

Téma: *Náboženství a etnicita*

**There** is no consensus on what constitutes ethnicity but there is growing agreement that it is both objective and subjective. Ethnicity involves cultural attributes that can be observed, but those attributes must be of conscious value to a collection of people to amount to ethnicity. There is a growing agreement among scholars that ethnicity requires a sense of belonging and an awareness of boundaries between members and nonmembers, however vague and mutable those boundaries may be from situation to situation or from time to time.'

Ethnicity is difficult to define because it is composed of an intertwining cluster of attributes and not a singular cultural characteristic. Language, religion, territory and custom-by themselves-are insufficient to identify, or sustain, an ethnic group. Moreover, the cluster of attributes assigned a collective value by a group will vary. A common language is a typical component of the ethnic cluster, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient to distinguish ethnicity. The linguistic component in the ethnic cluster is verified by Austria's Slovene population and a government language census used as a basis for general Slovene mobilization. Yet clear ethnic boundaries among Africans and East Indians survived in Guyana long after the British successfully made English-speakers out of both groups.

This essay will explore the effect of religious differences on intergroup' boundary visibility and maintenance between two ethnic groups to determine whether there is something peculiarly intense or profound about religion when it is a part of ethnic differentiations and the gap between communities is especially wide. Eastern European societies have experienced an historically high level of interethnic contact. Ethnic boundaries in that region are rarely maintained by the sheer physical remoteness often found in Asia or Africa. Thus an investigation of how ethnic boundaries and group integrity are maintained and the role played by religion in that process is especially rewarding in analyzing Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

Religion appeals to a suprahuman or supraempirical authority to formulate explanations, judgments and goals. But in practice religions are markedly diverse. For instance, the extent to which supra-empirical authorities are explicitly and coherently defined differs widely. This is the basis of conventional distinctions between the 'Great' religions (Hinduism, Islam, etc.) and the presumably 'lesser' religions (animism, eclectic folk versions of the Great religions, etc.). The explicit organizational structures used to implement clerical authority and the extent of hierarchy and integration in those organizations also differ among religions. Thus Roman Catholic Christianity stands out because of its explicit, elaborate and hierarchical organization and animist religion is distinguished by its low degree of explicit organization and clerical professionalism. Religions can also be categorized according to the extent of their taboos determining dress, diet and other behaviors. Finally, religions differ in their approach to evangelical proselytizing. Islam and Christianity have ardently pursued converts and thus have absorbed a diverse range of cultural groups, Judaism has been remarkably non evangelical.

The kind of religion-along these lines of distinction-as part of an ethnic group's communal package will determine how porous the ethnic boundaries are, how capable a group is of

withstanding outside pressures to assimilate, and how prone the group will be to absorb outsiders through intermarriage or conversion. The type of religion confessed by group actors is also a significant factor in interethnic dynamics. The most tense interethnic relationship occurs when two ethnic groups confess different religions, each religion is theologically and organizationally elaborate and explicit, and when those religions have generated taboos operative in the routine aspects of life, for instance diet. The intensity is increased when each religion has a tradition applicable to the situation between Malays and Chinese in Malaysia, between Walloons and Flemings in Belgium, or between Great Russians and Ukrainians in the Soviet Union.

Therefore, when assessing what religion adds to ethnic identification and inter-ethnic relations, it is essential to note that there are critical differences among religions which bear directly on how ethnicity is expressed and maintained collectively. It is not simply a matter of 'religion' being a part of the boundary setting package, but which religion. To add another complexity the boundaries may often be affected by a sect of a major religion. Some ethnic boundaries persist when persons are all Muslims, all Hindus or all Christians but the distinction between Sunni and Shiite Muslims is a salient factor in Iraqi ethnic politics; and there are divisions between Lebanese Christians-Maronite, Orthodox and Catholic.

Ethnic communalism does not appear to be lessened when groups are distinguished by sectarian differences rather than by major religious confessional orientations. Interethnic hostility, however, may be particularly acute when each ethnic group is convinced that its own interpretation of the basic theology is correct while the other's is corrupted. Moreover, when the religious beliefs of two ethnic groups are relatively close the other differences may become especially important since they are necessary for boundary maintenance. Richard Gambino observes that Italian-Americans traditionally felt more antagonism toward Irish-Americans than against Jews or Protestants because of what they perceived to be the deviations of Irish Catholicism. This suggests that when ethnic boundaries are firmly established on extra-religious grounds, group members who appear to be religiously identical will have a stake in denying religious homogeneity.

The most common way of rendering the extent to which religion sustains ethnic boundaries operative in the study of ethnicity has been to focus on rates of intermarriage which is, in a sense, the 'bottom line' of ethnicity. The rate of intermarriage is not determined by religious rules exclusively since class and racial factors are also important in reducing or promoting intermarriage. Marriage is a sacred act in most cultures and religious divisions are significant even when they operate in company with class and racial factors. The rising rate of intermarriage between gentiles and Jews in the United States has alarmed many Jewish leaders who believe it indicates a lowering of the religious quotient in the American Jewish ethnic package and a weakening trend. In contrast secularization has been deliberately promoted in the Soviet Union and the State has encouraged cross-ethnic and cross-confessional marriages. Nonetheless Muslims (who themselves are ethnically diverse) are less likely to, marry non-Muslims than they are to marry Muslims.

It may be futile and unrealistic to separate religion and ethnic identity. Many individuals behave as if their ethnic affiliation and professed religion are one and the same: to be born Croatian is to be born Catholic. But there have been attempts in the United States to pry religion and ethnicity apart analytically. American political analysts have questioned (as have the elected politicians they advise) the existence of a 'Catholic vote' and wondered, on the other hand, if 'ethnic votes' determine polling outcomes. Historically analysts have been interested in the immigrant experience (or assimilation experience). That interest has raised questions about the interplay of religion and foreign nationality in shaping behavior in the American society. Most

such questions are directed toward Catholic-confessing ethnic groups because of the American preoccupation with Church and State and because Catholic groups have presumably had the most electoral impact. Actually the effort to distinguish religion and ethnicity is just as valid for Protestants and other religious subgroups.

If ethnicity is merely religion in disguise, then holding religion constant should reveal few significant differences among ethnic groups. A recent study of American Catholics' political attitudes and values revealed wide-ranging differences among Catholics and those intra-Catholic differences fell into distinctly ethnic patterns. Furthermore, the survey was most directly related to spiritual values and not concerned with such differences as US foreign policy vis-a-vis Poland or Ulster, questions that would normally elicit group differences. For example, 76 percent of the Irish Catholics opposed miscegenation laws, whereas 58 percent of the Italian Catholic respondents and 66 percent of the Polish Catholic respondents agreed with those laws. Likewise, only 32 percent of the Irish Catholics favored legalized abortion when a mother 'is married and doesn't want any more children,' while 43 percent of the Italian Catholics favored legalized abortion. The same study also found that ethnic attitudinal differences persist among American Protestants along ethnic group lines although the differences were less wide-ranging overall. For instance, 37 percent of German Protestants favored legalized abortion whereas 57 percent of the Scottish Protestant respondents did so. Kathleen Frankovic made an important related attempt to determine whether religion is simply the class phenomenon in disguise by studying religion's impact on American political behavior. She found that in voting behavior and issue orientations, 'No matter what type of class measures were used-income, education, occupation, or even residence in urban areas-religious distinctiveness remained relatively high.' Furthermore, Frankovic found little evidence that inter-religious differences in political behavior were being diluted over time in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Thus if religion is a factor which helps to sustain ethnic boundaries it is not losing sufficient impact to lend credence to end of ethnicity' predictions. Moreover, a cross-national Gallup Poll survey conducted in 1976 revealed that 56 percent of American respondents considered their religious beliefs very important' to them, while only 5 percent labeled them 'not at all important.' The same survey found, however, that only 17 percent of West Germans and 12 percent of Japanese considered their religious beliefs 'very important.

Many nation-states have been formed on the assumption that religion and ethnicity were separable, but that when an overwhelming majority of citizens all confessed an identical religion-ethnicity would lose saliency and functional value. This was the hope underlying the formation of Israel and the postcolonial establishment of Pakistan. It is increasingly obvious, however, that even when religion is a constant, ethnic boundaries remain and sometimes ethnic group members even hold them in greater esteem. Being Jewish has not eliminated the sense of the Russian Jew's ethnic integrity inside Israel. This is not as surprising as it first appeared to observers because, according to a study by Jeffrey Ross, recent Russian Jewish immigrants in Israel do not think of their Jewish identification as a religious identity, but rather as a national identification. Only 8.1 percent of Ross' sample of new Russian Jewish immigrants considered themselves to be religious.s Similarly, Bengalis in precivil war Pakistan assigned more and more value to their supra-Islamic ethnic distinctiveness. There was a growirig interaction between Muslim and Hindi Bengalis across the India-Pakistan border as the rift between East and West Pakistan Muslims widened. The civil war was not just territoriality masquerading as ethnicity; today Western Pakistan is all Muslim yet it is still threatened by interethnic conflict.

Within some multiethnic and multi-religious states there is a feeling that religion may cause less system-threatening cleavages than ethnicity. Thus political parties with religious orientations are formed to comprise two or more ethnic groups-at least at election time. Political integration in Belgium typically involved ethnically crosscutting religious and secular parties.

When these parties-Socialist and Catholic-collapsed or split into communal wings the existence of the Belgian state appeared to be in serious jeopardy. The Belgian political system, in other words, tolerated political mobilization based on religion but could not withstand political mobilization based on ethnicity without a new constitutional and elitist formula for integration. The Netherlands and West Germany also experienced formalized religious cleavages in social and political affairs which have not caused the profound anxiety occasioned by, past and potential, ethnic changes.

Finally, in order to see how much religion contributes to the intensity and the sustenance of ethnicity it is possible to examine ethnic groups that are internally divided along religious lines. There are few multi-religious ethnic groups and their relative scarcity suggests that religion is the root of ethnic differentiations or that religious distinctiveness is a key to ethnic saliency. The overseas Indian ethnic group is internally divided more often than not by religion. Indian ethnic communities in Malaysia, Guyana, Trinidad, Uganda, and Great Britain are divided between Muslims and Hindus and, in smaller numbers, by Christians. A cursory review of those Indian-communities suggests that (1) the existence of religious heterogeneity has not made Indian qua Indian ethnicity less real for its members than ethnicity for religiously homogenous groups, (2) religious diversity frequently hinders efforts by Indians to mobilize communally to pursue Indian interests. Thus in Guyana common local political gossip suggests that the largely African ruling party has deliberately exploited the religious split among the Guyanese Indians intending to co-opt Muslim Indians. The Indian political party in Guyana, however, is secular and does not depend on religious appeals. Despite being a majority in Guyana, the Indians have failed to translate their numbers into an effective political mobilization. The divisions among the Indian population in Britain are linguistic, caste, country of previous residence and religious, and those divisions have hampered Indian political development in labor, immigration and housing policy.

One of the most prominent religiously divided ethnic groups in Eastern Europe is the Czech community. That community is divided between Catholics and Protestants, but the Czechs have sustained a strong sense of ethnic boundaries. Similarly, Albanian ethnic nationalism has flourished in recent generations despite intra ethnic divisions.

Religious homogeneity may not be the sine qua non of ethnic boundary maintenance but religious pluralism within a community still has genuine consequences in the operation of the community in society at large.