Federalism or Nationalism? Fears and Promises

Suren Raghavan*

The indefatigable politics around the perennial interpretation and implementational considerations (or the **lèse-majesté)** of the concept of Federalism has, once again clogged the institutional politics and their proxies in Sri Lanka. Mr. Ranil W., the leader of opposition seems to be the modern architect of this branch of the discourse. While there is an oversubscription already, it may be symbiotic to resound some of the basic concepts to map the current debate on Ethno national and Multinational Federalism axis.

I Nationalism: (how) Do we understand it?

Walker Connor complained that in political science, there remains a lacuna of systematic study of definition of nationalism.[1] Many others have shared this sentiment.[2] This may be due to the fact that the concept of 'nationalism' is essentially a contested one[3] and has been used to imply two distinctly different, at times conflicting but interwoven concepts. Nationalism can mean statehood as in 'Indian Nationalism', but it can also denote one's belonging to a group within a state such as Québec nationalism in Canada or Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka.[4] Connor termed the first type, 'patriotism' and the second, 'ethnonationalism'.[5] From the vast collection of literature on nationalism, ethnonationalism, minoritinationalism and similar concepts, an intellectually satisfying and empirically attested definition is hard to arrive at.

A review of the literature shows that the definition of 'nationalism' has changed dramatically over time and is extremely contextualized. Unsurprisingly the introduction to a study by Royal Institute of International Affairs in 1939 warns that language had a 'leading' role in defining nationalism.[6] Then as now, the text and definition of nationalism are highly influenced by linguistic, political, military, cultural and even economic factors and motives. However, scholars agree that the importance and appreciation of the subject has changed dramatically from the post World War II to the post 9/11 political context.[7] To avoid an exhaustive comparative analysis of different definitions of nationalism, which is beyond the scope of this essay, it is sufficient to say there are at least two main categories to which most of the definitions belong.

---

* writer is a researcher at University of Ottawa and could be reached via sragh015@uottawa.ca

[1] Walker Conner, 'When is a Nation born', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 13, Number 1, 1990, pp 92-103.
[2] See: Daniel Conversi, 'Nationalism Boundaries and Violence', *Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 28, number 3, 1999, pp 553-584. and Michael Keating and John McGarry, (Eds) Minority Nationalism and the changing International Order,(Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001)
[3] John Garry, 'On Liberty Liberalism and Essential Contestability', *British Journal of Political Science*, 1978, Vol. 8, pp 394.
[4] Walker Connor, A Nation is a Nation', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 1, Number 4, 1978, pp 377-397.
[5] Walker Connor, 'Nationalism and Political illegitimacy', in Daniel Conversi (Ed.), *Ethnonationalism in Contemporary World* (London, Routledge, 2002), pp, 24-50.
[6] Nationalism: A Report by the study group of Royal Institute of International Affairs, (1939) at pp xvi-xx. As cited in 'Nationalism and Political illegitimacy', in Daniel Conversi (Ed) *Ethnonationalism in Contemporary World,* at p. 24
[7] On 11 Sep. (9/11), 2001, four high jacked planes crashed into the twin towers of New York City, creating a paradigm shift in national security of the USA. See: http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/index.htm for full report. Visited on 15 March 2006.

First, in which nationalism is an ideology and political movement.[8] It is largely a constitutive element of modernity[9], constantly defining friends and foes,[10] and creating a state of mind.[11] Benedict Anderson, in his paradigm-creating argument maintained that social instruments such as mass media, mobilization of work force, and strong administrative arrangements made it easier for masses to 'imagine' that they belonged to a community.[12]

The second category of definitions is largely framed in the economic and territorial terms. Ernest Gellner noted that nationalism in an instrumental ideology that promoted 'uniformity' for the industrialisation of economies.[13] Hobsbawm wrote that a nation is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a 'territorial' state.[14] Anthony Smith favoured the state as the defining feature of nationalism.[15]

[8] Peter Alter, *Nationalism,* Translated by Stuart McKinnon-Evans, 2nd ed. (London, Hodder Headline Group, 1992) p 4.
[9] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, University of Mass. Press 1992) at p. 18.
[10] Peter Shalins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989) at pp 270-272.
[11] Hans Kohn and Craig Calhoun (Eds), *The Idea of Nationalism: A study of Origins and Background* (New York, Transaction Publications, 2005), at p 10.
[12] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Revised edition London & NY: Verso, 1991.
[13] Earnest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press,1983) at p 27-29 and 38-49
[14] E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 9-10.
[15] A. D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London, Duckworth, 1971), p. 21.

II A new understanding of nationalism

In recent times, a fair amount of literature has emerged supporting the need to understand nationalism differently. Connor popularized the term 'ethnonationalism', which embodies loyalty to both a nation and to an ethnic group. While at one level it refers to the state, and at another it reflects the politics of a sub unit often deprived.[16] This is because, as Smith points out, nationalism is often expressed in ethnic terms.[17] As Charles Taylor declared 'outside my own culture I would not know who I was as a human being'.[18] Tamir argues that when nationalism or ethnonationalism as it's atomised, is a real and living force, individuals find it difficult live outside of it. This personification explains why nationalism needs to be treated as a serious present day social dynamic.[19]

In the traditional literature the tendency has been to avoid the use of the term 'nationalism' in referring to separatist or autonomist movements developing outside the state. Nationalism of stateless groups therefore, was referred by a range of words including sub-nationalism, micronationalism, ethnonationalism or ethnoregionalism. By contrast, state nationalism was treated as part of daily politics even when it produced 'banal nationalism' as Michael Billing called it.[20] Contrary to the 'primordial' nationalism of sub groups, state nationalism was considered to be very 'civic'.[21]

Whatever the way in which nationalism is defined one thing is clear without doubt: nationalism has been partially responsible for many repugnant political outcomes from inter state civil wars to genocide[22]. In Turkey, former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda conflicts led to major human rights violations, when nationalism of one group took over the entire society. In contrast, however, some multiethnic states such as Canada, Switzerland, India, and recently Belgium have successfully incorporated the different demands and political desires of sub groups. The common denominator for this relative success is their ability to create different forms of governments based on federal principles, each suited for their historical

---

[16] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994a) at p 168.
[17] Anthony D. Smith, 'Dating Nation' in Daniel Conversi (Ed), (2002) op., cit., pp. 53-71.
[18] Charles Taylor, Why do nations become States?' in G. Laforst, (Ed) Reconciliating *Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism* (London, McGill-Queen University Press, 1993), chap. 3, p. 40-58.
[19] Yael Tamir (1993), op., cit., at p. 85-86
[20] Michael Billing, *Banal Nationalism* (London, Sage Publishers, 1995).
[21] David Brown, *Contemporary Nationalism: Ethnocultural and Multicultural Politics* (London, Routledge 1995).
[22] Rudolph J. Rummel, 'Power, Genocide and Mass murder', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 30, 1, Feb. 1994, pp 1-10, at p. 4-5. Also http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/massacre.html for a detail account

and contextualized needs. For this reason, peace promoters,[23] political scientist,[24] conflict analysts[25] and of course federalists have argued that states that are multinational ought to consider some federal form for constitutional and institutional arrangements. Alfred Stepan concluded that countries with high level of diversities 'will never become stable without workable federal systems'.[26] Failing to follow may push these states into protracted ethnopolitical conflicts like those in Sri Lanka, Sudan or Somalia. Thus, Will Kymlicka a noted contributor claimed that 'countries that are formed though a federation of peoples naturally will need some form of federation'.[27] That being so, how do we acknowledge nationalism individually and collectively for positive political results? Are the supporters of federalism justified in their advocacy?

[23] Kidane Mengisteab, 'New Approaches to State Building in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia's Ethnic-Based Federalism' *African Studies Review* Vol. 40, No. 3 (Dec., 1997), pp. 111-132
[24] Larry Diamond, (1999), op., cit., pp 151-160.
[25] *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators* see at: www.idea.int/publications/browse/cm.cfm
[26] Alfred Stephan, ' Federalism and Democracy : Beyond a US model', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, Number 4 , October 1999, pp, 19-34.
[27] Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multinationalism and Citizenship* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), at p. 96.

III Federalism and Nationalism

The way nationalism was understood and described in the past poses the biggest challenges when studying the relationship between nationalism and federalism in a multicultural state. This is clear in the work of Gellner.

> 'In our age many political systems which combine cultural pluralism with a persisting inequality between cultures…. are doomed, in virtue of their violation of the nationalist principle which, in the past ages, could be violated with impunity'[28]

He believed that under the new social order multicultural identity is 'increasingly uncomfortable',[29] and the options were to change either the state or the cultural identities. Gellner hoped that greater technology and superior education would reduce the need to be different and all citizens could live in a common culture.[30]This visible scepticism could be due to lack of appreciation for the possibility of political re-engineering in multinational states via constitutional arrangements.

Michael Burgess, in his recent contribution to the debate, noted a 'severe limitation' in the conventional liberal concept of nationalism. He pointed that this definition ' … obscures national minorities and indeed identifies all collective identities as part of the same nation…'[31] Burgess agreed that the definition adopted by Galligan was possibly true in culturally homogenous states like Australia, but is highly 'problematic' in highly diverse states. The position developed by Burgess seems to have derived from two main factors. The first is the empirical evidence of living and breathing liberal, polycultural and multinational states with some form of federalism. And the second, a normative position, in which Burgess is reluctant to accept the artificial limitations imposed on different vibrant cultures by institutional rigidity.

---

[28] Earnest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1997), at p.104.

[29] _____, Conditions of Liberty: Civil society and its Rivals (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1994), p. 108.

[30]

[31] Michael Burgess, *Comparative Federalism: Theory and Practice* (London, Routledge, 2006), at p. 111.

In contrast, federalism is a political arrangement that recognizes both self rule and shared rule as argued by Elazar.[32] And it is a normative political philosophy.[33] Democratic federations, (as opposed to communist federations[34]) are able to accommodate different nations with their nationalism.[35] The spirit of these definitions are very close to the nationalism as identified by Brendan O'Leary, who believed nationalism is something that should be 'free and institutionally expressed and ruled by its 'co-nationals'[36] Here, the possibility of many nations, even with strong national sentiments, forming a shared rule is fully recognised. Nationalism, understood this way, is compatible with federal philosophy, or at least they do not oppose it, and could, in fact, build a complementary relationship. It is imperative then to examine the relationship between these important political entities of our time.

[32] Daniel J. Elazar, *Exploring Federalism* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, University of Alabama, 1987).
[33] Peterson King, *Federalism and Federation* (London, Croom Helm, 1982).
[34] Former USSR and Yugoslavia are not considered as democratic federation. They limited the citizens' choice to make decisions and be of the local as well as the federal governments. See; Carol Skalnik Leff, Democratization and Disintegration in Multinational States: The Break up of the Communist Federations, *World Politics* - Volume 51, Number 2, January 1999, pp. 205-235. for full a discussion.
[35] Will Kamlicka, 'Federalism, Nationalism and Multiculturalism' in *Theories of Federalism: A Reader,* Dimitrios Karmis and Wayne Norman (Eds), (New York, NY, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) at p 269.
[36] Brendan O'Leary, 'On the Nature of Nationalism: An Appraisal of Gellner's writing on Nationalism', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 2, number 2, pp 191- 222. at p. 191.

IV Federalism-Nationalism how do they relate?

In the vast literature covering the relationship between federalism and nationalism there are at least three main categories of argument.

First: federalism and nationalism are independent and mutually exclusive. Many early commentaries fall into this category. In a report to a committee on Public Safety, in January 1794, the authors pronounced 'Federalism and superstition speak low Breton; emigration and hatred speak German; the counterrevolution speaks Italian, and fanatism speaks Basqué.[37] The outlook has been 'monistic' than 'pluralistic' or federal during this time. Such monistic tendencies are seen in the thoughts of the 'founder fathers' of federalism from Hamilton to Madison. [38] Based on the concept of 'one nation' these pioneers succeeded in categorising the blacks, whites and others who had many differences in terms of social origin, culture, language and even basic civil rights into one monistic identity. Hueglin called this as 'counter traditions' of federalism.[39] As Burgess shows, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon who promoted territorial representation and early idea of federalism in Europe was not fully open to a federation based on nationalism. Indeed Proudhon was largely motivated by economic benefits.[40] Even while he introduced a 'confederation of confederations' underpinning the two tier politics in a federation,[41] failed, as Vittoria Majocchi suggests, to recognize any form of multinationalism.[42]

Pierre Trudeau, who later became the Prime Minister of Canada, held similar views. In an essay presented in 1968 he argued that federalism to be the best way to nullify and invalidate the strength of nationalism. His focus was to make federalism with functional reasons, so that the emotions involved with nationalism could be diluted.[43] For these pioneers, federalism was the antidote or the taming whip of nationalism. Of course, this limited attitude could have been a result of the time and context they lived, when pluralism had not developed as in the modern form.

---

[37] De Certaus, Dominique and Revel 1975 as cited in Roger Brubaker *Citizenship and Nationalism in France and Germany* (Cambridge Massachusetts , Harvard University Press, 1992) at p. 7-8

[38] Dimitrios Karmis and Wayne Norman, (eds) 2005, op., cit. at p 9.

[39] Thomas Hueglin, *Early Modern Concepts for a Late Modern World: Althusius on Community and Federalism* (Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1999) chap. 12 Dimitrios Karmis and Wayne Norman (eds) 2005, op., cit. at p 9.

[40] Michael Burgess, op. cit. at p. 172

[41] As cited in Dimitrios Karmis and Wayne Norman (eds.) 2005, op., cit. at p 9.

[42] Luigi Vittoria Majocchi, 'Nationalism and Federalism in 19th Century Europe' in A. Bosco (ed.), *The Federal Idea: History of Federalism from Enlightenment to 1945* (London Lothian Press, 1991) at p 162.

[43] Pierre Trudeau, 'Federalism of (Toronto Press, 1968), pp 182-200.

[43] Daniel Treisman, 'Russia's "Ethnic, Nationalism and Reasons', in Pierre E. Trudeau (Ed), *Federalism and French Canadian* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968), pp 182-200.

The second category of argument concerning the relationship between federalism and nationalism is that they are one and the same. As O'Leary has shown, many former communist states permitted some form of federalism and nationalism occurring side by side, because they believed that could promote socialism.[44] Federalism was maintained as a necessary step to achieve socialism.[45] These leaders by nature were strong cosmopolitans, as they worked towards a common and liner world economy and social order. Consequently, those federations which were limited by a 'hidden agenda' could only be short lived.[46]

Third category of argument states federalism and nationalism can coexist and bring meaningful benefits under given conditions. Very sensibly, most scholars in this camp, base their arguments on the fact that the world is dramatically changing in terms of state formation. A changing world order requires a creative political order in which one would have the freedom to be a global citizen, a state citizen as well as a citizen of a particular nation. Summarizing this belief, Ronald Watts noted, 'we appeared to be in a paradigm shift which is taking us from a world of sovereign nation states to a world of diminished state sovereignty and increased interstate linkage of a constitutionally federal character'.[47] A confident Kymlicka claimed, 'multinational federations have succeeded, tamed, domesticated and pacified nationalism. It is difficult to imagine any other political system that can make the same claim'.[48] Burgess, after presenting a comparative analysis, concludes that 'federal arrangements.., are likely to be the most successful institutional response to nationality claims'[49]

However, these contributors have cautioned that all nationalisms may not be compatible with all federalisms. The historical need, internal social-demography and the political culture of a state will largely determine the successful outcome of a federation. Federations have been formed in different ways. For some federations, given territorial cleavage was the single difference and thus created territorial federations.

---

[44] Daniel Treisman, 'Russia's "Ethnic Rival". The separatist activism of Regional Leaders in a Post Communist Order', *World Politics*, Vol. 49. Number 2. Jan. 1997, pp 212-249.
[45] Brendan O'Leary, 'An Iron Law of Nationalism and Federalism', *Journal of Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 7, part 3, July 2001, pp, 273-292.
[46] Anita Inder Singh 'Managing national diversity through political structures and ideologies: Soviet experience' in *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 1, part 2, July 1995, pp 197-220.
[47] Ronald Watts, *Comparing Federal Systems*, 2nd edition, (Kingston, Ontario, Queen's University, 1999), p. 4.
[48] Will Kymlicka (2005), op., cit., p. 269.
[49] Michael Burgess, (2006) op., cit., at p. 129.

V Mononational and Multinational Federations

Creation of the US federation was largely framed on white, protestant and English-speaking identity.[50] The presence of other sub groups such as blacks was not actively recognized.[51] US federation was dominated by the notion to 'unite people living in different units but shared a common language and culture'.[52] This attempt to unit the people made an extensive administrative arrangement possible.[53] As Burgess suggests 'they created a new form "the compound republic" yet gave the closest name: a federation'.[54] The desire to unite and to override other differences was clearly presented in the writing of Madison's federal papers.[55]

By contract when a federation is formed with the full consideration for the powers and boundaries demanded by the nations within, it is recognized as a multinational federation.[56] It is in this form of federation that a sub national claim could be accommodated. India, Malaysia, and Belgium are most prominent federations in this category. The fundamental apprehension of these federations is to actively seek out for the possibility of federal societies within them, on the basis of religion, language, or ethnicity. India has created nine new states since 1970, three as recent as November 2000.[57] This 'deliberate democracy' has been the most successful feature[58] and the 'pragmatic approach', of India as Brass named it.[59] This is even remarkable of a country where, as Kenneth Wheare called it only a 'quasi-federalism' [60] exists. Like other federations, Indian condition is clearly historical and contextualized.

Donald Horowitz had argued for a more subtle mechanism. He suggested that federations should be designed in a way that regional nations should not become majority in

---

[50] Will Kymlicka (2005), op., cit., p. 272-274.
[51] Large collection of literature is available of the origin and various stages of development of native Americans since the arrival of European whites at http://www.nativeamericans.com/ and http://www.tolatsga.org/Compacts.html
[52] Murray Forsyth Federalism and Nationalism (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1989), at p. 4.
[53] The US federation is made of 50 states, 2 federacies, 3 home rules, 3 unincorporated territories and 130 Native American domestic Independent Nations, see Ronald Watt (1999) op., cit., at p. 10.
[54] Michael Burgess (2006) op., cit., at p. 74.
[55] The Federal Papers II see at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/federal/fed.htm visited on 15 March.
[56] Will Kimlicka, (2005) op., cit., at p. 276.
[57] In the year 2000 India created three new territories. On Nov. 01 Chhattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh, on 09 Nov. Uttaranchal in Uttar Pradesh and 15 Nov. Jharhand in Bihar and proposals are discussed to create further states. See full discussion at www.statoids.com/uin. visited on 16 March 2006.
[58] Balveer Arora and Douglas Verney, *Multiple Identity in a Single State: Indian Federalism in Comparative Perspective* (New Delhi, Konark Publisher Ltd. 1995)
[59] Paul R. Brass, *The Politics of India since Independence* (New Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 1990) at p. x.
[60] Kenneth C. Wheare *Federal Government* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964) 4th edition as cited in Burgess(2006) op., cit., at p.123

a given region.[61] This is to prevent them becoming secessionist. By doing so he noted the balance of power will force different nations to stay together. Kymlicka remonstrates that US federation was created on this basis making it a 'territorial federation'[62]. This mechanism may help prevent separations but would fail to fulfil the national aspiration of those nations seeking special identity in power sharing, and may defeat the purpose of the federation. Then, do multinational federations create opportunities where nationalism can be located? Is federalism the answer for all those states bleeding due to ethnonational conflicts? Can federalism be transplanted as a normative political ideology and be a conflict transformative social contract? The honest answer could be 'yes' and 'no' because the success does not depend on the promise of federalism alone, but how and where it is applied.

[61] Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflicts* (Barkley, California, California University Press, 1985) chapter 14.
[62] Will Kimlicka,' (2005) op., cit., pp 275-276 for detailed discussion.

VII Promise of Federalism

Ted Gurr's study of Minorities at Risk (MAR) showed, among other facts, that federalism is more capable in accommodating minority concerns and thus reduce discrimination. Gurr's survey remarkably proves that federal states, compared to unitary states, have experienced 50 per cent less political violence and are more stable.[63] Critics of these observations however, have raised questions regarding the economic strength of federal states, suggesting that federal principles alone are not the contributing factors for this relative peace. Bermeo in her research found that below a given GDP and per-capita level, federal states have failed to perform better than unitary states in term of minority aspirations.[64] Beside economic factors, federations tend to fail due to institutional incapability and lack of commitment by the elites, as seen in Nigeria.[65]

This forces us to revisit the primary question. Is there a relationship between federalism and nationalism? If so what is it? How do we recognize and positively exploit the same? These are questions for which only limited answers could be provided because on one hand what is meant by 'federalism' seems to differ in different states and on the other, nationalism: is highly contextual, interpretative and governed by normative analysis.[66] But in face of the growth of nationalism, as more states are becoming multinational, it is impossible to ignore the pressing demand for an answer, however incomplete it may appear.

The relationship between federalism as an institutional arrangement to accommodate the social force of nationalism could be seen from different ways states have dealt with them. There are at least two opposing approaches observable, both largely influenced by the constitutional nature of a state.

1. Nationalism by sub groups is a reality and could be incorporated into national politics with institutional arrangements. India stands as the best example of this

[63] Ted R. Gurr, Minorities at Risk: A Global survey of Ethnopolitical Conflicts, (Washington D.C. US Institute of Peace Press, 1993) sees. www.usip.org. visited on 12 March 2006

[64] Nancy Bermeo, 'The Import of Institutions', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, number 2 April 2002, pp 98-110

[65] Nigeria, an oil rich nation with relative higher GDP failed to harvest the full benefits of its federal practice as the institutional capacity was fragile. See. Rotimi T. Suberu, 'Nigeria: Dilemmas of Federalism' in Ugo M. Amertti and Nancy Bermeo (Eds), *Federalism and Territorial Cleavage*, (Baltimore and London. John Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp, 327-352.

[66] Peter N. Stearns, 'Nationalism: An Invitation to comparative Analysis' *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, Number 1, Spring 1997, pp 57-74.

approach.[67] Followed by Canada.[68] Two factors could promote this process of 'incorporation'. First the incorporated national group is smaller, in compared with the rest of the federation, as in the case of Nunavut of Canada and all the new states created in India. Secondly, the presence of a stronger political identity between the region and federal body through a national party like the Indian Congress or UMNO in Malaysia.[69] As shown earlier, all these states have some form of federalism.

2. More states often have tried to coerce demands of sub national groups. History is full of examples of such approach, and the human suffering that followed. Turkey's response to the Kurdish national demand[70], Sri Lanka's response to the Tamil political aspirations, all have produced long drawn social conflicts.[71] When used, coercion has produced long term negative results even in developed world, as witnessed during the Thatcher regime towards IRA.[72] It is clear; these states are unitary in their constitutions.

It is not difficult to decide which institutional system has dealt with nationalism in a positive manner. Why then, state political elites like those in Sri Lanka fear federalism, they rather engage in a destructive civil war than to consider a form of federalism? This is a question that brings furthers difficult questions.

[67] Atul Kholi, 'India: Federalism and Accommodation of Ethnic Nationalism' in Ugo M. Amertti and Nancy Bermeo (Eds), (2004), op., cit., pp, 281-300

[68] Nunavut is the largest and newest of the territories of Canada; it was separated officially from the vast Northwest Territories on April 1, 1999 via the Nunavut Act and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act, though the actual boundaries were established in 1993. The creation of Nunavut marked the first major change to Canada's map since the incorporation of the new province of Newfoundland (including Labrador) in 1949. yet it has the least population in province of Canada.

[69] Donald Horowitz, Making Moderation Pay: The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Conflict Management' in Joseph Montville, ed., *Conflicts and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1991)

[70] Michele P. Angrist, 'Turkey: Roots of the Turkey-Kurdish Conflict and prospect of constructive Reforms' in Ugo M. Amertti and Nancy Bermeo (eds), (2004),op., cit., pp 387-416

[71] Robert I. Rotberg (Editor), *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation* (Washington, DC The Brookings Institution, 1999)

[72] Michael Keating, United Kingdom: Political Institutions and Territorial Cleavages' in Ugo M. Amertti and Nancy Bermeo (Eds), (2004),op., cit., pp 155-180.

VIII Fears of Federalism

Failed federations, in some postcolonial states have generated fears amongst elites and powerful cultural groups to embrace federalism, in multinational states. Their disinclination to consider federalism lies in the possibility of secession by an extensively federated sub unit and future rivalry if succeeded.[73] But any serious study will provide evidence otherwise. It is by means of a federation that many possible separatist attempts have been successfully challenged, in India, Spain and Canada. When these separatist groups were incorporated into the decision making mechanism, the separatism itself goes 'off-stage' as Athul had argued.[74] William Zartmann noted 'responsibilities reduce demands'. [75] By contrast, repeated refusal to consider a federal model often leads to lethal separatist insurgents. Sri Lanka and its protracted conflict is a classic case study,[76] while the story of Eritrea[77] and East Timor[78] provides further insights.

This is in not to suggest that federalism and federations hold the final answer for all nationalist and ethnopolitical turbulences.[79] That would be far-fetched, especially given the fact that a number of federations have failed during the last few decades from West Indies to Singapore.[80] The argument is simply that federalism has sufficient space to accommodate nationalism, compared to any other model of government. Thus, it is indispensable for critics as well as fans of federalism to study the reasons for the success and apparent failures of federalism.

Bermeo believes that lack of volunteerism is a main reason for these failures.[81] It is no wonder, as the word 'federal' derives from the Latin word 'foedus' meaning 'covenant'[82] without which any federation is distained to diminish. This is why Elazar argued for a true

---

[73] Brendan O'Leary, op., cit., at p. 283
[74] Athul Kholi , op., cit.,
[75] William Zartmann 'Negotiation and Pre-Negotiations in Ethnic conflicts: The Beginning the Middle and the End' in Joseph Montville, (1991) op., cit., pp 527-28
[76] A. Jeyaratnam, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism* (London, C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 1999)
[77] Tesfatsion Medhani, 'Remarks on Eritrea and Possible framework for Peace' in Peter Woodworth and Murray Forsyth (Eds.), *Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa: federalism and Alternatives* ,(Aldershot, England: Dartmouth Publishers 1994) at p. 23-24
[78] Traub, James. 'Inventing East Timor', Foreign Affairs, Jul/Aug 2000, Vol. 79 Issue 4, p74-89.
[79] Svante E. Cornell, 'Autonomy as a source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective', *World Politics*, Vol. 54, Number 2, Jan. 2002, pp 245-276
[80] Thomas M. Franck. & Other (Eds) *Why federations fail: an inquiry into the requisites for successful federalism* (New York, New York University Press, 1968) and See Nancy Bermeo, 'The Import of Institutions', *Journal of Democracy,* vol. 13, number 2 April 2002, pp 98-110 at p 106 full list of failed federations.
[81] Nancy Bermeo, (2002) op., cit., at p. 108
[82] Oxford English Dictionary, paper ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002) at p 229.

'sense of partnership' in every federation.[83] When federalism is imposed on, creating what Stepan in self style vocabulary calls 'forced-together federations'[84], their success is doubtful. It is also imperative to observe that behind every failed federation there seems to be a separation or break down of democracy. However to dispel unsubstantiated fears, no separatist moment has ever succeeded in a multinational democratic federation.[85] The success or the failure of a federation in terms of its national political identities depends on issues such as the geniuses of the political elites, the strength of the institutional arrangements, the socio-political culture and last but not least the set of normative values on which the state is willing to function.

[83] Daniel Elazar, (1987), op., cit., at p 67.
[84] Alfred Stepan has introduced such terminologies as 'Coming together Federalism', 'Holding together Fderalism' and Forced-together Federalism' See. Alfred Stepan in Ugo M. Amertti and Nancy Bermeo (Eds), (2004) op., cit., pp 441-456
[85] Nancy Bermeo, (2002) op., cit., at p. 108

IX Conclusion

Nationalism, a historical force, is growing with new acceptance, ironically fuelled by globalised world conditions.[86] Like in the past, mistreated nationalism could bring destructive political results. There is a great normative value in recognizing nationalisms with the nations those promote their own political identity into the constitution of states. This is possible through a democratic multinational federation. Multinational federations could create coexistence and safety for many different nationalities within a state. However, federations automatically don't guarantee the success of any multinationalism. Beside, the architects of federations should be able to design a 'custom made' arrangement for each specific historical condition.[87] The fears of federalism are not founded on any factual or empirical evidence; rather, it could be the intransigent political attitude and beliefs of political elites, which had worked as emboldens for conflicts and separation. Political scientists disagree on many facets of the multinational discourse. Especially, as Burgess shows, the accuracy of the use of terms like multinational-democracies or multinational societies is still contested.[88] These finer arguments may fill future debates of federalism. Further, as Horowitz has shown, the developing international legal interpretation on the right of 'self-determination' has caused concerns amongst those who fear federalism.[89]

However, it will be the task and talent of social scientists, as well as politicians, to create conditions for better life standard, equal opportunity and integrity of life for millions who are caught in states that are struggling to move way from their traditional institutional settings. Many states, especially in the developing world are torn between entrenched mononationalism and the need to keep with the changing world. It is precisely because the ultimate aim of all human efforts should be to help shape the world into a better and safe place for all, that the normative value of the study of the relationship between federalism and nationalism becomes urgent. To that end as Burgess has convincingly argued, a true multinational federation holds promises not just for an individual state but as a possible future order in a globalised world.[90] Therefore it is important to focus on federalism as a

[86] John Gray (2002), op., cit., chapters 1-3
[87] Linz, Juan J. 'Toward Consolidated Democracies' *Journal of Democracy* - Volume 7, Number 2, April 1996, pp. 14-33 at p 26.
[88] Michael Burgess, (2006),op., cit., at p. 129-130
[89] Donald Horowitz, 'Self Determination: Politics, Philosophy and Law' in M. Moore (ed.), *National Self Determination and Secession* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998)
[90] Michael Burgess, op., cit., at p. 268

'peace-creating' government model, because enough evidence suggests that federalism holds the capacity to engage with nationalism in a creative manner. What are the conditions under which federalism will be considered favourably? What are the challenges for this endeavour? How to conquer them? What is the most acceptable way to introduce federalism as a political solution to many states that are bleeding? Is it possible for a universal institute like the UN to create a charter on federalism for ratification by member states? These are questions that need further, long-term academic, empirical and experimental endeavours.