

Q. Why does the political mobilization/modernization of multinational states sometimes lead to the assimilation of ethnic nations at the periphery and sometimes to their emergence as autonomous regions or independent states?

- (1) Modeling Political Mobilization: The core-periphery relationship. Assuming a process of political mobilization involving the periphery, will there be assimilation (the removal of ethnic/cultural barriers to political communication and adoption of the center's supranational identity) or a creation of a national movement?
- Assimilation theories: Ethnic conflict arises from outmoded traditionalism, which will be wiped out with the advent of modernity. (no serious obstacles to assimilation)
 - Delayed assimilation theories: Ethnic conflict is a traditional and very stubborn impediment to modernization. Ethnic groups will already be conscious of a separate identity, but there should be indirect assimilation over time and with modernization.
 - Provocation theories: Ethnic conflict is an integral part, and even a product, of the modernization process – often modernization is accompanied by calls to nationalism and the standardization of education, language use, etc., which may backfire in the case of ethnic minorities. If the core can control this initial nationalist outburst, it should prevail in assimilating the entire periphery-ethnic population.

(NB. Cederman assumes that non-ethnically differentiated marginalized groups (i.e. workers, peasants) will eventually assimilate (if maybe change) the national identity.)

- (2) Modeling Collective Action: What if the core cannot control the initial nationalist outburst, and there are short run revolutionary disruptions of assimilation w/LR effects?
- the government is likely to remain stable (ie. Not lead to nationalist-independence outbreaks) if assimilation stays ahead of or keeps abreast of mobilization – you don't want to overshoot mobilization of a potentially alienated populace. Cederman's model predicts overshooting if the assimilation rate falls under 50% of the population.
 - Is overshooting the best indicator of nationalist collective action? Does this mean that multinational states mobilize slowly? Not necessarily: multinational states depend on both external (power vs. adversaries) and internal (cohesion) factors.

So...Cederman needs his model (presented p. 168-9) to be dynamic, allowing for both invasion or foreign economic domination as well as secession and the status quo. Mobilization in multinational states must be very careful: too slow a process triggers external intervention, too rapid a mobilization triggers nationalist collective action.

(3) Historical Illustrations

- Habsburg empire: low mobilization rate initially prevented nationalist collective action, but eventually led to a weak state unable to face international threats.
- Soviet Union (w/Gorbachev): fast mobilization led to a politicized, autonomy-demanding periphery:
- European Union: attempts at wide-reaching reforms (under Delors) prompted nationalist reactions that slowed ratification of the Maastricht treaty.