


the given minority is seen as representing a moderate threat) that will likely be cited widely in scholarly works for years to come. The five in-depth case studies are thorough and interesting.

At the same time, this book also raises some questions. Why is the role of external actors brought up in the theoretical chapter yet no hypotheses derived about it? Later in the case studies of Estonia and Latvia, the role of external actors such as the European Union is an important factor that has influenced the countries' decision-making towards their Russian minorities. Furthermore, could it be that the key variable influencing governmental decision-making towards their Russian minorities is not so much the perceived threat that such minorities may represent but more so the perceived likelihood that harsher measures towards the Russophones could lead to a Russian intervention? The way it is conceptualized and operationalized, the very concept of "threat perception" includes numerous variables – and it is not clear how much weight each of them holds. As a result, in the qualitative empirical part of the study it can sometimes be questioned whether the perceived threat level could be assigned differently. For example, after assessing the numerous variables that fall under threat perception, the author states that Russian minorities have historically represented only a moderate threat to Latvia and Estonia. However, as in both of these countries there has been a significant concentration of Russian speakers in the Eastern regions, why is this threat assessed just as moderate? The threat perception section as a whole could benefit from engaging more with additional literatures on threat perception in international relations. Finally, while it is impressive to learn that this book draws on interviews with more than 100 individuals, it would be helpful to see more information about these interviews – for example, are these interviews roughly equally distributed over all 11 countries?

Overall, this book is a welcome addition to the scholarship on minority integration, ethnic politics and the politics of the Former Soviet Republics. Those with interest in Ukraine, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia and Kazakhstan will likely be interested in reading the detailed cases studies on these countries. The theoretical and conceptual insights regarding the dynamics of minority integration and exclusion will be of interest to keen observers of conflict situations and secessionist movements in other regions.

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Language and Nationality: Social Inferences, Cultural Differences, and Linguistic Misconceptions, by Pietro Bortone, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, 272 pp., \$130 (hardback), ISBN 9781350071636, \$40 (paperback), ISBN 9781350071643.

This informative and well-written book has a somewhat misleading title as it in fact covers a much broader topic than the link between language and nationality, one that could be more appropriately described as the relationship between language and group identity. Coming from a linguist, the examination prioritizes the language part, namely linguistic features and processes rather than social factors and institutional mechanisms. Phenomenally erudite and fluent in many languages, the author entertains the readers with little-known facts about similarities and dissimilarities of various languages from different parts of the globe, their historical evolution, and widespread perceptions thereof among scholars and the general public. In the process, he vividly demonstrates how the language people use is almost always perceived as a marker of their belonging to certain social categories and thus they are responded to in accordance with their interlocutors' views of those categories. Nationality is but one of these categories; others include gender, age, class, occupation, place of origin, and ethnic group.


Bortone's examination begins with one of the most obvious badges of personal identity, the names, which can also tell a lot about their bearers' belonging to certain social categories, from gender to nationality. He then proceeds to a more important source of information about users of language, namely their particular ways of using it, which are "usually sufficient for others to categorize us in a particular fashion and to decide how they want to respond to us" (19). Some ways of speaking – from accents to slangs and dialects – are met with strong disapproval or even hostility, either because they differ markedly from listeners' perceptions of proper usage in a given context or because they are associated with groups of people that listeners generally dislike. One common (but not necessarily conscious) way of responding to somebody else's speech is making one's own speech closer to or more distant from theirs, so as to establish commonality or draw distinction, to signal the wish to belong to the same group or assert the belonging to another one. While such linguistic adjustment is most obvious in case of multilingual speakers switching between different languages, Bortone insists that "everybody has a linguistic repertoire consisting of distinct linguistic codes selected according to the audience, the setting, the tone of the occasion, and the purpose – in sum, depending on the role one has to play in that context" (51).

It is only in the second half of the book that Bortone deals precisely with the relationship between language and nationality. Having discussed various definitions of ethnic groups and nations and refuting the primordialist understanding thereof as eternal and homogenous, he examines the key element of contemporary perception of nationhood which he calls the nation-based outlook. At its heart is the belief that the globe is naturally and inevitably divided into nations having, or striving to have, their own states. In accordance with the topic of the book, the author then focuses on the creation of nation and the role of languages – particularly written languages and cultures – in this process. In the next chapter he discusses the creation of languages, first in parallel with the creation of nations and "their" states and later with the crucial role of those states in the standardization and promotion of the perceived national languages.

While recognizing the merits of a common standardized language for effective communication and governance within a state, Bortone draws attention to the fact that the standard promoted by that state is usually based on the speech of particular elite groups who further benefit from its elevation to official status. He also highlights another negative consequence of the imposition of a national language, namely the suppression of linguistic diversity: "In order to make one particular language appear to be the long-established and nation-wide accepted tongue of a sizable country, the polyphony of dialects and perhaps other languages that, in many cases, preceded its spread has to be erased and downplayed as much as possible" (184). Accordingly, the nation-based outlook perceives the use of minority languages by some parts of the population as a problem, all the more so because it assumes that speakers of those languages use the same "one nation – one language" logic and thus see themselves as constituting a separate nation worthy of its own state. In the final chapter, Bortone summarizes various aspects of the widespread perception of language as coterminous with nationality and argues that while its proponents have to a large extent made it a reality by imposing a single language for a certain nation, many languages have survived and are still spoken within the borders of states associated with other, more widespread languages. He thus concludes that "the equation between language and nationality is untrue for much of humankind. In the world, there are more multilingual than monolingual peoples, including in Europe, and languages coterminous with one state are a rare exception, not the rule" (220).

What is lacking in Bortone's detailed and nuanced analysis is a discussion of specific mechanisms by which linguistic homogeneity is imposed and heterogeneity is preserved. While refuting widespread misperceptions of language and its relationship with nationality, he does not seek to explain how they are disseminated and inculcated and why the opposite, correct perceptions do not prevail. When discussing numerous facts about dozens of languages used in the past and present in various parts of the world, he barely mentions particular social groups and institutions contributing to their expansion, retention, or attrition. Therefore, this linguistic account of the link between language and nationality should be complemented by a social science analysis which would

necessarily deal with fewer nations and languages but demonstrate how the link was established and preserved by certain groups in certain countries at certain periods of their distant and recent history. At the same time, Bortone's book will be useful to those readers of this journal who want to learn more about language processes accompanying, and contributing to, the formation and evolution of nationality groups.

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The Symbolic State: Minority Recognition, Majority Backlash, and Secession in Multinational Countries, by Karlo Basta, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021, 272pp., \$130.00 (cloth), ISBN 9780228008057, \$37.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0228008064.

Multinational states are not nation-states. They have peculiar political dynamics involving the relationship between national minorities, majorities, and the state. Karlo Basta's book delves into the very heart of this relationship by presenting a dynamic theory of nationalist demands and state responses using the cases of Canada/Québec, Spain/Catalonia, Yugoslavia/Croatia, and the "velvet divorce" of Czechoslovakia.

The theory begins with the idea that national minorities present both instrumental and symbolic recognition demands. Instrumental demands are demands for policy and fiscal autonomy. States will typically choose to respond to these demands as opposed to symbolic recognition demands because policy and fiscal autonomy do not directly involve a compromise on national identity, or the "symbolic-institutional order." For Basta, states will respond favorably to instrumental demands if the central government's broad ideological approach (he distinguishes between *state-interventionist* and *pro-market*) is the same as the regional government seeking autonomy because autonomy will then not threaten the central government's policy objectives. This is what Basta calls the "political economy story." More important is the subsequent "symbolic politics story." As initially the demands of the national minority are only partially met (at best, demands of an instrumental nature are met), a second round of claims focused on symbolic recognition unfolds. Here, the central government may choose to offer some form of symbolic recognition of nationhood to relieve nationalist pressure. Such recognition, Basta tells us, is likely to offend the majority group's vision of the country and, therefore, to trigger a backlash against recognition within this (majority) group. In turn, such backlash (which may very well lead to the termination of the recognition agreement) can be used by (minority) nationalist politicians to stimulate mobilization in favor of independence. The end result is a secessionist crisis.

The most interesting argument here is that symbolic recognition is likely to trigger secessionist crises. It is counter-intuitive and provocative. Indeed, the argument goes against much of the literature on the accommodation of nationalism, which tends to suggest that formally recognizing the existence of a minority nation is for states an effective way to manage nationalism. The argument is well-developed and persuasive. It is built on an ontological and theoretical position on institutions that provides them with symbolic importance. Indeed, backlash to recognition occurs because the majority group feels that such recognition is a threat to what is essentially *their* symbolic-institutional order. An original and powerful aspect of the theory is that institutions have symbolic value not only for the national minority, but also for the majority group. In this sense, the book builds on the (still very slim) literature on majority and state nationalism.

Basta's theory rests on an analytical distinction between instrumental and symbolic recognition demands. In reality, the line between these two "types" of demands is blurred. For example, the