

Identity, Political Actors, and Preferences: Organized Ethnic Communities and Canadian Public Policy

Paper prepared for the Canadian Political Science Association Annual Convention
Ottawa, Ontario
May 27-29, 2009

By: Brent E. Sasley
University of Texas at Arlington
bsasley@uta.edu

Christopher G. Anderson
Wilfrid Laurier University
canderson@wlu.ca

Very much a draft copy: comments welcome

Introduction

Group identity has long been considered an important motivator of political activity. But in recent years, many Western democracies have experienced a rise in identity politics that has corresponded to increasingly competitive, dichotomous, and

aggressive political action. That is, groups have been increasingly asserting their individual group identity at the expense of national or state identity; and have been pushing for domestic and foreign policies that fit with the preferences that stem from these identities. Examples abound: In the United States, fierce debate has erupted over the role of the Jewish community in directing American foreign policy; in Britain and Holland there is rising concern about radicalism in Muslim immigrant communities and their efforts to shape social and legal policy; in Belgium the Flemish majority and Walloon minority have increasingly disagreed over language and other policies; and in Canada the opposing demonstrations of Jewish and Arab communities (and their supporters) over the 2008-2009 Israeli campaign in Gaza as well as the May 2009 protests along Toronto highways by members of the Tamil community have for many highlighted the importance of identity for determining political action.

In the wake of these developments, some have argued that the political mobilization of ethnic communities is problematic at best, and inappropriate at worst, for a host country's interests, identity, and perhaps even democracy (on the Canadian experience, see for example Granatstein, 2007). Such arguments assert that individuals of a specific community often give more of their loyalty to that community, and its own interests, over loyalty to the state and its "objective" interests. On this basis groups then seek to insert their particularistic ideas into the policymaking process, to contest or alter what would otherwise be the preferred framework for policy stemming from the national interest—as defined by state elites.

In exploring this literature, we have identified six major problems in the general understanding of ethnic group activity and public policy. First, although it is widely recognized that identity matters in determining public policy, the specific links between identity and policy are often not well defined, explained, or theorized. Second, much of the literature on the impact of domestic groups on public policy is built primarily on American examples, making it more difficult to apply theoretical and empirical insights to other countries. Third, the focus tends to be on ethnic group activity as though these communities and the policymaking process exist in an international vacuum. There is little discussion of the role of international developments on group and national identity and, subsequently, policymaking. Fourth, few studies focus on the *competition* between ethnic groups over how to define national identity, and how this definition affects policy. Fifth, ethnic groups and foreign and domestic policymaking are often studied as separate domains. There is, however, no a priori reason that they should be, as the lessons learned in one area might very well be relevant for the other. Finally, many studies focus only on specific ethnic communities, but without using these specific groups as early test cases for theory development. The findings and conclusions are then difficult to apply to other groups, inhibiting our understanding of ethnic group activity across countries, issues, and time periods.

This paper is a first-cut effort at addressing these theoretical and empirical deficiencies. We do so by fitting the study of Canadian ethnic groups and political activity into the more general literature on this issue. We also approach this study with a normative bias: we start from the basis that in a democracy ethnic lobby groups must be expected and allowed to operate as freely as any other interest group. Rather than understanding ethnic community activity as an anomaly to what is otherwise the

“normal” national political process, we regard this as the completely natural outgrowth of a democratic society.

As part of a larger project that we are only just beginning, the paper is a reflection of the issues we are confronting and the ideas we are utilizing. We use the literature on identity and foreign policy as our starting point, including both its theoretical insights and some of the empirical issues regarding ethnic communities and foreign policymaking that it explores. The next step will be to apply these ideas to a study of the political mobilization of ethnic group communities in response to political developments abroad, such as the 2006 Lebanon War and the Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka, and Canadian domestic (e.g., citizenship and security) and foreign policies.

In preparation of such an endeavour, this paper is structured in the following manner. The first section makes some general comments on ethnic communities and policymaking, including defining our variables. The next part discusses the theoretical framework that we start with. This model proposes that we understand national identity as a battleground, over which groups contest as a means of influencing policy. Here we draw on the literature on domestic political competition, and on identity-based approaches to foreign policy. The third section begins the theoretical analysis of ethnic communities and Canadian foreign policy, as the first stage of our project. Following this we lay out four hypotheses, as suggestions for ways to examine the relationship between ethnic communities, advocacy efforts, and policy outcomes. The final segment notes the academic and policy implications of our study.

Ethnic Communities and Policymaking

Migration has probably been an instinctive imperative among humans since the necessity of having to follow the movement of animal herds. In the modern world, emigration of peoples from their birth countries and into new host countries has led to multi-ethnic, multicultural societies in a growing number of states; there are few “pure” nation-states left. Once they immigrate into a new country, most members of these ethnic groups¹ (including subsequent generations born in the host country) maintain connections to their kin country.² They do so sometimes for economic or material purposes, usually because of family members still living there, but also because of the powerful emotional, psychological, and cultural bonds they continue to feel (see Saideman, 2002; Shain, 1999; Smith, 2000).³

¹ “Ethnicity” is used here broadly to refer not just to specific genetic connections, but also to components of a wider shared identity, which can include religion, language, history, traditions and customs, and so on.

² We use the term “kin country” over “homeland.” The former term more precisely specifies the communal connection between the group and another state, while the latter implies that an ethnic community does not really belong in the host country. This is problematic on both moral and political grounds. At the same time, kin country does not have to refer to a constituted, recognized, sovereign state, but rather a territorial space that, while not an official country, still retains some informal boundaries connected to a specific area and identity. Kurds, Palestinians, Basques, and many others would fall into this category.

³ By our definition, use of the term ethnic group does not connote any time frame, in terms of when members of a group might have immigrated to a host country. We refer to ethnic groups in general terms, without making distinctions on the length of time members of a group might have been in the host country. This is because we are not accounting for the political activities of individual members of the group, but rather for the political activities of the group as a whole as it relates to the specific topic under study (e.g., foreign policy toward a kin country).

Ethnic communities' identity is therefore closely tied to a territorial identity, even when members have relocated to a different country (their host country).⁴ In the foreign policy arena, communal groups' concerns often relate to their kin countries, and center around a determination to strengthen their host country's relationship with their kin country, and to tailor their host country's policies to advance the interests and preferences of their kin country even when the host country's own interests and preferences may be at odds.⁵ This territorial dimension to their identity enhances their determination to influence their host country's domestic and foreign policy, and in this way they are different from other domestic interest groups (see, e.g., DeConde, 1992).

A Theoretical Model: National Identity as a Political Battleground

The causal factor in our study for determining public policy is identity. Moreover, we break "identity" down into two facets: national identity and ethnic group identity.⁶ We argue that a country's national identity is a battleground on which ethnic groups struggle to define the host country's identity. A group's identity informs its interests, which then shape its policy preferences, and finally translates into the specific policies that it advocates.

This struggle emerges when the kin countries of specific ethnic groups in a host state are engaged in conflict with each other. Given the intense affective attachment that communal groups often feel toward their kin country, they may feel compelled to become engaged in such conflicts. This can become even more prevalent when different groups come from the same region or area, where the proximity between kin countries increases the likelihood of territorial conflict. The ethnic group's contribution to this struggle is to influence the host country's policies to: (1) become more favorable to its kin country; and (2) become more favorable to that specific ethnic group at the expense of the interests of opposing ethnic group(s).

Identity is therefore more than a cultural process; it constitutes part of a *political* process. This means a host country's identity, and the policy it produces, is subject to contestation and change. For this reason, domestic ethnic communities may work constantly to influence the national community's perception of its identity, what is in its national interests, and its specific policies.

The Importance of Domestic Political Competition

Briefly, groups compete with each other in the political arena to obtain decision-making power, and once they obtain that power they insert their preferences and priorities into domestic policy (Kingdon, 1984) and foreign policy (Checkel, 1997; Moravcsik,

⁴ On the importance of territory in politics more generally, see Duchacek (1986). K. Holsti (1991) found that territorial self-determination and sympathy for ethnic or religious kin in other countries are among the top motivations for war in the contemporary world.

⁵ We do not mean here to argue that these differences, and an ethnic group's insistence on ignoring them, are a problem for democracies. Rather, we mean this in the same way that any interest group may prefer policies that differ from those identified by a government as in the national interest. Free trade, for example, is considered by some sectors of the economy to be a bad idea, even when a government deems it to be an appropriate economic policy. But those who advocate for free trade would not be accused of undermining the national interests as ethnic groups are when their priorities differ from those of the government.

⁶ This is not to say that an individual or even a group can only have two identities. The two-facet categorization is only meant to highlight the distinction between national-state identity and the narrower group identity that may differentiate or contrast national identity.

1997).⁷ In democracies, these contests often center on elections, where leaders must be elected by the population and then re-elected to maintain their authority to continue making policy decisions. Politicians know this, and therefore strive to respond to the demands and interests of the electorate, hoping (or assuming) that if they do, the public will reward them with political office (Buono de Mesquita et al. 2003; Downs, 1957; Siverson 1998). In the contest over votes, politicians must obtain support from large segments of the population—a majority or a plurality, depending on the type of electoral system. They necessarily seek to determine what public opinion prefers, and then respond accordingly (see Abramson, Aldrich, and Rhode, 1990; Foyle, 1999; O. Holsti, 2004; and Ostrom and Job, 1986).

This competition, and the importance of the public in determining winners, creates considerable space for all kinds of interests groups to organize to influence policy. But ethnic groups operate on a different plane from other types of interests groups. The difference lies in the basis for competition and policy: for ethnic groups this basis is identity. This means that ethnic groups often concentrate on identity as the issue-area over which politicians must compete to garner a community's support, rather than just material incentives such as resources for community development (though these of course might well be relevant). To continue with the metaphor, if national identity is the battleground on which groups struggle, politics is the weapons/tactics by which ethnic communities struggle to influence politicians and leaders.

Identity-Based Approaches to Policymaking

Here we build on the literature that focuses on identity as a determinant of public policy. In the International Relations literature, Constructivist approaches provide a good starting point. This literature has, since the mid-1990s, highlighted the relevance of identity as a key motivator of state policies, and this is especially so where conflict is involved (see especially Wendt 1999, 1992).⁸ Even a cursory examination of the motivations, both publicly proclaimed and privately admitted by leaders, of many of the world's conflicts after the end of the Cold War highlight the importance, indeed the *sine qua non*, of identity. Hutus murdered Tutsis and Serbs committed atrocities against Bosnians because of who they were, how their group was different from the other one. Other factors (primarily economic) were relevant, but it was their entanglement with a communal group's identity that mattered most. These other material factors mattered primarily insofar as they were viewed through the prism of identity. According to Alexander Wendt, "people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them. States act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not" (Wendt 1992, 396-397).

How does identity determine foreign policy? By informing an actor of what its interests are. An actor (in this case a state) can only pursue a policy if that policy fits with

⁷ On foreign economic policy and domestic politics, see Milner (1997, 1988); and Putnam (1988). On foreign security policy, see Snyder (1991); Van Evera (1984); and Zakaria (1998). For discussions on the impact of domestic politics on war, see Levy (1989); and Cashman (1993: Chapter 5).

⁸ For good works on identity and foreign policy, see Berger (1998); Checkel (1997); Duffield (1999); Hopf (2002); Johnston (1995); Katzenstein (1996); and Ruggie (1997). On identity and foreign policy in the Middle East, see Telhami and Barnett (2002); more specifically on the Arab world see Barnett (1998); on Israel, see Sucharov (2005); on Turkey, see Sasley (forthcoming).

its conception of itself: identity provides a basis for action, as well as a justification, for state behavior (Reus-Smit, 1997). Identity does not necessarily translate directly into specific policy, but provides a framework in which specific policies can be considered, discarded, and adopted.

Where identity is a determinant of foreign policy—that is, a state’s position toward other actors in the international system—then at least part of that identity emerges/is constituted in relation to these other actors. How others act toward a country, and how that country acts toward them, helps shape perceptions of what that country stands for in the international arena. The most simplistic way to think of this is in terms of allies and enemies: “By dealing with enemies, identity is reinforced through the specification of what ‘identity’ is not, presenting these differences as a threat to what the self is believed to be. ... By dealing with allies, one’s identity is reinforced by affirming the links and characteristics that make that specific other an ally. This is a positive identification of what constitutes the self” (Messari, 2001: 227).

But this is too simplistic. Surely, given the multitude of actors in the international system as well as the variety of disagreements among allies⁹ and instances of cooperation among enemies,¹⁰ national identity as influenced by systemic forces is more variegated and complex. It is the fact of this complexity that allows domestic groups the space in which to operate, to attempt to insert their identity and thus preferred policies into the host country’s foreign policy. When foreign actors (usually but not necessarily other states) of different ethnicities are engaged in their own conflict, domestic communal groups feel a greater sense of urgency to influence their host country’s foreign policy toward that conflict and its constituent parties. The identity link between a domestic ethnic group and a foreign actor becomes very relevant in this context.

Ethnic Communities and Canadian Foreign Policy

Although ethnic communities have been referred to as a “third actor” in foreign policymaking because of their political activity and their objectives, distinguished from government and the wider society (Shain, 2002), our understanding of this process is really neither broad nor deep enough. This is particularly so in the Canadian experience.

This section builds on one of the author’s efforts to construct a generalizable model on ethnic groups and foreign policy, and from the study of the literature on Canadian ethnic groups and foreign policy, particularly the Jewish community.¹¹ But the insights from that project are relevant for this paper, as they help us understand the basis for political action by ethnic groups.

Much of the literature widely assumes that the Jewish community exerts considerable, if not enormous, influence on Canadian foreign policymaking, and has for

⁹ Canada and the US, for example, despite being close allies have had a number of specific quarrels in recent years that have caused antagonism in the relationship, including the softwood lumber dispute and differences over the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

¹⁰ Despite their intense disagreements, even Israel and Iran—staunch enemies—have managed to cooperate at times, including supporting Iraqi Kurds against Saddam Hussein’s regime in the 1970s and 1980s, and in the arms-for-US hostages framework in the 1980s.

¹¹ This research included interviews with a number of officials in the Canadian government (former and current), as well as leaders from the Canadian Jewish and Canadian Arab communities. They have been incorporated these anonymously into this study.

all intents and purposes hijacked Canadian Middle East policy toward its own ends (i.e., in Israel's interests).¹² But there is a puzzle here: How can the Jewish community exert such enormous influence over policymaking, at a level far above other ethnic communities?

Most studies focus on the organizations of the community, and their considerable resources, mobilization, and access, all founded on the support of the wider Jewish community in Canada. The consequent implied assumption is that it is by virtue of *being* the Jewish community that this ethnic group has influence. In other words, the independent variable (the capacity of the Jewish community) is explained by reference to the dependent variable (outcomes, or high levels of influence).¹³

This is problematic on theoretical, empirical, and moral grounds.¹⁴ Theoretically, these studies tend to be descriptive, without rigorous conceptual frameworks, variables, or definitions. This leaves us without any way of comparing Jewish groups' influence with that of other ethnic communities, and therefore influence cannot actually be quantified or measured.¹⁵ Empirically, and this stems from the theoretical concerns, evidence adduced to support studies on the Canadian Jewish community is overly-narrow. It is sketchy, without deep or sustained examination of situational variables, archival records, and interviews with government officials and community leaders. And these studies often focus on only a small number of cases, or even a single case. The conclusions drawn from them, then, are often more anecdotal than anything else, and raise questions about their accuracy. Morally, an over-focus on the Jewish community raises concerns about the role of this particular community in Canada, the locus of its loyalty, and the appropriateness of its activities. Relating to the point about theoretical development, lack of comparison with other ethnic communities implies that there is something about the Jewish community *qua* the Jewish community that leads to influence.¹⁶ (As noted above, these considerations are relevant for our understanding of ethnic groups and foreign *and* domestic policymaking.)

Hypotheses on Ethnic Communities and Public Policy

It should be self-evident that a group's chances of winning on the ideational battleground are significantly improved if the pressure group has a well-organized and well-financed political organization, with a competent, professional staff to successfully promote its messages. Without these, an ethnic group's ability to influence policy may be

¹² For some examples, see: Ismael (1985, 1984); Kirton and Lyon (1989); Lyon (1992).

¹³ See Hermann (1978) on the necessity of distinguishing between the two.

¹⁴ For a fuller discussion of the theoretical and empirical problems, see Sasley and Jacoby (2007).

¹⁵ Part of the problem may be that many of these studies approach the issue from outside the International Relations field, in which there are a number of theoretical frameworks that are used to explain state behavior.

¹⁶ We by no means suggest that studies of the Jewish community are, for example, inherently anti-Semitic, nor do we claim that such studies' conclusions are anti-Semitic. Unfortunately, given the sensitivities involved in discussion of such issues, these concerns are often raised by scholars, government officials and politicians, and community leaders. At the same time, such worries raise questions about communal groups more generally, namely, the assumption that an ethnic community's priorities are always the same as their kin country's. Although they cannot be completely ignored, a rigorous academic inquiry should not be prevented from moving forward because of them. It is our hope that establishing a rigorous theoretical model, which moves away from specific groups and that can also be applied across communities and countries, will help insert more objectivity in the study of ethnic groups and policymaking.

compromised, particularly if an opposing group does have such an organization. But the model posits that the existence of such capabilities on their own does not guarantee influence. An ethnic community that is much better financed and organized surely has an advantage in lobbying activities, but that does not automatically translate into influence. In the Canadian context, for example, the Jewish community is—as mentioned above—considered to exert significant sway over policymaking. Yet there are a number of instances in which the community has been unable to shift Canadian policy toward its preferred position. These include getting the Canadian government to: support the creation and then recognition of a Jewish state in Palestine; sell advanced arms to Israel at the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict; enact legislation against the Arab boycott of Israel; and move the Canadian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (see Bercuson, 1985; Bones, 1985; Flicker, 2002-2003; Goldberg, 1989; Kay, 1996; Stein, 1976/77; Tulchinsky, 1998: Chapter 6).

The focus here is therefore not on a particular ethnic group or its organized institutions. Instead, we must concentrate on the enabling conditions under which groups can exert influence, and to do so requires understanding the wider circumstances in which ethnic communities operate. The idea here is that ethnic communities can shape their host country's identity and thus the government's foreign policy only when conditions are ripe; otherwise, while they may continue to mobilize in the political arena, they will be largely unsuccessful. This is explored through the following propositions, which are explained in reference to the Jewish and Arab communities in Canada, and their struggles to influence Canadian identity and policy.

Hypothesis 1: An ethnic community is more likely to exert influence the more embedded it is within the wider society.

“Embedded” here refers to the length of time a community has been living in a host country, its assimilation into the social and economic structures of the host country, and its acculturation to the host country's political culture. Communities that are embedded are simply better able to take advantage of their position on two grounds: First, community leaders have greater access to decision-makers; second, the wider community is more comfortable operating within the political arena and so can be more easily mobilized in support of the goals as set out by the community's organized representatives.

In Canada the Jewish community is by far more embedded in Canadian society and polity than the Arab community. Jews began emigrating from Europe to Canada close to the beginning of French and British colonization (see Tulchinsky, 1997). Though small in number at first, the Jewish population slowly but steadily increased (though the bulk of the immigration came at the end of the nineteenth century and after [Taras and Weinfeld, 1990: 667]). Moreover, they had powerful motivations for coming to Canada, and for building a strong institutionalized life there: they had no other country of their own. And where they did live, they were subjected to various forms of discrimination and persecution. Certainly, prejudice and anti-Semitism existed in Canada at the time as well, but it was not as virulent or as violent as it was—and would be—in Europe.

Because they had been there for so long, Jews in Canada had more time to both work at integrating themselves into the economy and learn the political culture. Involvement in the economy is important because it gave the Jews time to participate in economic activity, building their wealth and advancing their status. Both of these gave

impetus to their high levels of access in politics, as they developed connections to other wealthy (non-Jewish) leaders and politicians. Indeed, until the 1960s and 1970s, Jewish advocacy (on both domestic and foreign policy issues) was run by wealthy individual Jews with little institutionalized support from the wider community (Brown, 2001; Goldberg 2001; Waller 2000). In politics, the Jewish community has had more time to construct viable community institutions, which has been plugged into the Canadian political system. At the same time, Jews as a community have acclimatized to Canadian political culture, operating comfortably and easily in the Canadian political system—including as Members of Parliament (Tulchinsky 1998).

By contrast, the Arab community in Canada only began to increase in any significant numbers after World War Two (Abu-Laban 1988, 104-105). At first there were less compelling reasons for large numbers of Arabs to immigrate to Canada, since they had their own countries to live in and thus did not suffer discrimination at the hands of a (different) ruling communal or national group.¹⁷ They thus had less time to embed themselves in the Canadian political system and economy. At the same time, newer waves of Arab immigration occurred in the 1990s and after, as they sought new opportunities and freedoms away from the repressive regimes that governed their home countries. This recentness has put the Arab community at a considerable disadvantage: unused to working in an open political system, many Arab citizens of Canada are either uncomfortable operating so openly in politics or unaware of the importance and necessity of doing so. This is underlined by a community-wide fear of the government, especially after the September 11 attacks when Muslims and Arabs were viewed more suspiciously by government and law enforcement, leading for many to self-imposed restrictions on political activity.¹⁸ Where they do operate politically, their unfamiliarity with Canadian political culture has led to some questionable advocacy efforts. Conversations with both former government officials and community leaders indicate that Arab lobbyists often view their efforts in the context of a zero-sum game against Jewish organizations.¹⁹ Their demands then seem less reasonable to Canadian decision-makers, and are therefore less effective in achieving influence.

Hypothesis 2: An ethnic community is more likely to exert influence when public opinion is more supportive of its goals.

Governments do not concern themselves only with a single ethnic group's interests. To do so would be political suicide, since ethnic communities are (usually) minorities; relying on a single group for electoral votes would not get a politician or party very far at a national level, particularly where communal groups are at odds with each other based on conflicts between their kin countries. Instead, governments try to respond to public opinion more generally, when they can.²⁰ Although public opinion does not set

¹⁷ This is not to say that numbers of Arabs (for example, from Lebanon) did not immigrate to Canada before then; however, these were not in significantly large numbers, which precluded the community's ability to become as involved in Canadian political and economic life as the Jewish community did.

¹⁸ Interestingly, Waller makes the argument that in the first half of the twentieth century, most Jews experienced similar feelings—conditioned on anti-Semitism—that lead to “political passivity” (2000, 81).

¹⁹ For example, Arab lobbyists have often focused their efforts on critiquing the Canadian-Israeli relationship, rather than promoting relations between Canada and the Arab states.

²⁰ This is not to suggest that governments make decisions based on public opinion polls (though they may on specific issues). Often there are “objective” national interests that the state determines is more critical to meet than narrow domestic interests (see Krasner 1978). Governments can also manipulate public opinion

specific policy (see O. Holsti 2004, 56-69; Page and Shapiro 1983), it does help to set the broader parameters within which governments may prefer to remain (Sobel 2001).²¹ If public opinion is supportive of a particular ethnic community's concerns—that is, more sympathetic to its concerns or objectives—government is more likely to follow the popular will and meet that community's demands.

Until the late 1980s (though perhaps beginning in the 1970s), Canadian public opinion was generally more supportive of Israel than the Arab countries. This allowed the Canadian Jewish community to claim a connection to the Canadian public that resonated with that public, and prompted the Canadian government to adopt a similarly sympathetic policy where possible.

This public approval stemmed from several factors: First, the Holocaust was undeniably a horrific experience visited upon the Jews, and it was hard for Canadians to ignore it. Images of concentration camp survivors languishing in displaced persons camps in Europe—the site of the ghastly crimes committed against the Jews—could not help but raise at least sympathy in support of what many—but by no means all—Canadian Jews were calling for: the creation of a Jewish state in predominantly Arab Palestine. It was more difficult to understand why the Arabs, who had of course not undergone any such experience, wouldn't allow the victims of the Nazi horrors a place of refuge (Bercuson 1985, Chapter 1; Brown 2001, 121-129). Second, Israel and the Jews were inherent parts of the Christian narrative that influenced many Canadians, including their leaders (Lester Pearson is often cited in this context), to sympathize with the Jews and their objectives than with the Arabs—who played no important role in the Bible and were not conceived as being organically tied to the land in Palestine in the same way the Jews were (see Merkle 2001). Third, after the establishment of Israel in 1948, it was viewed as “the little guy” in the Arab-Israeli conflict: a small country to which a long-exiled Jewish population had miraculously returned and reconstructed, surrounded by a much larger, very hostile Arab population committed to its destruction. The stunning Israeli victory in the 1967 War enhanced Israel's image, as the victorious Jewish David over the Arab Goliath.

With the growing awareness of Palestinian national identity, and subsequent demands for self-determination, Canadian public opinion in favor of Israel over the Arab states began to decline, which translated into relatively less support for the Canadian Jewish community's preferences. This was enhanced by the Palestinian *intifada*, the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and consequent Israeli military actions against both Palestinians and Lebanese. As Waller notes, Jewish leaders were increasingly concerned about growing criticism of Israel “that focused on Israel as occupying power, as an alleged violator of human rights, and as the denier of the political aspirations of the Palestinians” (2000, 88). These changes in Canadian public opinion became reflected in discourse and rhetoric, if not policy, among Canadian politicians and decision-makers.

Hypothesis 3: An ethnic community is more likely to exert influence when a party is in power that is predisposed to the preferences of that community.

An ethnic community will find it more difficult to play a role in policymaking when the government is already committed to a course of action at odds with the

to support their own preferred, and pre-existing, policies (see Cruz 2000, 277-278; Jacobs and Shapiro 2000).

²¹ For this argument in the Canadian context, see Nossal (1997, 118-130).

community's own priorities. But the flip side is that an ethnic group can achieve much more success when a government is already inclined to support its priorities, based on ideology, principles, or goals that either are shared or dovetail with the community's own ideology, principles, or goals.

This hypothesis may be the trickiest to prove, because of the difficulty a researcher has in determining what came first: a leader or party's inclinations, or efforts by an ethnic lobby group. Still, there are ways around this. Where possible, one can study a leader or party's statements on a given issue (of importance to the ethnic community) before power is attained, or on similar or related issues—in this way separating the independent and dependent variables.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper is a good example of the importance of this proposition. Commentators from across the political spectrum have noted his strong personal beliefs regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and terrorism. These have combined to enforce a stronger personal sympathy for Israel's position vis-à-vis its conflict with Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which are listed on the Canadian government's catalog of groups that practice terrorism. As a result, during the Israeli military campaigns against Hezbollah in Lebanon in summer 2006 and against Hamas in Gaza in December 2008-January 2009, Harper or his ministers expressed strong public support for Israel in its struggle against terrorist groups, including for the use of force against them. Particularly in the Gaza campaign, little or no mention was made of the numbers of Arab civilian deaths—an issue that concerned much of the Canadian public and many of its politicians. In this case, the prime minister advocated a policy (that is, public rhetoric) at odds with public opinion.

Moreover, the personal style of governing by a given leader is also relevant. In the case of Harper, it has been widely commented on that he has centralized decision-making, particularly on foreign affairs, in his own office, and to a large degree removed it from his ministers' and the Department of Foreign Affairs' purview. In so doing, he has made it easier to translate his own preferences into policy; by dominating the decision-making process, he can insert his own ideology or principles into policy.²² It is widely presumed that Harper holds a more sympathetic view of Israel's position, and so is therefore more amenable to considering the priorities and objectives of the Canadian Jewish community.

The above premises have all dealt with domestic issues. But the connection between international and domestic affairs and its effects on foreign policy is already well established (e.g., Milner 1997). The last hypothesis makes this connection by focusing on external developments.

Hypothesis 4: An ethnic community is more likely to exert influence when international developments stimulate sympathy for a kin country or create conditions of uncertainty and flux.

Global conditions impact on domestic politics. In the context of ethnic communities and foreign policy, they can do so in one of two ways. First, when international events occur that negatively affect its kin country, an ethnic community may be able to build on these developments to forge sympathy for the kin country, and thus

²² For broader theoretical discussions of this process, see Berman (1998); Checkel (1997); McNamara (1998); Moravcsik (1997). On the centralization of power around the prime minister in Canada in recent decades, see Savoie (1999).

pry open enough support among the public and/or politicians and decision-makers to insert their preferences onto the foreign policy agenda. Second, international developments can create conditions of uncertainty or flux for policymakers, opening up space for a group to insert its preferences and thus shape both identity and foreign policy. In both cases, global developments can also help prompt mobilization among ethnic groups, to better take advantage of the changed conditions.²³

Regarding the first condition, we have already discussed the importance of both the Holocaust and the 1967 War in stimulating sympathy among Canadians for Israel. A more recent example is the December 2008-January 2009 Israeli campaign against Hamas in Gaza. Some compared it to Israel's campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006. In both cases, the militant-terrorist groups operated in civilian areas that Israel then attacked, killing hundreds of civilians and destroying infrastructure and property. In the 2006 crisis, public opinion in Canada (including in the media) questioned the appropriateness of the Israeli campaign, particularly focusing on the number of civilian casualties. In the 2008-2009 fighting, public opinion (again including the media) was far less critical of Israel. Though concerns were still raised about civilian deaths, there was considerably more understanding for the Israeli position, and sympathy for its stated reasons for engaging in the campaign: the thousands of rockets and mortars that Palestinian groups had fired on Israel from Gaza over the previous years.

To illustrate the relevance of the second element of this hypothesis, we can look at the September 11 attacks and the conviction it created—especially once the Harper government came to power—that terrorist groups had to be dealt with much more firmly than they had been in the past. This included providing greater sympathy for those countries engaged in their own struggle with terrorist groups—particularly Israel. 9/11 put the issue of international Islamist terrorism on the global agenda, and few countries were able to avoid the consequences of this. Certainly Canada could not: the forceful US response to the attacks made it difficult for close American allies like Canada to ignore American sensitivities and demands related to the subsequent “war on terrorism” (Sasley and Jacoby 2007). Although it had previously refused to consider Hezbollah a terrorist organization, the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks created a greater willingness to list Hezbollah as a group that practiced terrorism, even though there was not necessarily new intelligence on this point. Before September 11, Jewish groups had lobbied to have Hezbollah listed as a terrorist group, but had not been successful. Only after the changed global circumstances brought about by 9/11 did the government do so.

Implications

This paper is only a preliminary effort to understand how and when ethnic groups can exert influence over policy. The main purpose was to construct a series of hypotheses that could form the foundation for a model of ethnic communities and policymaking. We did not apply to model to specific empirical evidence; that remains to be completed in the

²³ A good example in the Canadian context is the 1967 War and the crisis that led up to it. Canadian Jews were galvanized into action by the developments that first seemed to threaten Israel's very existence and then in rapid succession led to Israel's unexpected but dramatic victory over three Arab states. These events crystallized the importance of Israel to the Canadian Jewish identity, and fostered the belief that the community would from now on have to mobilize and act on behalf of Israel in Canada (See Waller 2000).

context of the larger research project on ethnic communities (including other ethnic groups) and public policymaking of which this paper is but a part.

Because the model does not deal with a specific ethnic group, it can be used to examine different ethnic communities in different states. It also, then, has wider theoretical and policy implications beyond the Canadian Jewish and Arab communities.

The importance of this topic is underlined by the fact that states are increasingly multi-ethnic, as immigrants move around the world and establish themselves in host countries. It thus touches on a range of academic debates on the foreign and domestic policymaking process, the activities of ethnic communities in this process, the construction of national identity and how it informs foreign policy, and the importance of transnational identities and connections.²⁴ In all of these issues, a generalizable model allows us to better compare a particular ethnic group's activity over time and across issues, and across countries. It also helps us compare the activities and levels of failure and success of different ethnic communities within a state. All of this contributes to a better understanding of the conditions under which a communal group can exercise influence.

In policy terms, this study can provide decision-makers with an understanding of how ethnic communities can indeed impact on policymaking. A more comprehensive awareness of how national identity is formed—or manipulated—can let policymakers know whether and when they can ignore ethnic communities' demands. It also feeds into broader questions of multiculturalism and accommodation, as has in recent years been seen in Quebec and Toronto.

The study is also relevant for ethnic groups, by providing them with information necessary in their efforts to shape policy, including ingredients for successful advocacy. Finally, as mentioned above, understanding the role of ethnic groups in policymaking through a generalizable framework helps us better respond to criticisms raised about appropriate ethnic group behavior. Ethnic group mobilization has been stigmatized by some in recent years, as verging on illegitimate. But this is an inappropriate categorization, since ethnic groups operate as all interests groups do—trying to influence policy to better meet their particular interests.

²⁴ There is also a growing literature on the nature of group loyalty in multi-ethnic states, which we do not address here but for which our study does have relevance. See, for example, Devetak (2003); Waller and Linklater (2003).

References

- Abramson, Paul R., John H. Aldrich, and David W. Rhode. 1990. *Change and Continuity in the 1988 Elections*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly.
- Abu-Laban, Baha. 1988. "Arab-Canadians and the Arab-Israeli Conflict." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 10, no.1 (Winter): 104-126.
- Barnett, Michael N. 1998. *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bercuson, David. 1985. *Canada and the Birth of Israel: A Study in Canadian Foreign Policy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Berger, Thomas U. 1998. *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Berman, Sheri. 1998. *The Social Democratic Moment: Ideas and Politics in the Making of Interwar Europe*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Bones, Alan. 1985. "Zionist Interest Groups and Canadian Foreign Policy." In *Canada and the Arab World*, edited by Tareq Y. Ismael, 151-171. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.
- Brown, Michael. 2001. "Zionism in the Pre-Statehood Years: The Canadian Response." In *From Immigration to Integration: The Canadian Jewish Experience: A Millennium Edition*, edited by Ruth Klein and Frank Dimant, 135-146. Toronto: Institute for International Affairs, B'nai Brith Canada.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson, and James D. Morrow. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.
- Cashman, Greg. 1993. *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T. 1997. *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Cruz, Consuelo. 2000. "Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Futures." *World Politics* 52, no.3 (April): 275-312.
- DeConde, Alexander. 1992. *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

- Devetak, Richard. 2003. "Loyalty and Plurality: Images of the Nation in Australia." In *Political Loyalty and the Nation-State*, eds. Michael Waller and Andrew Linklater, 27-42. London: Routledge.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Duchacek, Ivo D. 1986. *The Territorial Dimension of Politics: Within, Among, and Across Nations*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Duffield, John S. 1999. "Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism." *International Organization* 53, no.4 (Autumn): 765-803.
- Flicker, Charles. 2002-2003. "Next Year in Jerusalem: Joe Clark and the Jerusalem Embassy Affair." *International Journal* 58, no.1 (Winter): 115-138.
- Foyle, Douglas C. 1999. *Counting the Public In: Presidents, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Goldberg, David H. 2001. "The Post-Statehood Relationship: A Growing Friendship." In *From Immigration to Integration: The Canadian Jewish Experience: A Millennium Edition*, edited by Ruth Klein and Frank Dimant, 135-146. Toronto: Institute for International Affairs, B'nai Brith Canada.
- _____. 1989. "Keeping Score: From the Yom Kippur War to the Palestinian Uprising." In *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg, 102-122. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Granatstein, J.L. 2007. *Whose War Is It? How Canada Can Survive in the Post-9/11 World*. Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.
- Hermann, Charles F. 1978. "Foreign Policy Behavior: That Which Is to Be Explained." In *Why Nations Act: Theoretical Perspectives for Comparative Foreign Policy Studies*, edited by Maurice A. East, Stephen A. Salmore, and Charles F. Hermann, 25-47. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Holsti, K.J. 1991. *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648-1989*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holsti, Ole R. 2004. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*, revised ed. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Hopf, Ted. 2002. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

- Ismael, Tareq Y., ed. 1985. *Canada and the Arab World*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.
- _____, ed. 1984. *Canadian Arab Relations: Policy and Perspectives*, revised ed. Ottawa: Jerusalem International Publishing House, Inc.
- Jacobs, Lawrence R. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 2000. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. 1995. *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Katzenstein, Peter J., ed. 1996. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kay, Zachariah. 1996. *The Diplomacy of Prudence: Canada and Israel, 1948-1958*. Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Kingdon, John W. 1984. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. USA: HarperCollins.
- Kirton, John and Peyton Lyon. 1989. "Perceptions of the Middle East in the Department of External Affairs and Mulroney's Policy 1984-1988." In *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, edited by David Taras and David H. Goldberg, 186-206. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Krasner, Stephen. 1978. *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Levy, Jack S. 1989. "Domestic Politics and War." In *The Origin and Prevention and Major Wars*, eds. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb, 79-99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyon, Peyton. 1992. "The Canada Israel Committee and Canada's Middle East Policy." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27, no.4 (Winter): 5-24.
- McNamara, Kathleen R. 1998. *The Currency of Ideas: Monetary Politics in the European Union*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Mearsheimer, John J. and Stephen M. Walt. 2007. *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Merkley, Paul. 2001. *Christian Attitudes Towards the State of Israel*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

- Messari, Nizar. 2001. "Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Islam in U.S. Foreign Policy." In *Foreign Policy in a Constructed World*, ed. Vendulka Kubálková, 227-246. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Milner, Helen V. 1997. *Interests, Institutions, and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1988. *Resisting Protectionism: Global Industries and the Politics of International Trade*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Moravcsik, Andrew. 1997. "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* 51, no.4 (Autumn): 513-553.
- Nossal, Kim Richard. 1997. *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*. 3rd ed. Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc.
- Ostrom, Charles W., Jr., and Brian Job. 1986. "The President and the Political Use of Force." *American Political Science Review* 80, no.2 (June): 541-66.
- Page, Benjamin I. and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1983. "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy." *American Political Science Review* 77, no.1 (March): 175-190.
- Putnam, Robert. 1988. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42, no.3 (Summer): 427-460.
- Reus-Smit, Christian Reus-Smit. 1997. "The Constitutional Structure of International Society and the Nature of Fundamental Institutions." *International Organization* 51, no.4 (Autumn): 555-589.
- Ruggie, John Gerard. 1997. "The Past as Prologue? Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy." *International Security* 21, no.4 (Spring): 89-125.
- Saideman, Stephen M. 2002. "The Power of the Small: The Impact of Ethnic Minorities on Foreign Policy." *SAIS Review* 22, no.2 (Summer-Fall): 93-105.
- Sasley, Brent E. and Tami Amanda Jacoby. 2007. "Canada's Jewish and Arab Communities and Canadian Foreign Policy." In *Canada and the Middle East*, eds. Paul Heinbecker and Bessma Momani, 185-204. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Sasley, Brent E. Forthcoming. "Turkish Identity as Enabler or Impediment: Turkey in Central Asia." In *The "New" Central Asia: The Regional Impact of International Actors*, ed. Emilian Kavalski. Singapore: World Scientific.
- Savoie, Donald J. 1999. *Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Shain, Yossi. 2002. "The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution." *SAIS Review* 22, no.2 (Summer-Fall): 115-144.
- _____. 1999. *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and Their Homelands*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Siverson, Randolph M. 1998. *Strategic Politicians, Institutions, and Foreign Policy*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Smith, Tony. 2000. *Foreign Attachments: the Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Snyder, Jack. 1991. *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Sobel, Richard. 2001. *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy since Vietnam: Constraining the Colossus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stein, Janice Gross. 1976/77. "Canadian Foreign Policy in the Middle East after the October War." *Social Praxis* 4, no.3-4: 271-297.
- Sucharov, Mira M. 2005. *The International Self: Psychoanalysis and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Taras, David and Morton Weinfeld. 1990. "Continuity and Criticism: North American Jews and Israel." *International Journal* 45, no.3 (Summer): 661-684.
- Telhami, Shibley and Michael Barnett, eds. 2002. *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Tulchinsky, Gerald. 1998. *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community*. Toronto: Stoddart.
- _____. 1997. *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community*. North York: Stoddart.
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1984. "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War." *International Security* 9, no.1 (Summer): 58-107.
- Waller, Michael and Andrew Linklater, eds. 2003. *Political Loyalty and the Nation-State*. London: Routledge.
- Wendt, Alexander. 1999. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1992. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46, no.2 (Spring): 391-425.

Zakaria, Fareed. 1998. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.