1986: ch. 2).

This brings out the importance of shared myths and memories in the definition of *ethnies*, and the subjective identification of individuals with the community; without the shared myths and memories, including myths of origin and election, and the sense of solidarity they engender, we would be speaking of an ethnic category rather than a community. The second key element is the orientation to the past: to the origins and ancestors of the community and to its historical formation, including its 'golden ages', the periods of its political, artistic, or spiritual greatness. The destiny of the community is bound up with its ethno-history, with its own understanding of a unique, shared past.

Approaches to ethnicity

The phenomena of 'ethnicity' are not only empirically very varied, they are characterized by paradox. On the one hand, we encounter highly durable *ethnies*, some of them indeed tracing their origins over several centuries, even millennia. On the other hand, we observe the rise of new *ethnies* and the dissolution of older ones, as well as the many transformations of culture that existing *ethnies* have undergone. Moreover, as we come closer to the object of investigation, we discern the many fissures in *ethnies* and shifts in ethnic identification; the literature is full of examples of 'multiple identity', which include not only the many different affiliations of individuals with other kinds of grouping such as gender, region, class, religion, and the like, but also the many shifting identifications between different *ethnies* or ethnic categories. In ancient Greece, for example, one could identify with one's *polis* (city-state), with one's ethno-linguistic group (Ionian, Boeotian, Dorian, Aeolian), or with one's *ethnie* (all Hellas). In modern Nigeria, one can identify with one's clan, one's *ethnie* (Ibo, Yoruba, Tiv, Hausa, etc.), one's religious community (Christianity, Islam), and with the national state of Nigeria, not to mention with

African culture. (See Alty, 1982; Coleman, 1958: Appendix.) It is no wonder, then, that we find such conflicting approaches to the study of so kaleidoscopic and seemingly paradoxical a set of phenomena.

For convenience, we can divide the existing approaches to 'ethnicity' into two broad camps, and a number of alternative approaches.

First come the so-called 'primordialists'. This is a term that was first used by Edward Shils (1957), who was influenced by his readings in the sociology of religion. He sought to distinguish certain kinds of social bond—personal, primordial, sacred, and civil ties—and to show how even in modern, civic societies the other kinds of social bonding persisted. It was an idea taken up by Clifford Geertz (1963), who spoke of the 'overpowering' and 'ineffable quality' attaching to certain kinds of tie, which the participants tended to see as exterior, coercive, and 'given'. It is important to note here that 'primordiality' is attributed by individuals to the ties of religion, blood, race, language, region, and custom; it does not inhere in these bonds. Geertz suggests that the drive for an efficient, dynamic modern state interacts with the other great drive for personal identity, which is based on the 'primordial ties'. This is not so far from Weber's belief that political action is the single most effective source of a 'belief in blood relationship, unless gross differences of anthropological type impede it' (Weber, 1978: 393).

'Primordialism' as such has come in for a good deal of criticism for presenting a static and naturalistic view of ethnicity and for lacking explanatory power (Eller and Coughlan, 1993). Scholars frequently point to the malleability of ethnic identity, its overlapping with other kinds of social identity, and people's capacity to assume various identities in different situations. Frequent migration, colonization, and intermarriage, particularly in the modern world, have undermined the view of ethnic communities as immemorial, discrete, persisting units.

Recently, however, sociobiologists have proposed a more radical primordialism, which regards genetic reproductive capacity as the basis, not only of families and clans, but of wider kinship-based groupings like *ethnies*. They suggest that these groups are bonded through mechanisms of 'nepotism' and 'inclusive fitness', and that the myths of descent which underpin *ethnies* correspond with such nepotistic reproductive strategies. This line of argument has been attacked for reducing cultural and social behaviour to biological drives, and for failing to account, except rather speculatively, for the bonding of large *ethnies* and nations (Reynolds, 1980; but cf. van den Berghe, 1986).

In stark contrast to 'primordialists', the 'instrumentalists' treat ethnicity as a social, political, and cultural resource for different interest- and status-groups. One version focuses on élite competition for resources and suggests that the manipulation of symbols is vital for gaining the support of the masses and achieving political goals (Brass, 1991; Cohen, 1974). Another version

examines élite strategies of maximizing preferences in terms of individual 'rational choices' in given situations; here it is assumed that actors generally desire goods measured in terms of wealth, power, and status, and that joining ethnic or national communities helps to secure these ends either by influencing the state or, in certain situations, through secession (Banton, 1983 and 1994; Hechter, 1986 and 1992).

One of the central ideas of 'instrumentalists' is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity, and the ability of individuals to 'cut and mix' from a variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to forge their own individual or group identities (A. Cohen, 1969; Bhabha, 1990; Hall, 1993; R. Cohen, 1994). This risks divorcing the quest for individual cultural identity from its institutional bases. There is also the danger, common to instrumentalist approaches, of neglecting the wider cultural environment in which élite competition and rational preference maximization take place.

Instrumentalists can also be criticized for defining interests largely in material terms, for failing to take seriously the participants' sense of the permanence of their *ethnies* (which might be termed 'participant's primordialism'), and, above all, for underplaying the affective dimensions of ethnicity. This is well brought out by Connor's subjectivist and Fishman's historical critiques. Throughout history *ethnies* and nations have clearly aroused collective passions of a quasi-physical kind in ways that even classes failed to do. (Fishman, 1980; Connor, 1993).

Few scholars in practice adhere to either the primordialist or the instrumentalist pole *tout court*. But there have been few systematic attempts to synthesize the two types of approach. Both McKay and Scott have demonstrated that this can be done on a theoretical level; the question is rather how far such syntheses can be empirically helpful (McKay, 1982; Scott, 1990).

Three alternative traditions of enquiry into ethnicity are Barth's 'transactionalist', Horowitz's 'social psychological', and Armstrong's and Smith's 'ethno-symbolic' approaches. For Barth, ethnic groups must be treated as units of ascription, where the social boundaries ensure the persistence of the group. It is not the cultural content enclosed by the boundary, but the boundary itself and the symbolic 'border guards' (language, dress, food, etc.) that perpetuate the community and require intensive anthropological study. Nevertheless, Barth regards the boundary as permeable; indeed, transactions across the boundary help to render the boundary more durable. Barth has been criticized for assuming the fixity of bounded ethnic identities and failing to differentiate types of ethnic allegiance, the resources open to various ethnic groups, and their individual subjective dimensions (Francis, 1976; Wallman, 1986; Epstein, 1978).

Horowitz (1985), by contrast, uses the group psychology of Henri Tajfel and focuses on differential estimations of group worth, and on their collective stereotypes. Arguing that ethnic groups in Africa and Asia, included in

modern territorial states, have different cultural and economic resources, he suggests that we can explain their strategies, including secession and irredentism, in terms of the 'backward' or 'advanced' nature of the group's resources and of the region they inhabit. Underlying his approach is the assumption that ethnic affiliation is ultimately based on kinship myths and on a sense of group honour in relation to other groups. Horowitz's account provides a welcome antidote to reductionist approaches. It can be supplemented by a historical perspective, particularly in non-colonial contexts, that includes other factors like the role of the intelligentsia, collective memories, and pre-existing group antagonisms.

The main concern of 'ethno-symbolists' is with the persistence, change, and resurgence of *ethnies*, and with the role of the ethnic past or pasts in shaping present cultural communities. Armstrong (1982) applies Barth's general approach to pre-modern ethnic communities, notably in medieval Christendom and Islam, but infuses it with a concern for the cultural forms that Barth had discounted. For Armstrong, as for A. D. Smith (1986), myths and symbols play a vital role in unifying populations and ensuring their continuity over many generations. Armstrong considers a range of factors, like nostalgia for past life-styles, religious civilizations and organizations, imperial *mytho-moteurs*, and language fissures, in creating shifting ethnic identities. Smith examines some of the causes of ethno-genesis, distinguishes between 'horizontal' (aristocratic) and 'vertical' (demotic) *ethnies*, and traces the patterns by which they give rise to modern nations. He also emphasizes the cultural contents of myths, memories, and symbols, notably myths of origin and ethnic election, and memories of the golden age. There has, he argues, been a resurgence of ethnicity in the modern world, as intelligentsias have rediscovered ethnic roots as an antidote to the impersonality of bureaucratic rationalism (Smith, 1981; and 1991). Though clearly differing from 'primordialist' accounts, ethno-symbolism has been criticized for failing to identify sufficiently the mass bases of ethnic phenomena, relegating their material aspects, and privileging the contents of myths and memories.

Ethnicity in history

Ethnic phenomena have varied in importance and salience throughout history. We find records of 'tribes' and ethnic groups in the Middle East in the third millennium BC, with the advent of the ancient Egyptians, Sumerians, and Elamites. The subsequent history of inter-state conflict in the area is interwoven with ethnic migrations, invasions, and conflicts, as Indo-European groups came into contact with native Semitic-speaking groups. The Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian empires dominated large numbers of *ethnies*, who were accorded varying degrees of autonomy but who intermarried and mingled freely. Certain ethnic groups stand out in the ancient world,

notably the ancient Greeks and Jews, who have left copious historical records. Under the Hellenistic and Roman empires, ethnic élites were encouraged to adopt Greek and Roman mores and to participate in the social and political institutions, though ethnic prejudice remained widespread (Sherwin-White, 1952; Balsdon, 1979; Finley, 1986; Mendels, 1992).

In the Far East we can discern the outlines of ethnic states in China, Japan, and Korea, despite considerable internal disunity. In south and south-east Asia the ethnic components of social life and political order are less visible, given the frequent intermingling of peoples and cultures. However, in medieval Java, Kandy (Sri Lanka), Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam a sense of common ethnicity based on Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim cultures emerged over long periods. In ancient and medieval India Hindu diversity and the segmentation of the caste system diluted a sense of common ethnicity; but in the Middle East Islam helped to give the Arabs a sense of ethnic unity, despite the early fragmentation of the Caliphates. In medieval Africa and Latin America the fluidity of ethnic affiliations and the fragility of empires largely prevented the emergence of ethnically based polities, and make it difficult to discern the impact of ethnicity on social life (Oliver and Atmore, 1981; Lehmann, 1982; Dikötter, 1992; Lapidus, 1988).

With the renewed migrations of Indo-European peoples into Europe under the late Roman empire, ethnically based kingdoms (*regna*) emerged in what is now France (Franks), Spain (Visigoths), Italy (Lombards), Germany (Saxons), and England (Anglo-Saxons), and later Scandinavia (Viking kingdoms) and Hungary (Magyars). Arguably, these became the prototypes and frameworks for the medieval kingdoms of France, Spain, England, Denmark, Sweden, and Hungary which formed the cultural basis of subsequent modern nations. In Eastern Europe Slavic-speaking peoples settled and became differentiated in the early medieval period into the familiar ethnic communities and states (Croatia, Poland, Serbia, Bulgaria, Kiev, Muscovy) that subsequently formed the basis of modern nations (Seton-Watson, 1977; Pearson, 1983; Reynolds, 1984, ch. 8; Llobera, 1994; Portal, 1969).

Ethnicity in the modern world

With the appearance of the modern bureaucratic state and capitalism, ethnic communities take on a new political importance. In the older empires *ethnies* remained passive, but recognized communities, like the *millets* of the Ottoman empire. In the modern rational state there was no room for an ethnic autonomy that conflicted with the requirement for all citizens to integrate into the new national state. The new ideologies of political nationalism required all the members of a 'nation-state' to be united and homogenous, and this produced quite new conflicts in most states which were, after all, composed of several ethnic communities (McNeill, 1986, ch. 2).

This can be most strikingly illustrated in the attitude of the French revolutionaries to minorities within the borders of the new nation of 'France'. In their view, France constituted an homogenous cultural nation, a 'republic one and indivisible'; minorities, therefore, though they might practise their customs and religion in private, had to assimilate *as individuals* into the French body politic and become equal citizens. Unlike the German ethnic conception, as Brubaker describes, the French embraced a 'civic' nationalism; as Clermont-Tonnerre put it in the French assembly in 1791: 'To the Jews as a nation we give nothing; to the Jews as individuals we give everything'. This 'civic' ideal has become the source of a vigorous debate about different bases of citizenship, with 'ethnic' and genealogical sources being treated as illiberal and anti-democratic (Brubaker, 1992; Breton, 1988; A. D. Smith, 1995, ch. 4).

From this debate there has emerged a wider concern for the elements of both ethnic and national identities. For many, the influx of immigrants, *Gastarbeiter*, asylum-seekers, and ex-colonials has decomposed received narratives of 'national identity' into their 'hybridized' cultural components. Multi-culturalism has become the political expression of a more pluralistic approach to nationhood in Western polyethnic states, though such tendencies have also generated nationalist reactions to ethnic minorities (Hammar, 1990; Husbands, 1991; Rex, 1995). At the same time, anti-essentialist anthropologists and others have sought to deconstruct ethnicity itself, suggesting not only that all ethnic communities are deeply divided, but also that ethnicity itself is an optional identity and is often overshadowed by other (gender, class, regional) identities. The role of women, in particular, in ethnic and national reproduction has in the last decade begun to attract considerable scholarly attention (see the essays in Tonkin *et al.*, 1989; Yuval-Davis and Anthias, 1989; Balibar, 1991; Hall, 1992; Walby, 1992; also Eriksen, 1993).

These approaches have received support, not only from liberal reactions to the exclusive and destructive tendencies of some expressions of ethnic conflict, such as those in Bosnia, the Caucasus, and the Indian subcontinent, but also from the expectation of cultural assimilation of smaller *ethnies* into wider national communities. This is especially marked in North America, where observers like Glazer and Moynihan (1963 and 1975), Bell (1975), Gans (1979 and 1994), and others have engaged in strenuous debate about the long-term prospects for minority ethnic communities in a melting-pot culture. For some, ethnicity has become largely 'symbolic' in modern societies, whereas others regard the wider 'ethnic revival' in both the West and the former Soviet Union as demonstrating the economic and political modernizing potential of ethnic loyalties, as, for example, in the case of 'middlemen minorities' (Stone, 1979; A. D. Smith, 1981; Taras and Bremmer, 1993). This also ties in with the recent politicization of diaspora communities who engage in an overseas 'vicarious nationalism', such as the Greeks, Irish, Jews,

Poles, and others in North America and Australia (Landau and Esman, in Sheffer, 1986; Zenner, 1991).

In non-Western societies ethnicity has a much more direct influence on the creation of nations and the distribution of resources in post-colonial states. Imperialism and colonialism drew the boundaries of new states in Africa and Asia without much regard for ethnic identities, yet also encouraged the ethnic classification of populations and required some ethnic communities to play special roles in the colonial polity, such as, for example, the 'martial races' (Enloe, 1980*a*). The new, urbanized, indigenous élites soon found it necessary to compete for power using ethnic constituencies and symbols as their bases of mass support (Horowitz, 1985; Brass, 1991). In Africa and Asia, as well as in parts of Europe, ethnicity continues to deeply divide the national state, with or without a return to 'fundamentalist' religion, or alternatively through the modernization of languages and language rivalries (Enloe, 1978; Edwards, 1985; Landau, 1986).

Ethnicity has also become allied to issues of 'race' especially in so-called 'plural societies' (Furnivall, 1948; M. G. Smith, 1969). Some states and regimes have gone even further, and employed racist ideologies to harden cultural cleavages so as to exclude and dehumanize minorities on the basis of colour, culture, and physical stereotypes. This has brought about a century of forced population transfers, mass murder, and genocide (Poliakov, 1974; Kuper, 1981; Fein, 1993). Even without racist categorization, ethnicity in the context of the modern state frequently provides the basis for conflicts over the distribution of resources, with grave regional and geopolitical consequences. This helps to account for the periodic recourse to ethnic secession and irredentism on the part of marginalized ethnic minorities. This is a phenomenon that has encouraged scholars and statesmen to examine various strategies for ethnic conflict regulation from partition to consociationalism and federalism, in the hope of peaceful accommodation of the different demands of *ethnies* and national states (McGarry and O'Leary, 1993; Smooha and Hanf, 1992).

Transcending ethnicity?

As we move into the third millennium, the prospects for ethnicity are uncertain. On the one hand, as Gellner (1983) and others suggest, the homogenizing tendencies of advanced industrialism and nationalism leave little space for 'sub-national' ethnic identities. Globalization, economic and cultural, tends to reduce ethnicity to the folkloristic margins of society; neither the multinationals nor mass electronic communications have any regard for ethnic or national boundaries (Featherstone, 1990). In many ways, ethnicity has become a residual category for people to fall back on when other projects and loyalties are found wanting (Hobsbawm, 1990; cf. Giddens, 1991). There is the parallel argument that post-industrial, polyethnic states, particularly in

immigrant societies, must forge purely civic identities and symbols if they are to remain democratic and secure the loyal participation of all their members (Miller, 1995; Breton, 1988; Castles *et al.*, 1992; cf. Hutchinson, 1994).

On the other hand, recent advances in electronic communications and information technology provide 'sub-national' groups with dense cultural networks in 'post-industrial' societies (Richmond, 1984). This parallels the argument of Melucci (1989) about the uses of revitalized ethnic ties in sustaining interaction networks in the face of the depersonalizing, bureaucratic structures of late modernity, and the need for distinctive cultural and psychological ethno-national conceptions by economic élites in advanced industrial societies like Japan (Yoshino, 1992). For McNeill (1986), Connor (1993), and A. D. Smith (1995), ethnic differences and ethnic nationalism are unlikely to be eroded both because of the economic and political needs of modern, industrial societies and because of the constantly renewed impact of ethnic myths of descent and ethnic heritages on modern nations.

Given the longevity and ubiquity of ethnic ties and sentiments throughout history, it would be rash to make predictions about the early transcendence of ethnicity or to imagine that a world of so many overlapping but intense affiliations and loyalties is likely to be able to abolish ethnic conflicts.