

# **SWISS NATION-STATE AND ITS PATRIOTISM A CRITIQUE OF WILL KYMLICKA'S ACCOUNT OF MULTINATION STATES<sup>1</sup>**

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In recent years we have witnessed a considerable increase of interest in the issues of multiculturalism. It has become one of the most discussed issues in liberal political theory. The main question goes: How, if ever, should the state react in front of the demands coming from groups of its citizens who claim differential rights on the grounds of their 'cultural distinctiveness'?

One of the most influential authors of the past decade who has tried to assess a theoretical model of defense of 'cultural rights' from a liberal prospective is Will Kymlicka. His theory is probably unavoidable in any contemporary discussion on multiculturalism.

This paper stems from my critical reading of Kymlicka's theory. On the one hand, I have found his use of terms like 'culture' and 'nation' rather ambiguous and misleading from a liberal viewpoint. This is not a minor issue insofar as Kymlicka's very aim has been to provide a liberal theory of defense of cultural rights. On the other hand, I was unsatisfied with the way in which he relied on Switzerland as an example of a 'multination state'. The evidence he provided for justifying that claim seemed neither sufficient nor appropriate to me.

It is not my intention here to provide an alternative model of dealing with 'cultural differences'. My aims are more modest. First, I want to provide a critical assessment of Kymlicka's theory by pointing out some of its conceptual ambiguities. Second, I want to discuss the case of Switzerland by defending the thesis that it does not constitute a multinational state.

I argue that Kymlicka's theory of multiculturalism - in which Switzerland does play a role, and, I claim, a crucial one - draws wrong conclusions from the Swiss case and misinterprets its multicultural experience. At the end of the paper I will try to summarize some of the findings that, I believe, could serve if not as an alternative model then at least as suggestions of some interesting lessons that we can draw from the Swiss experience.

## I - KYMLICKA: A BRIEF ABSTRACT

I do not believe that Will Kymlicka succeeds in reconciling liberal premises with the language of nationalism. As a matter of fact, it is one thing to argue that individuals need a 'context of choice' in order to exercise their right to choose the 'good life'; it is a different thing to claim that such a context of choice is provided only and foremost by 'societal cultures' or 'nations' defined almost exclusively in linguistic terms.<sup>2</sup> If a liberal, as Kymlicka believes, should agree with the idea that the question 'Who am I?' is irrelevant to his or her liberal credo, and so no given community of individuals can be seen as constitutive of one's personal identity, then it is not comprehensible why he implicitly endorses the idea that 'nation' is, might or should be the 'primary focus of identification'.

On the other hand, the passage from 'culture' to 'nation' in Kymlicka's theory is problematic also because the language of nationhood bears its specific political meanings. Kymlicka seems aware of this when he states that '[t]he sense of being a distinct nation within a larger country is potentially destabilizing', while acknowledging that he has not yet been capable of identifying the sources of unity in a 'democratic multinational state' (1995: 192). In fact, this is even said to constitute the 'fundamental challenge' to which liberal theorists still have to provide an answer.

Moreover, Kymlicka's fundamental distinction between 'single nation-states' and 'multination states' is rather muddy. On the one hand, since he claims that '[i]n very few countries the citizens can be said to share the same language, or belong to the same ethnonational group', one would expect that all the countries in the world, except perhaps for 'Iceland and the Koreas' are multinational (Kymlicka, 1995: 1, 196 n.1). In that case, most of the world's countries should worry today about their stability. On the other hand, Kymlicka continuously draws his conclusions from such a contrast by pointing on specific and relatively restricted examples of multinational states. Such examples progressively narrow down until the author is left with only one credible country that he can pick out in order to show that a multinational state can be viable - that country is Switzerland.

My aim is to argue that Kymlicka misinterpretes the experience of Switzerland in terms of multiculturalism when he labeled it the 'most multinational country' (Kymlicka, 1995: 18). My thesis, instead, has been that Switzerland constitutes a true nation-state and that over the centuries it has developed a particular kind of *patriotism*. In order to illustrate this, I will first shortly mention the *historical* evidence that shows that the Swiss nation has been progressively constructed since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and that it is a result of a rather typical process of nation-building. I will then pass onto *sociological* evidence by examining the two features that Kymlicka

himself sees as essential in adopting the language of nationhood: that is, the power of a nation to name itself (designation-based argument) and the assumption that nations represent people's 'primary identities' (identity-based argument). I want to show that the Swiss linguistic groups neither consider themselves as distinct 'nations' nor see their respective linguistic communities as their 'primary foci of identification'.

Nevertheless, it is still possible that, some day, Switzerland might become a multination state. Some evidence related to the increasing impact of the mass media in segmentation of the Swiss public space and the potentially dividing impact of direct democracy suggest that Switzerland might end up being divided into distinct linguistic blocs as it is the case with the contemporary Belgium. Faced with such an alternative I shall, in the third part, distinguish a couple of *normative* arguments that speak in favor of maintaining the concept of a single Swiss nation.

## II - SWITZERLAND

### A - Historical evidence

The late 18<sup>th</sup> century was a turning point in the European and World's history. This assertion is especially true for the realm of politics. The shift of the source of state sovereignty from divine and personal to popular and impersonal radically changed the vision of state and of politics. Hence the two major political upheavals of that time, American (1776) and French (1789) revolutions, placed the 'people' and the 'nation' at the core of the politics. 'We the people of the United States' and 'la nation française' became the *mots d'ordre* of that time.

Therefore, I find it appropriate to begin the discussion of the Swiss nationhood at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, preceded by a short presentation of the origins of the Swiss Confederacy. My aim here is to provide an account of the first political developments that brought about the rise and implementation of the idea of a Swiss nation. For that reason I shall particularly focus on the events that took place since 1798, when the Helvetic Republic was created, leading up to the creation of the federal Constitution in 1848. In that year the modern, federative Swiss state came about and, since Kymlicka has often argued that 'multinational countries' like Switzerland were formed by the 'more or less voluntary federation of two or three European cultures' (Kymlicka,1995: 13), it is of utmost importance to check out if such an assessment really holds in the case of Switzerland.

My second aim is to show that the discussion over the existence of one Swiss nationality is not new and that it was well present in the intellectual circles of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Just like Kymlicka today, many intellectuals of that time

refuted the existence of the Swiss nation and were criticized by other thinkers who, on the contrary, defended such an idea. Particularly interesting is the reliance of some of the latter intellectuals on the Alpine landscape which was seen as an 'objective' feature of common Swiss nationality. This point will be more illustrative than analytical but I believe that it is important to point out that by many accounts Kymlicka's uninformed and aprioristic view on states like Switzerland represent a true *saut en arrière* insofar as it brings us back to the debates that took place over a century ago.

Every nation-building process consists of some common symbols, discourses and practices meant to provide an 'objective' basis for fostering the 'subjective' national feelings. Thus my third aim is to provide an account of certain features of the Swiss nation-building that belong to this category. They notably include national holidays, public ceremonies, national songs and anthems and so forth. This shall help us better understand the ways in which the common Swiss nationality has been promoted all over the country.

### ***About the origins***

At the time of political and social upheavals in North America and France the states of the Swiss Confederacy were still living under their own *anciens régimes*. The origins of this rather loose union of sovereign states can be traced back to the late 13<sup>th</sup>-century alliance of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden - three 'Forest Cantons'<sup>3</sup> situated in the (present-day) central Switzerland - who had signed an agreement of mutual defense in order to resist military threats from the Habsburg rulers.<sup>4</sup> The alliance was more and more enlarged as other neighboring cantons gradually joined in: Lucerne (1332), Zurich (1351), Glarus (1352), Zug (1352), Bern (1353), St. Gallen (1451), Appenzell (1452), Schaffhausen (1459) etc.

The Swiss Confederacy was remarkable in safeguarding the independence of its constituent units. This was partially achieved through the *politics of neutrality*, formally recognized by European powers at the Treaty of Westphalia, in 1648. Although they were able to avoid foreign invasion and general warfare, the cantons engaged in four major 'civil' wars (1529, 1531, 1656, 1712) (LINDER, 1994: 7). All these wars had religious character, reflecting the Catholic/Protestant cleavage in the Confederacy.

### **Helvetic Republic (1798-1803)**

The most significant change in political terms occurred in 1798, with the invasion and eventual occupation of Switzerland by Napoleon's army. The various *anciens régimes* of Swiss cantons were abolished and the Helvetic Republic (*République helvétique*), 'one and indivisible' (*une et indivisible*), was proclaimed. It was to become one of the 'sister republics', or 'cushion states', that Napoleon was setting up east of France. The institutional pattern of the Helvetic Republic was similar to the French Republic - that is, highly centralized. The only concession that the French Emperor-to-be accorded to the Swiss, in recognition of their peculiar political history, was the collegiate system of government (the 'Directorate') and the subdivision in purely administrative units that, nevertheless, mostly corresponded to the pre-existing cantons of the Confederacy.

The importance of the Helvetic Republic in the Swiss history cannot be underestimated. For the first time the inhabitants of Switzerland came to belong to the same institutional setting, were entitled to the same rights and duties, especially the power to vote and participate in the political process. In other words, the existence of a unified state - in the French revolutionary tradition - provided for the first time 'objective' features for creation of a common Swiss identity.

The significance of the Helvetic Republic in the process of creation of the Swiss national identity is threefold (Guzzi-Heeb 1998: 131): (a) the republican institutional setting offered the basic conditions for the construction of a modern nation, particularly through formation of the modern political space and the modern state; (b) an 'objective' national identity would arise in such a political turmoil out of certain national peculiarities (*nationale Besonderheiten*); and (c) the Helvetic Republic would foster a 'subjective' national identity through an unprecedented mobilization of the people I will consider each of these aspects in turn.

First, the creation of a modern state provided a new political context in Switzerland. This can be seen as a precondition for the formation of national identity. Such conditions did not exist in the previous political system of Swiss Confederacy. According to Guzzi-Heeb, "No nation could arise in the political system of the Swiss *ancien régime* because no political-legal framework was available, not even at the level of the single cantons... The political, but also economic, social and cultural space was very fragmented. The political unit for the solution of major problems of the population in this mosaic-like structure was primarily the commune" (Guzzi-Heeb, 1998)<sup>5</sup>. So neither does it make sense to claim that in 1798 Switzerland was 'one nation' nor that it was composed of different 'cantonal nations', and even much less so of *linguistic* nations. The segmentation of political allegiances and of identities was

so huge that it prevents us from making such a statement. Until 1798 the primary political, social and economic life of ordinary people had been their commune and, to a lesser extent, the canton. From 1798 onwards these two political units would not, of course, cease to be important but they would have to compete with the creation of a broader Swiss (or Helvetic) identity.

Moreover, the Helvetic Republic set the bases not only for the promotion of a common Swiss (or Helvetic) identity but also for the consolidation of identities at the *cantonal level*. The two processes went parallel. Some commentators even describe this as double process of 'nation-building' in Switzerland ( KREIS, 1995: 77).

Second, the new state provided the basis for the development of certain 'objective' features of national identity. This is especially evident in three fields: economical, religious, and political. Guzzi-Heeb illustrates this point with the example of Southern Switzerland, where a variety of Italophone dialects was spoken. Since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century that region was under the dominion of various Swiss cantons. It was a 'subject territory' (*Untertanengebiet*). The arrival of Napoleon's troops and the subsequent erase of ancient privileges entailed political emancipation of these territories. The local population was finally 'free' (*liberi*). But what was to be done with that freedom? Two distinct political factions developed. The one was pushing towards annexation into the newly formed Cisalpine Republic (which roughly corresponded to the present-day Northern Italy), a country with which the Italophones from formerly Swiss 'subject territories' shared geographic proximity and a more or less akin dialects. The other faction, however, wanted to remain a part of the new Helvetic Republic. The first faction called itself 'free and Cisalpines' (*liberi e cisalpini*) and the second one 'free and Swiss' (*liberi e svizzeri*). Some members of the 'free and Cisalpines' faction attempted to impose *manu militari* their view through a coup d'état in Lugano, on 15 February 1798, by seizing the representatives of Unterwalden (German-speaking canton in central Switzerland, in that time charged with the administration of the Lugano district). But a 'huge and surprisingly unfriendly crowd' soon gathered in the main piazza of the town and the 'free and Cisalpines' faction was forced to release the hostages and retreat (Steinberg 1996 [1976]: 11-12. After the defeat, "two lawyers... led a group of armed men to the representatives from Unterwalden... and demanded 'Swiss liberty': 'We demand our sacred rights; we desire Swiss liberty; finally, after centuries of subjection, we are mature to govern ourselves.' ...In a delirium of popular celebration, the people planted a liberty tree with a William Tell hat on it and proclaimed themselves 'Liberi e Svizzeri'. During the next few days all other subject territories in the area followed the Lugano example and declared themselves 'Free and Swiss". (Steinberg, 1996 [1976]: 12).

From this passage we can realize that language or 'culture' played hardly any role at all in the decision of Italophone populations of the Southern Switzerland to remain within the broader state framework of the Helvetic Republic, most of which was German- and French-speaking. If it had been so, they would have certainly embraced the annexation into the Cisalpine Republic. What were the reasons for such a decision? From the *economic* point of view, the territory of the present-day Canton Ticino had always played an important role in the commerce exchanges between the Northern and Southern Europe. The notion of 'frontier' did not have the contemporary meaning. But with the creation of the Cisalpine and Helvetic Republics, two strong, modern states came to stand one next to the other. This influenced commercial exchanges and the logic of economic investors: the economy became 'nationalized'. The borderline between the two countries became an economic frontier (Guzzi-Heeb, 1998: 136). All this had its influences on the 'helvetisation' of the Italophones in Southern Switzerland and contributed to their distancing vis-à-vis the Italian-speaking areas on the other side of the border.

Not only economy but also *religion* played an important role in the 'nationalization' of Italian-speaking Switzerland. The new Cisalpine state put a considerable pressure on the Catholic church and in many occasions harassed the patterns of religious life of its inhabitants. The Helvetic Republic did not engage in such policies against the Catholics. Therefore, the establishment of the new frontier permitted the Swiss Catholics to preserve their religious traditions. It also provided, once again, a significant 'factor of demarcation' (*Faktor der Abgrenzung*) that helped to prevent the annexation of Italian-speaking Swiss territories into the Cisalpine Republic (Guzzi-Heeb, 1998: 136-137). Being 'Swiss' meant preserving one's traditions.

Finally, *politically* speaking the Helvetic Republic provided the context for an unprecedented politicization and mobilization of the people (Guzzi-Heeb, 1998: 138). This was particularly the case in the anti-republican upsurge in the aftermath of 1798. Interestingly enough, the opponents of the idea of a unified Switzerland adopted a *national* rhetoric in order to defend their positions. So in the course of a 1802 meeting of 'traditionalists' (*Traditionalisten*) in Schwyz, in central Switzerland, one of the speakers emphasized the will to 'rescue of the fatherland' and claimed that the gathering represented the 'Swiss nation' (*Schweizernation*). Even more significant is the fact that the opposition of 'traditionalists' to the new republic, which mainly came from circles that lost consistent political and economic privileges in 1798, made necessary the creation of horizontal links between different opponents all over Switzerland. Hence for the first time did the 'traditionalists' from Southern Switzerland

came into contact with the anti-republican movement in central Switzerland (Guzzi-Heeb, 1998)

The opposition of the 'traditionalists' to the Helvetic Republic was so strong as to oblige Napoleon to issue in 1803 an 'Act of Mediation' in order to stabilize the political situation in Switzerland. It consisted mainly in the return to a sort of federal/confederal setting that had existed before 1798. The main difference was that the former 'subject territories' were permitted to maintain their independence. As a result, the Italian-speaking 'Canton Ticino' was created. Moreover, Napoleon conceded much wider range of *popular rights* than he did in any other state under his control. Such decisions point to two extremely important elements of Swiss political culture - federalism and popular (or direct) democracy - that are still today major components of the common Swiss national identity.

Third, the 'objective' features of identity provided during the Helvetic Republic were reflected at the level of *subjective identities*. Guzzi-Heeb (Guzzi-Heeb, 1998:139-140) explains this again on the example of the Canton Ticino. Why did the 'overwhelming majority of the population especially from the countryside' express the will to stay within Switzerland and opposed the annexation into the Cisalpine Republic, despite the fact that they did not share the same language or culture with the former and they did very much so with the latter? Guzzi-Heeb points out three main reasons: (a) the political model of the Cisalpine Republic was perceived as a 'deadly menace' (*tödliche Bedrohung*) for the local political order based on autonomous communal corporations (*Gemeindekörperschaften*) under a mild confederal rule; (b) the incorporation into the Cisalpine Republic would have meant the loss of important commercial privileges such as the control over the cattle market in Lugano and the control over the commercial traffic on the Southern part of the Gothard-pass; and (c) it would radically change the situation of the sociopolitical elite which would, in the case of entrance of their territories in the Cisalpine Republic, lose their privileges under the influence of neighboring cities of Milan, Como and Varese. As a matter of fact, the Italian-speaking elite had traditionally exercised an important function as intermediaries (*Vermittlungsfunktion*) between the German-speaking rulers from the North and the local population.

The interesting conclusion of Guzzi-Heeb is the following: the creation of a common Swiss national identity was, at least to a certain extent, due also to an *antinational* tradition, if by such a label we understand the fierce resistance of certain elites to unifying and centralizing tendencies during and after the Helvetic Republic. As a matter of fact, in the aftermath of the 1803 Act of Mediation, the consolidation of the state in the course of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was done mostly at the *cantonal* level (Guzzi-Heeb, 1998:145). Only thanks to a certain external pressure



would various cantons and regions be obliged to cooperate and make out of Switzerland a 'community of destiny' (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*). This leads me to the discussion of the political developments in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

But let me first briefly summarize the main findings of this section. The Helvetic Republic played an essential role in the process of nation-building in Switzerland. It did so by creating the institutions of a modern state based on the rule of law and on the protection of basic rights and liberties to which all citizens were equally entitled. The influence of the new state was also reflected in other spheres of life such as economic and religious. All this, in turn, provided the bases for the creation of a distinct Swiss civic identity among the population and differentiated it from neighboring countries often akin in language and/or religion, as the example of the Italoophone Switzerland clearly shows. But the road towards a more united Swiss state was still long and not without obstacles - only in 1848, fifty years later, would a truly federal Constitution be enacted.

### ***Towards the 1848 federal constitution***

In this section I will point to some major political events and debates that took place in the aftermath of the Napoleonic influence in Switzerland and until the design of the 1848 federal Constitution. In particular, my aim is to stress the instrumental and rhetorical use of the language of Swiss nationhood in the major political disputes of those years, rather than 'prove' the existence of the Swiss nation in that époque.

After the 1803 Act of Mediation Switzerland was no longer 'one and indivisible' but rather a sort of federal state, in the sense that single cantons obtained a certain degree of political autonomy but not the formal sovereignty. Such a situation lasted until the political decline and eventual military defeat of the man - Napoleon Bonaparte - who was to be blamed, or cherished, for the great changes that Switzerland undertook in that time-period. The Congress of Vienna (1815) symbolized the will of return to the pre-revolutionary political order in Europe and marked the beginning of the 'Restoration' era. For the Swiss cantons this meant, generally speaking, the return of ancient privileges to those who had lost them. The attempt to re-establish the *anciens régimes* took place all-over Switzerland. Such endeavors were generally successful with one notable exception. The great powers safeguarded the autonomy and cantonal independence of the former 'subject territories', namely cantons of Aargau, Ticino and Vaud. This went against the will of some cantons (Bern, Lucerne, Fribourg/Freiburg, Solothurn, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwald and Zug), where conservative forces were power. These cantons created in 1814 a 'special assembly' (*Sondertagsatzung*) claiming the return of the formerly subject

territories. This almost led to a civil war (Kölz, 1992: 178) and only after the pressure and menace by foreign powers was this 'special assembly' dissolved. Finally, on 8 September, 1814, the new agreement (*Bundesvertrag*) was signed (without the consent of Schwyz, Uri and Nidwalden). Hence Switzerland became a confederation made of 22 sovereign cantons. The cantons of Geneva, Neuchâtel and Valais/Wallis - previously allied with Swiss cantons principally for military purposes - became the new members of the Confederacy. The new agreement made clear that the scope of the new Confederacy was to assure 'to the 23 sovereign cantons their freedom, independence, and security against any attacks by foreign powers and to assure peace and order within' (cited in Kölz, 1992:184). So 'external protection' and 'internal order' were the main objectives of the new Alliance. Note that, contrary to the ideals of the French Revolution, it put aside the principle of *individual* rights and liberties; the Swiss Confederacy clearly aimed at safeguarding the *cantonal* liberty (Kölz, 1992:184). This can be related to the classical distinction between the liberty of the moderns and the liberty of the ancients that a 'Swiss' political philosopher, Benjamin Constant, drew in those very years.

The first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of important political upheavals in Europe like the 'liberal' revolutions of the 1820s and 1830s, Greek independence, and so forth. I shall not present a detailed overview of those events here. However, I would like to emphasize that the political situation within Switzerland was largely influenced by the affairs in the rest of the continent. For the purposes of this essay it is especially important to point out the opposing political forces in Switzerland because it might shed important light on the process of creation of national identity.

The main political conflict in Switzerland up to the creation of the federal state in 1848 was between the conservative and progressive forces. The conservative camp consisted mainly of anti-revolutionary power-holders who had lost their privileges in 1798 but regained them with the Restoration. They were particularly strong in Catholic cantons although we should by no means make a complete equation between the two. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the conservatives were principal defenders of cantonal sovereignty. This is, of course, closely related to their attachment to ancient privileges which were mainly enjoyed within single cantons. They feared a unifying and centralized state. As a result, the conservatives were mainly against the national rhetoric based on the idea of existence of a single Swiss nation. At the same time, as I noted earlier in this essay, they were obliged to engage in horizontal alliances throughout different cantons and regions of Switzerland in order to better defend their interests. This, paradoxically, had a considerable impact on 'nationalization' of the country, as I have already underlined in the section devoted to the Helvetic Republic.

The progressive forces can be divided in two main factions: radical and liberal. They demanded the reestablishment of the principle of individual rights as proclaimed in the French Revolution. Their influence was particularly evident in the 1830s, which is also labeled in the Swiss history books as the liberal phase of 'Regeneration'. In many cantons liberals took power, changed cantonal constitutions and renewed cantonal rules of law in the sense of individualism and rational natural right (Kölz, 1992: 210). Generally speaking, the chances of reform were higher in Protestant and/or more industrialized cantons (Kölz, 1992: 225).

But liberals and radicals were not satisfied with cantonal constitutions: they aimed at a new federal setting (Kölz, 1992:374). Many politicians and intellectuals, who pleaded for a more centralized and unified Switzerland, were using the national rhetoric in order to defend their view. It is difficult to discern in what cases the invocation of the 'Swiss nation' was meant to express the profound feeling of the writer and when it had purely instrumental function.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Ludwig Snell, a liberal, pleaded in his 'appeal' (*Zuruf*) for a 'prospective and closer federal association, for a stronger centralization' because this is where 'the desires of all Swiss [were] directed'. The weak union of the cantons in that time, Snell claimed, permitted 'no common creation, no national project enterprise... the industry is restricted to the narrow playfields, the commerce is everywhere hindered, and to the spiritual forces lack the greatest and noblest incentive: the conscience of working for one nation'. Only through the creation of a more unified federal state could arise a 'more real and stronger national spirit [*Nationalgeist*], a more genuine and encompassing love of the fatherland [*Vaterlandsliebe*]' (cited in Kölz, 1992: 374-376). The intermingling of the plead for a 'national spirit' and the 'conscience of working for a nation' with the needs of 'industry' and 'commerce' would, to a certain extent, go along Gellner's (1983) thesis that the functional needs of industrial revolution fostered the nation-building process. As I will show later on, the only difference is that in Switzerland such a necessity, contrary to Gellner's thesis, did not transform into linguistic or 'cultural' homogenization.

Did the Swiss 'nation' exist in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? The question is undoubtedly badly formulated because the nation-building process was still in progress. Nevertheless, if by 'nation' we understand the sense of belonging to the same group of people the answer would probably be negative (except, of course, for the elites). The majority of ordinary Swiss never moved far away from their commune or canton. If, by chance, they met another 'Swiss' from a different canton they would probably not have been even able to communicate. But this bears nothing of exceptional because the same could be said of almost any country in that time-period.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, the mistake is to see this as a decisive factor for determining whether one nation really existed or not. We should rather observe things from the appropriate historical perspective. The main point here is that in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when first theories of nations (e.g. Herder, Fichte) were certainly circulating in intellectual circles, the rhetoric of nationhood was often used in order to *justify political goals*. Those who were proclaiming the existence of a given 'nation' would typically demand administrative centralization and territorial unification. In this light, what was happening in Switzerland was not very much different from, for instance, political developments in the Italian *Risorgimento*. The ordinary 'Swiss' of the time were probably not able to communicate between each other but neither were so the ordinary 'Italians'. As De Mauro (De Mauro, 1963: 41; Hobsbawm, 1992: 38) has pointed out, in the year of Italian 'unification' (1861) barely 2,5% of the people could actually speak Italian. The variety of local dialects was so strong that 'when the Visconti-Venesta brothers walked down the streets of Naples speaking Italian they were thought to be Englishmen' (Steinberg 1996: 129). Of course, Italian elites, especially those involved in the process of 'unification', could and did communicate between each other, but so did the Swiss elites. The main difference is that the Italian standard language was imposed from the political center throughout Italy. In Switzerland there was no such imposition. Every canton maintained the complete autonomy in linguistic matters. They did eventually adopted, for practical reasons, the standardized versions of German, French and Italian languages but the central state was mostly silent about it. Therefore, the rhetorical use of nationhood was certainly no less prevalent in Switzerland than in other European countries.

What *did* count were the *political consequences* of such national rhetoric. In the case of Switzerland it meant the elaboration of the Federal constitution in 1848 and the creation of a more united, stronger Swiss state.

### **1848: The establishment of the federal Swiss state**

The tumultuous years leading up to 1848 ended up in a short civil war, that took place from 4 to 29 November 1847. The war originated when the radical-led faction of the Confederal Assembly (*Tagsatzung*) decided to dissolve by force the *Sonderbund* ('special alliance'). The *Sonderbund* had been created in 1845 by seven conservative (and at the same time Catholic) cantons (Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Fribourg/Freiburg and Valais/Wallis) with the aim to assure mutual protection in the case of aggressions by the radicals.

Anti-*Sonderbund* forces won the war. It was a fortunate circumstance that conservative foreign powers (Austria, Prussia, France, Russia), believing that the

conflict would last longer, did not intervene. Only on 18 January 1848 did they send to the Swiss an 'intervention note' (*Interventionsnote*) warning that they would intervene if the situation would not calm down (Kölz, 1992: 546).

Although the Swiss response was unambiguous - foreign powers had no right to intervene in internal matters of Switzerland since at the Congress of Vienna they had only engaged in the guarantees of the Swiss territory and not of its internal order - the very possibility of a foreign intervention obliged the Swiss political elites to work fast on the elaboration of a new Constitution. It also had a certain influence in convincing the victors of the *Sonderbund* war of the necessity to make compromises. The commissions involved in writing down the new constitution were, not surprisingly, divided into two main factions: the first, mainly radical and liberal, wanted a more centralized state, the second one sought to maintain, as far as possible, cantonal sovereignties.

I shall present here some of these debates. My main aim is to show that during the discussions over the new Constitution the nation was used exclusively as a political concept, designing the entire body of citizens, a fact that bears some resemblance with the US model. The focus on the elaboration of the 1848 Constitution is important since it represents the founding year of the modern, federal Swiss state which basic structures have remained unchanged until the present day. If in 1848 Switzerland consisted of distinct linguistic nations who decided to join and form a federation - as Kymlicka (Kymlicka, 1995: 13) has hinted - then we should certainly expect to find traces of such a distinctiveness of the Swiss society in the debates that took place over the new Constitution. Alas, as I will show, the evidence does not support such a claim.

Once the balance of power was clearly set on the side of the radicals, the idea of a Swiss nation quickly reemerged. For instance, the influential radical from the Canton Vaud, Henry Druey, demanded the direct election of federal representatives because the source of sovereignty was 'the people'. Moreover, he claimed that the idea of a 'Swiss nationality [*schweizerische Nationalität*] has gained on diffusion and strength from year to year' which was 'without any doubt' manifest through the existence of national festivities and associations<sup>8</sup> (Kölz, 1992: 554-555). Of course, not everybody saw the invocation of the 'Swiss nationality' positively. The conservative forces actually opposed it, not out of any 'cultural' conception of the nation, but because they considered that the notion of 'nation' had a too 'unitary character' [*unitarische Charakter*] (Kölz, 1992: 557). For these reasons, a proposal for the first article of the Constitution - which expressively mentioned the 'Swiss nation' ('... the cantons unite as Swiss nation'<sup>9</sup>, cited in *Ibid.* 556-557; my translation)

- was refused. Nevertheless, it was included in the legally unbinding preamble of the Constitution (Kölz, 1992:575).

The compromise between the defenders of national and, on the other side, cantonal sovereignties is most evident in the establishment of a bi-cameral parliament shaped on the US model.<sup>10</sup> The Swiss nation would be represented in the 'National Council' (*Nationalrat; Conseil national; Consiglio nazionale*), whereas the cantons would find their sovereignty expressed in the 'Council of States' (*Ständerat; Conseil des Etats; Consiglio degli Stati*). The two branches of parliament were given the same powers and competences, except in certain circumstances (such as the election of the members of government or of federal judges) where the two chambers would vote together. Such a bi-cameral system is still in use today.

There was some discussion on whether the National Council should be elected in one pan-Swiss electoral circumscription or through cantonal circumscriptions. The first proposal was defended by the radicals because it was considered good 'to strengthen the national sentiment [*Nationalgefühl*]'. The second one sounded better in the ears of the more federally oriented politicians who claimed that a similar territorial division in different electoral units already existed in France and in England and that in any case 'that would not kill the nationality [*Nationalität*]' (Kölz, 1992: 567).

What is particularly worth mentioning is that there was no big debate over the composition of the government. The seven-member 'Federal Council' (*Bundesrat; Conseil fédéral; Consiglio federale*) was constituted according to the model of some cantonal governments. The proposal to have it elected through direct popular vote was rejected by 10 to 9 in the relevant commission. Hence the government was to be elected directly by the Parliament. The only important limitation that was imposed was the requirement that the seven federal councilors be from different cantons. This was justified as a measure aiming to protect smaller cantons despite some fears that this could potentially undermine the elections of the most skilled politicians (Kölz, 1992: 572).<sup>11</sup>

Now if Switzerland had been really considered 'multinational' at the time, with different language groups forming distinct nations, then one would expect to see at least some discussion on whether such 'nations' needed to have their representatives in the highest executive branch of the country. In fact, I shall stress that Kymlicka is very reluctant to defend 'special group-representation rights' except in two particular circumstances: where a given group has witnessed a 'systematic discrimination' and where the state is composed of different nationalities. Indeed, it does 'make sense' to expect that a government of a multinational country includes members of different nations. Such is the case, for instance, of the fifteen-member

European Commission. This is not to say that personal characteristics of the candidate bear no importance in the composition of the Swiss Government. Indeed, the very first Swiss federal government was composed of five German-speaking, one French-speaking and one Italian-speaking Swiss. But what must be stressed is that language was never seen as the only, or even the most important, characteristic worth of attention. Religion, political party, gender, canton have also been important in assigning, or not assigning, the governmental post.

In conclusion, an interesting parallel can be drawn between the debates over the creation of the 1848 Swiss Constitution and the 1787 American Constitution. In both countries the opposition of two main factions characterized the debates: defenders of the cantonal or state rights on the one side against the proponents of a more unified federal state on the other. Both parties claimed to act in the name of 'liberty' but could not agree which of the two levels - cantonal or federal - was best suitable to it. The similarities are especially evident in the use of the *concept of nation*. So James Madison argued in *The Federalist Papers* that, "[e]ach State, in ratifying the Constitution, is considered as a sovereign body independent of all others, and only to be bound by its own voluntary act. In this relation, then, the new Constitution will, if established, be a *federal* and not a *national* constitution. The next relation is to the sources from which the ordinary powers of government are to be derived. The House of Representatives will derive its powers from the people of America; and the people will be represented in the same proportion and on the same principle as they are in the legislature of a particular State. So far the government is *national*, not *federal*. The Senate, on the other hand, will derive its powers from the States as political and coequal societies; and these will be represented on the principle of equality in the Senate, as they now are in the existing Congress. So far the government is *federal*, not *national*." (Madison et al. 1987 [1788]: 257).

Madison then argues along similar lines that the Government will be 'national with regard to the *operation* of its powers', but will be federal 'in relation to the extent of its powers' (Ibid. 258; emphasis in original). To sum up: "The proposed Constitution... is, in its strictness, neither a national nor a federal Constitution, but a composition of both. In its foundation it is federal, not national; in the sources from which the ordinary powers of the government are drawn, it is partly federal and partly national; in the operation of these powers, it is national, not federal; in the extent of them, again, it is federal, not national; and, finally, in the authoritative mode of introducing amendments, it is neither wholly federal nor wholly national". (Madison et al., 1992 :259)

The mixed 'national-federal' character of the Constitution is also evident in the Swiss case.<sup>12</sup> I have already mentioned the debates over the bi-cameral parliament.

As far as the Constitution itself is concerned, the Swiss have maintained the traditional term 'Confederation' so that the Constitution is officially labeled, in an apparently paradoxical way (especially in French and Italian versions) 'The Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation' (*Die Bundesverfassung der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft; La Constitution fédérale de la Confédération suisse; La Costituzione federale della Confederazione svizzera*).

I have also briefly mentioned the debate over whether the term 'Swiss nation' should be included into the articles of the Constitution. At the end it was agreed that 'nation' and 'confederation' could not stand side by side because it would be a pleonasm, so that the 'Swiss nation' is evoked in the preamble of the Constitution but in the articles only 'Confederation' is mentioned. Note that the preamble of the US Constitution begins with 'We the people of the United States...' and that one of the main critics of the Constitution, Patrick Henry, attacked it with the following words: "What right had they to say, We, the people? My political curiosity, exclusive of my anxious solicitude for the public welfare, leads me to ask, who authorized them to speak the language of We, the people, instead of We, the States?" (cited in Kramnick, 1987: 32)

Indeed, in this respect the Swiss Constitution shows more attention towards cantonal sovereignty. Thus the Article 1 reads: 'Les peuples des vingt-deux cantons souverains de la Suisse, unis par la présente alliance... forment dans leur ensemble la Confédération suisse' (cited in de Rougemont 1965: 88). The Article 3 defines the limits of cantonal sovereignty: 'Les cantons sont souverains en tant que leur souveraineté n'est pas limitée par la constitution fédérale, et comme tels ils exercent tous les droits qui ne sont pas délégués au pouvoir fédéral' (Rougemond, 1965). What is interesting in drawing the Swiss-USA comparison is the extent to which the term 'nation' had strictly political connotations. 'We the people', as sanctified in the US Constitution of 1787, would become, only two years later, one of the main contributions of the French Revolution to the change of the concept of political power in Europe: 'nation' was a body of citizens seen as the main (if not only) possessor of 'sovereignty'.

Therefore, it is incorrect to claim, as Kymlicka does, that the multinational states - if, for the sake of the argument, by 'multinational' we understand 'multilingual' - 'typically' rise through accommodation of 'minority [linguistically defined] nations'. At least such was not the case in Switzerland. This country was *neither* created as a federation of distinct linguistic nations *nor* as a federation that sought to accommodate such groups. Language was only mentioned when Henry Druey proposed to declare German, French and Italian the 'national languages' of



Switzerland. The proposition was unanimously accepted in the relevant commission (Weilenmann, 1925: 219).

Nevertheless, even though the Swiss ruling elite implemented a *political* concept of the nation, the idea of a Swiss nation would soon come under attack by intellectuals who considered nation in *cultural* terms. For such thinkers the very idea that a plurilingual nation could exist was simply unimaginable. In that regard, the present-day Kymlickian discussions on nationhood are not substantially different. In what follows I will present an illustration of the kind of the debate that was centered on the questions: What is the nation? Is Switzerland a nation?

### ***Switzerland as a counter-example in the debates on nationality***

The creation of the federal state in 1848 gave a new impetus to the nation-building process in Switzerland. At the same time, the Swiss national discourse had to adapt to the change in patterns of nationhood in other parts of Europe. As a matter of fact, the year 1848 appears as a symbolic dividing line between the political relevance of the political and cultural definition of 'nation'. As I have shown, the conception of nation used in Switzerland in the years leading up to 1848 as well as during the elaboration of the federal Constitution was very similar, if not the same, to the one that had been evoked in *Federalist Papers* in order to justify the new American Constitution. Now in 1848, a series of revolutions sprang across Europe and some of them were based on a sort of nationalism that put emphasis on *cultural* and *linguistic* peculiarities. Such was, for instance, the case of uprisings in Milan and Venice, in Prague and Budapest, against the Habsburg Empire. The representatives of various 'German' states also met in Frankfurt to discuss the 'German unification'. In this regard, it is even more striking to notice that the 1848 debate over the new Constitution in Switzerland hardly mentioned at all linguistic issues.

But it is not surprising that in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *the Swiss political and intellectual elite was progressively obliged to cope with a concept of nation based on an alleged linguistic/cultural unity* that was alien to its political culture and its historical tradition. It was well understood that such a concept of nationhood would soon endanger the very idea of a single Swiss nation-state because of the linguistic heterogeneity of the country. My aim here is to provide a short account of such a debate and show that by many accounts Kymlicka's claim that Switzerland constitutes a multinational state is not new and that it was already powerfully combated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

To be sure, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the idea of a culturally defined nation was not completely new and its intellectual development could be traced back at least to

Cuoco, Herder, Fichte or Michelet (cf. Viroli 1995, Ch. 4). So even in the years leading up to 1848 some intellectuals had contested the idea of a Swiss nation. Especially fierce critiques came from German intellectual circles who claimed that 'Swiss nationality was... without real foundation, a mere invention by Johannes Müller and Friedrich von Schiller' (cited in Kohn 1956: 90). But they immediately encountered even harsher opposition from Swiss authors. Gottfried Keller, one of the most famous Swiss poets, was especially keen on refuting the critiques.<sup>13</sup> In one of his earliest poems, Keller rejected the efforts to determine a nation by its 'racial' or 'ethnic' elements. He argued that such a theory, then propagated from Germany, would reduce all nationalities to a primitive tribal stage. "Germans believe that they bring us at silence when they claim that the Swiss people, because of its origins, does not belong to itself but that the German Switzerland belongs to Germany, the French Switzerland to France... that is a *deliberate disrespect* [Nichtbeachtung] of our national character."<sup>14</sup> (Keller, 1936 [1841]: 101; cited in Kohn, 1956: 90-91).

So Keller criticized the fact that some foreigners (Germans in this case) applied their own conceptual categories on Switzerland and so unjustifiably put into question the existence of the Swiss nation. Keller qualifies this as a serious and prejudicial 'disrespect' (*Nichtbeachtung*) of the Swiss national character (*Nationalcharakter*). In another memorable passage, Keller tried to define the *nature* of such Swiss national character that was object of misinterpretation. "Swiss national character does not rest on ancestors nor on patriotic sagas of the country's past nor on anything material; it rests on the Swiss people's love of freedom, on their unique attachment to their small but beautiful and dear fatherland, on the home-sickness which seizes them even in the loveliest foreign lands. When an alien loves the Swiss constitution, when he feels happier among us than in a monarchical State, when he gladly accepts our habits and customs and assimilates himself, then he is as good a Swiss as someone whose fathers fought at Sempach ... The Swiss has found out that his soul requires the independence of the whole fatherland, the freedom of thought and expression, the complete equality of rights and non-recognition of class and caste. The Swiss likes to speak of his liberty, but he does not try to force it upon anybody else, and why shouldn't he talk of it lovingly? Every good subject likes to talk of his king, and our king is liberty; we have none other". (cited in Kohn, 1956: 93)

So freedom, love of the country, love of the constitution, equality of rights, were presented as the main features of the Swiss national character. Keller's vision of Switzerland is undoubtedly romantic and idealized but it nonetheless corresponds to some elements of the Swiss nationhood that are still praised today<sup>15</sup> And elsewhere he defended the peculiarity of the Swiss nationalism: "We believe we recognize the dreamy character of the nationalism around us which bases itself on hoary memories

of the past, on linguistic and racial traditions. Therefore we cling to our own Swiss kind of nationalism. We can say that it is not our nationality which creates and influences our ideas, but an *invisible idea existing in these mountains* has created the *distinct Swiss nationality* as its embodiment". (Keller, 1919 [1854-1855]: 43; cited in Kohn 1956: 95)

Here we can observe how Keller tries to invert the conceptual relationship between nation and nationalism. He claims that in Switzerland nationalism as an expression of ideas does not stem from the 'nationality' understood in terms of past memories, 'race' or language but, rather, that a distinct Swiss nationality stems from an 'invisible idea existing in these mountains', from an idea that does not depend on any ascriptive kinship. Such an interpretation of nationalism is fully respectful of differences and Keller, indeed, cherished that diversity in a 1860 novella 'The Little Flag of the Seven Upright Men' where we find the following passage: "How diverting it is that there is not just one kind of Swiss, but that there are people of Zurich and of Bern, of Unterwalden and of Neuchâtel, of Graubünden and... even two kinds of people of Basel; that there is an Appenzell history and a history of Geneva! May God preserve such variety within unity, for it brings the right education for friendship, and only where political togetherness turns to personal friendship of a whole people has the highest goal been achieved!" (Keller, 1954 [1850]: 198-9; cited in Bendix, 1992: 774)

What is interesting in this passage is that Keller points out the extreme diversity of the Swiss that does not rest (only) on language or on religion but also on different historical traditions of various cantons and even on differences within single cantons (the 'two kinds of people of Basel' refer to semi-cantons of Basel-City and Basel-Land). The idea that different linguistic groups form distinct nations seemed not to be important for him.

Keller's emphasis on the 'invisible idea existing in these mountains' needs also to be related to the role that *Alpine landscape* played in the defense of the Swiss nationality. In their comparative study of Canada and Switzerland Kaufmann and Zimmer (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998) have shown how in these two countries, partly as a consequence of their linguistic diversity, the promoters of common national identity relied on geography in order to justify the idea that these were 'authentic' nations. The authors distinguish two kinds of dialectics of landscape and nation.

First, there is a process of 'nationalization of nature' that portrays particular landscapes as expression of national identity. Here 'popular historical myths, memories and supposed national virtues are projected onto a significant landscape in an attempt to lend more continuity and distinctiveness to it' (Kaufmann and Zimmer,

1998: 486). The authors claim that this pattern of use of the landscape dominated in Switzerland until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Alpine motive can be found already in the writings of some 16<sup>th</sup> century Swiss humanists but the major examples of this development are to be traced to the early Romantics in the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus one of the fathers of the Helvetic Society, Franz Urs Balthasar, claimed that 'the character of the Swiss nation found its complete expression in its untamed, Alpine landscape' (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998 : 490; Marchal, 1992: 45). But the 'popularisation of the Alpine landscape in Swiss national mythology [was] largely the result of the publication of [Friedrich] Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* in 1804' (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998: 490). In this play the Alps were presented as a 'natural habitat' that fostered the emergence of a 'pure, simple, honest and liberty-loving character'; Ibid. 491). The play had a huge popular success and was frequently read and performed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 'became part of the literary canon of Swiss primary schools'. On the other hand, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Swiss Alpine landscape was the main object in the paintings of Ferdinand Hodler, one of the most famous Swiss artists. His great popularity 'had much to do with the fact that his paintings were widely perceived as a powerful expression of what made Switzerland distinct as a nation' (Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998: 491).

Second, and to some extent rather disquietingly, there was the process of 'naturalization of nation'. Faced with the increasing challenge of ethnically and/or linguistically based nationalism that was prevailing in Europe in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some Swiss intellectuals engaged in a process of defending a 'naturalized' version of Swiss nationality. Thus Johann-Kaspar Bluntschli argued: "If the Swiss possess a particular nationality, then this feeling derives above all from the existence of their beautiful homeland... There may well be Alps, mountains, seas and rivers outside Switzerland; and yet, the Swiss homeland constitutes such a coherent and richly structured natural whole, one that enables a peculiar feeling of a common homeland to evolve on its soil which unites its inhabitants as sons of the same fatherland even though they live in different valleys and speak different languages". (Bluntschli, 1915: 11; cited in Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998: 499-500).

Along similar lines went the argument of Ernest Bovet, professor of French literature at the University of Zurich : "A mysterious force has kept us together for 600 years and has given us our democratic institutions... A spirit that fills our souls, directs our actions and creates a hymn on the ideal one out of our different languages. It is the spirit that blows from the summits, the genius of the Alps and glaciers". (Bovet, 1909: 441; cited in Kaufmann and Zimmer, 1998: 500). At the same time it is important to stress that Alpine myth was not only evoked in intellectual discourses but was also used in school books, at national festivals and in other

occasions of popular interest and so constitutes a considerable part of Swiss national identity.

The intellectual debates on the concept of nation prior to 1848 did not have a lot of impact on Swiss political developments because they did not (yet) bear a proper political credibility. In fact, only when theoretical and moral reasoning becomes *political program*, does a theory really have an impact on the reality. And the cultural theory of nation would gain political credibility only in the years to follow, after the Italian (1861) and German (1871) 'unifications'.

In the post-1848 intellectual debates on nationhood Switzerland would be often invoked either as a *counter-example*<sup>16</sup> - that is, as forming one nation despite linguistic differences - or as an example of a *successful 'multinational' state*.<sup>17</sup>

So one of the first English-speaking political philosophers who discussed the concept of nationhood, John Stuart Mill, wrote the following lines in his 1861 *Considerations on Representative Government*. "A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a Nationality if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between themselves and any others - which make them co-operate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively. The feeling of nationality may have been generated by various causes. Sometimes it is the effect of identity of race and descent. Community of language, and community of religion, greatly contribute to it. Geographical limits are one of its causes. But *the strongest of all is the identity of political antecedents*; the possession of a national history, and a consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past. None of these circumstances, however, are either indispensable, or necessarily sufficient by themselves. *Switzerland has a strong sentiment of nationality, though the cantons are of different races, different languages, and different religions*". (Mill, 1993 [1861]: 391)

We can observe that Mill, despite his well-known claim that representative government necessitates the 'united public opinion' which can hardly exist in a country where people 'read and speak different languages' and do not have the 'fellow-feeling' (Mill, 1993 [1861] 392), had a very open and flexible vision of the nation to the point that he rightly recognized, as soon as 1861, that 'Switzerland ha[d] a strong sentiment of nationality' despite all its internal differences. Another important and often quoted author who tried to define the nation, Ernest Renan, noted in his 1882 essay *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*: « Comment la Suisse, qui a trois langues, deux religions, trois ou quatre races, est-elle une nation, quand la Toscane, par exemple, qui est si homogène, n'en est pas une ? ...La langue invite à se réunir ; elle

n'y force pas. Les Etats-Unis et l'Angleterre, l'Amérique espagnole et l'Espagne parlent la même langue et ne forment pas une seule nation. Au contraire, la Suisse, si bien faite, puisqu'elle a été faite par l'assentiment de ses différentes parties, compte trois ou quatre langues. *Il y a dans l'homme quelque chose de supérieur à la langue : c'est la volonté.* La volonté de la Suisse d'être unie, malgré la variété de ses idiomes, est un fait bien plus important qu'une similitude souvent obtenue par des vexations ». (Renan, 1996 [1882]: 16, 24-25)

The voluntaristic vision of the nation - '[l]'existence d'une nation est... un plébiscite de tous les jours' (Renan, 1996 [1882] :32) - that we can find in Renan's essay, has been analyzed and, often, criticized in most of the writings on nations and nationalism (e.g. Hobsbawm 1992 [1990]: 43-44; Kriesi 1999a: 17; Miller 1995: 22-23; Tamir 1995 [1993]: 66-67; Viroli 1995: 159-160) and I shall not develop it any further here. What must be retained, though, is that the writers like Mill and Renan rapidly realized that the concept of nation is much more complex and diversified than some 'culturalist' thinkers would have supposed. For Mill and Renan Switzerland constituted a nation and not a multinational state and had to be placed at the same footing with any other nation.

Among the authors who took the example of Switzerland as *successful multinational state* one could mention Karl Renner, one of the so-called Austro-Marxists intellectuals who at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century wrote numerous books and articles on multinational countries. His main objective was to solve the 'national question' of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His solution consisted in a form of 'personal' and not 'territorial' federalism that would make each citizen of the Empire 'at home' in any part of the country (cf. Renner 1918). For Renner, there was no doubt that Switzerland was composed of three nations: German, French and Italian. Thus a German-speaking Swiss was thought to share the same nationality with Germans from Germany, Austria or any other country. "We should just mention the old, well-established example of Switzerland. In such a political system it is understood by itself that all two or three nations take part equally in the common polity."<sup>18</sup> (Renner 1964 [1937]: 89).(NMW: 89). So Renner, similarly to Kymlicka, takes Switzerland as an example of successful multinational state and at the same time misinterprets it when he affirms that the Swiss 'nations' take an equal part in the common polity. In fact, that might be the case of different cantons but certainly not of Swiss language communities.

In sum, before and, especially, after 1848, many thinkers felt the necessity to defend the idea of a Swiss nation against 'culturalist' conceptions of nationhood. In this section I have focused on some of these defenses. This curiously shows that the kind of discussion central to this essay is not new in *form*, although I believe that it is

rather peculiar in *content*, since my arguments are mainly formed as a critique of Kymlicka's view on 'culture' and 'nation'. Did the 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals who defended the Swiss idea of nation do so on the basis of an excessively romantic and idealized vision of this 'country on the Alps', or did they perhaps rely on some specific and 'objective' elements that could prove the existence of a Swiss nation? The answer to this question will be attempted in the following section of this essay in which I present an account of the specific elements of the nation-building process in Switzerland.

### ***National holidays, public and commemorative ceremonies***

According to Smith (Smith, 1991: 14) one of the essential features of national identity are 'common myths and historical memories'. Now such myths and memories do not arise by themselves but are promoted by social agents capable of diffusing them throughout the entire 'national' community. One of the most powerful agents is, of course, the state and this is the main reason why thinkers like Gellner and Hobsbawm affirmed that '[n]ations do not make states and nationalism but the other way round' (Hobsbawm, 1992 [1990]: 10). But the state is not necessarily the only agent involved in this process and often associations of the civil society, for a variety of reasons, participate in it as well. In this section I look particularly into one aspect - the National Holiday - that was meant to foster the creation of a common Swiss national identity, as well as into some other elements related to the national discourse.

Only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did Switzerland begin to celebrate the foundation of the first Swiss Confederacy (allegedly occurred in 1291) by three 'forest cantons' (*Urkantone*) of Schwyz, Uri and Unterwalden. The first major celebration took place in the occasion of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary, on 1 August 1891, and only in 1899 was August First institutionalized as 'National Holiday' (*Bundesfeier, Fête nationale, Festa nazionale*) (Kreis 1991). Such a late institutionalization of the founding date of the Swiss Confederacy made Benedict Anderson (1991) include Switzerland in the 'last wave' of nationalism. 'Such a decision, waiting 600 years to be made,... suggests that modernity rather than antiquity characterizes Swiss nationalism' (Anderson, 1991: 135-136). Of course, I hope that it is clear at this point that it is incorrect to think - as Anderson (Anderson, 1991:139) does, following and citing Hughes (Hughes, 1975: 107) - that the year of birth of Swiss nationalism is 1891. We should rather think that 1891 is the most manifest outcome of the process of nation-building that can be historically traced at least to 1798 and the creation of the Helvetic Republic (although the idea of a Swiss nation had been developed in

some intellectual circles even earlier, as proven by the foundation of the 'Helvetic Society' [*Helvetische Gesellschaft*] in 1761).

Nevertheless, Anderson does point out, through the Swiss example, an interesting feature of nationalism in general. The promoters of nationalism would often pick up, more or less deliberately, certain historical 'facts' in order to justify their proper political or social ideals. Georg Kreis, for instance, speak of the 'myth of 1291' (Kreis, 1991). As a matter of fact, some people argued that the foundation of the Confederacy had been 1307 and not 1291.

On the other hand, as Regina Bendix (Bendix, 1992) has claimed in her study, we should not overestimate the force of Swiss nationalism (she prefers to call it 'mild' or 'moderate' patriotism). The very example of the national holiday shows this insofar as '[n]either the federal government nor the cantonal organizing committee intended [the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Swiss nationhood on 1 August 1891] more than one-time event' (Bendix, 1992: 777). In fact, the plea to make August First a national holiday came from the Swiss consul in Uruguay, in 1892, who regretted that, contrary to other consuls, he was not able to invite the fellow diplomats to the Swiss national celebration because of the lack thereof. The federal Justice Department responded that it had no legal powers to declare any day a holiday because such a decision resided, ironically enough for a 'national' holiday, within the competence of the cantons. Finally, in 1891 the federal legislature asked the governments of 25 cantons and semi-cantons to adopt August First as national holiday and only two of them (Zug and St. Gallen) turned that proposition down (Bendix, 1992: 776).

The discussion over the Swiss national holiday should not, however, inhibit us from acknowledging that many pan-Swiss public celebrations had existed well before 1891. Among the most influential were certainly *Swiss marksmen's festivals* (*Schützenfeste*), first of which was held in 1824 (Henzirohs, 1976). The first Swiss sports festival took place in 1832 and the first Swiss singers' festival in 1842 (Bendix, 1992: 774-775). The first marksmen's festival, according to the president of the organizing committee, had as a goal to 'pull the hearts of confederates closer together, to help the small-mindedness of cantonal spirit vanish in the elevated spirit of the Swiss nation' (cited in Bendix, 1992: 775). Such festivities, which were usually organized by private, benevolent societies rather than by the Swiss state (basically lacking between 1815 and 1848), were occasions in which the citizens of different cantons would meet, participate in common activities and develop *some* kind of collective sentiment. Even though, as Bendix (Bendix, 1992: 776) notes, 'the emotion is ephemeral' and 'once this goal was reached... local and cantonal identities had regained prominence and the desire for patriotic community had been increasingly overshadowed by the desire to assert individual, local, or regional difference and



autonomy', the impact of these festivities should not be underestimated for the development of the national identity. As De Capitani, Kaiser and Marcacci (De Capitani, Kaiser and Marcacci, 1991) have pointed out in their study on national festivities and on the importance of such rituals 'the pattern of patriotic and moral themes, well known to all the participants, took place in every occasion and was able to transmit a strong collective experience from which no one could escape'<sup>19</sup> (cited in Kreis, 1995: 47)<sup>20</sup>. Through what other practices, myths and institutions did the Swiss state and/or voluntary associations foster the creation of a common national identity? Following the report on the Research Project 'National Identity and Cultural Pluralism', commissioned by the Swiss government in 1985,<sup>21</sup> I present here some further elements of the nation-building process.

Brühlmeier's (Brühlmeier, 1991) thesis is that the *constitutional bases* represent an important element of national identity and favor its development. He based his analysis on some texts of literature where he retrieved the cardinal place of 'republicanism' - a political ideology the Swiss constitution is based upon. This is illustrated through the passage from an ideology based on 'natural rights' and a rigid share of roles to the republican ideology based on free interchange between governors and the governed. These topics were often dealt with in the works of some widely read Swiss authors such as Vattel and Iselin (18<sup>th</sup> century), Gotthelf, Keller and Hilty (19<sup>th</sup> century) and Spitteler (20<sup>th</sup> century).

This leads me to consider the role of *national literature in the school books*. The Swiss authors often wrote about emblematic figures of the Swiss history and, on the other hand, frequently evoked the alpine landscape. So in a 1911 school book of the Canton Geneva we can read: 'A force de vivre la même vie, la vie des montagnes, ces gens d'origines diverses en sont arrivés à se ressembler par bien des côtés: ils sont montagnards, et c'est ce qu'il fait les Suisses' (cited in Kreis 1995: 63). This is not to say that all over Switzerland the people would read the same things. As a matter of fact, the studies of Schmid (Schmid, 1981) and Tschirky (Tschirky, 1991) have pointed out regional and, especially, confessional divergences that caused differential treatment of historical facts and personalities. Nonetheless, all of them provided *some kind* of account of the common Swiss history.

The importance of *museums* is seen as a product rather than promoter of the process of nation-building (Kreis, 1995: 66). This is especially evident in the fact that the first Swiss National Museum was founded only in 1898. However, many smaller and local museums, not necessarily funded by the central state, also played a significant role in the nation-building process.

Within a similar framework we should place *national expositions* that took place on different occasions (Zurich 1883, Geneva 1896, Bern 1914, Zurich 1939,

Lausanne 1964) (Pauchard and Pavillon 1991). The next one was held in 2002. Its goals are clearly stated in the presentation: « Comme toutes les nations nées d'une volonté commune, la Suisse, 'Willensnation' [nation by will], doit périodiquement effectuer un retour sur elle-même pour se redéfinir et se fixer de nouveaux objectifs. C'est d'autant plus nécessaire qu'à l'aube du troisième millénaire, notre pays pluriculturel traverse une crise d'identité. A cet égard, les expositions nationales contribuent depuis toujours à forger l'identité collective et à réorienter la société. L'Expo.02 mettra en lumière les opportunités qu'offre l'avenir mais aussi les difficultés qu'il promet. Bref, elle incarnera l'esprit de l'avenir de notre pays. » (www.expo02.ch)

National holidays, various festivities, associations, army and the school constituted occasions for display of *national songs and anthems*. What is interesting here is the way in which songs in one language gave birth to versions in other languages. Swiss of various linguistic communities were so able to sing together songs like 'Rütlilied' ('De loin, salut!, calme prairie') or Gottfried Keller's 'O mein Heimatland' ('O mon beau pays'). At the same time, the multitude of songs and various anthems caused the fact that the Federal Council decided only in 1981 the definite version of the national anthem although the 1811 song 'Rufst Du, mein Vaterland?' served as semi-official anthem for over a century (Kreis, 1995: 67-69).

The list of some elements that have historically fostered the national identity in Switzerland and that I have presented in this section should not be seen as exhaustive or definite. Many other features (e.g. military service, universities, external threat etc.) have been omitted. My aim was simply to briefly illustrate the kind of practices that contributed to the creation of 'common myths and memories' in Switzerland and that promoted the sense of 'Swissness' among the inhabitants of this country. But what still remains to be seen is to what extent the Swiss feel 'Swiss' and to what extent, following Kymlicka's argument, they feel like members of separate linguistically defined 'nations'. This will constitute the main object of discussion of the second part of this Chapter, dedicated to the sociological analysis of the Swiss case. But let me first summarize the findings of the historical part.

In the historical presentation of the Swiss nationality my aim was to make clear three points:

1. that Switzerland was politically constructed as one nation in a process that lasted from the creation of the Helvetic Republic until the foundation of the federal Constitution in 1848 (political nationalism)

2. that the idea of the Swiss nation was promoted and defended in intellectual circles as a response to those who criticized it from a 'culturalist' perspective (intellectual nationalism)

3. that both political and intellectual ideas penetrated the collective consciousness of the population and created the sense of a collective national identity; this was partly achieved through various practices akin to the nation-building process

I believe that this has shown that Kymlicka is wrong, from an historical point of view, to consider Switzerland as a country composed of three or four distinct, linguistically defined, nations.

## **B - Sociological evidence**

But can we say that Switzerland is *at the present time* a multinational state? Again, the answer depends largely on the definition of nation that we adopt. Of course, if one insists on a simple equation 'language group = nation', without any further contextualization, then there is probably little to be done to convince him or her on the necessity of paying attention to peculiar circumstances of different countries.

However, as my main subject of critique is Kymlicka, I shall try to rely as much as possible on *Kymlicka's own account of nationhood* and show that it does not support his thesis that Switzerland is composed of different nations.

As a matter of fact, Kymlicka does not simply support the equation 'language group = nation'. He gives us many reasons why the discourse of nationhood is important. Let me point out at two of them: the designation-based argument and the identity-based argument.

I would like to pick up these two important aspects of Kymlicka's theory which will allow me to point out the shortcomings of Kymlicka's vision of Switzerland. On the one hand, we will see that the Swiss use the language of nationhood in order to describe their *common* institutions and practices. On the other hand, the foci of identity of Swiss citizens are multiple and do not necessarily go first and foremost to the linguistic community.

### **Designation-based argument**

Kymlicka gives a lot of importance to the 'power to name itself'; a power that is seen as a 'crucial test of respect for the group as a whole' (Kymlicka, 1998: 132). He

also brings examples showing that national minorities have 'adopted the language of "nationhood"' (e.g. in Canada the Quebec provincial legislature is called the 'National Assembly' and the main organization of Aboriginals is called the 'Assembly of First Nations') (Kymlicka, 1998: 127). This, for Kymlicka, is thought to be a proof of the will of these populations to call themselves 'nations'. Now, as far as Switzerland is concerned, it must be emphasized that the adjective 'national' is always used to describe pan-Swiss institutions and practices. The lower chamber of the Parliament is called 'National Council' (*Nationalrat*; *Conseil national*; *Consiglio nazionale*). It was expressively labeled in this way because the 'founders of the Constitution' of 1848 wanted it to represent the whole 'Swiss nation'. The four languages of Switzerland are defined in the Constitution as 'national languages' (*nationale Sprachen*; *langues nationales*; *lingue nazionali*).

In the every-day situations the Swiss refer to what happens at the pan-Swiss level most of the time by using the adjective 'national' or 'federal' (e.g. national or federal politics). When referring to Switzerland as a state the term 'Confederation' is also used. In international settings, Switzerland is often compared 'to other nations'. Although it still might be that the word 'nation' or the adjective 'national' are less frequent in Switzerland than, say, in France, they are almost never used to describe linguistic communities. What is even more worth our attention is the differential use of the word 'nation' in different parts of the country. It seems, in fact, that German-speaking Swiss use it less frequently from the Francophones or Italophones. Thus the August First is called 'National Holiday' in French (*Fête nationale*) and in Italian (*Festa nazionale*) but 'Federal Holiday' (*Bundesfeier*) in German.<sup>22</sup> There is a similar usage in the case of 'National Museum' (*Musée national*; *Museo nazionale*), which is called 'Country Museum' (*Landesmuseum*) in German, or in the cases of 'National Library' (*Landesbibliothek*; *Bibliothèque nationale*; *Biblioteca nazionale*) and 'National Exposition' (*Landesaustellung*; *Exposition nationale*; *Esposizione nazionale*) (Altermatt, 1996: 25). Although I cannot develop this point any further here I believe that certain reluctance in using the term 'nation' in German-speaking Switzerland might stem from the fact that the conception of nation in neighboring Germany and Austria has had traditionally very 'ethnic' connotations.

Nonetheless, this point is interesting because Kymlicka, probably influenced by Canadian experience, claims that the language of nationhood is often adopted by 'minority nations' in order to describe *their own* institutions and practices and that they are reluctant to use such a language at the *pan*-state level and sometimes see it even as an 'insult' or a 'denigration' (Kymlicka, 1998: 132). Now the example of Switzerland shows the very opposite, namely (a) that the language of nationhood is used by *all* language groups to describe their *common* institutions, practices and

collective citizenship; (b) that the language groups in numerical minority do not only accept the practice of such a discourse at the pan-state level but use it even *more frequently* than the most numerous language group.

Therefore, if this evidence is sufficient to show that the Swiss use their 'power to name [themselves]' in such a way as to see themselves as forming one nation and if 'respecting this power is seen as a crucial test of respect for the group as a whole' (Ibid.), then it must be clearly stated that Kymlicka has failed such a test when he constantly speaks of Switzerland as of 'multination' state, and even more so when he describes it as 'the most multinational country' (Kymlicka, 1995: 18).

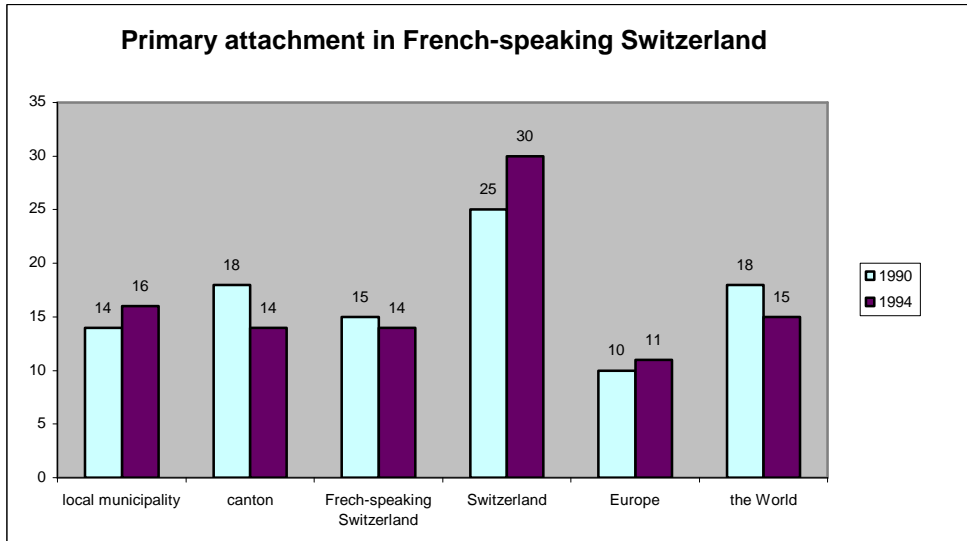
### ***Identity-based argument***

In Kymlicka's work there is a certain tension between his liberal credo and his endorsement of the idea that nation represents the 'primary focus of identification' of individuals. Since Kymlicka claims that Switzerland constitutes a multination state, then it is appropriate that we look for some evidence that would match such a claim with the belief that nations make up our primary identities. To be more specific, if Kymlicka believes that it is a 'general trend' that people's primary identification go their nation, then one should logically expect that the primary identity of the inhabitants of Switzerland ('the most multinational country') should go to their respective linguistic communities.

Therefore it is important to point out the *kind* of attachment that the citizens of Switzerland show toward their communities. Here I rely on a recent study of Kriesi et al. (KRIESI et al., 1996) which aim was to assess the salience of the 'linguistic cleavage' in Switzerland.<sup>23</sup> The authors refer to two surveys, carried out in 1990 and in 1994. The interviewees were asked to indicate their primary attachment among the range of six choices: local municipality, canton, linguistic region, Switzerland, Europe or the World.<sup>24</sup> Because of the very object of that study, the surveys were conducted in different linguistic regions of the country.<sup>25</sup> We can observe that in French-speaking part of the country there is a *great dispersion of primary attachments* insofar as 25 to 30% declared 'Switzerland' as their main identity whereas other five forms of identification score around 15% each (slightly less so in the case of affection to 'Europe'). In the light of the topic of this essay I shall stress that *the attachment to the linguistic community is barely 15% (in 1990) or 14% (in 1994)*. This is, indeed, a rather paradoxical outcome for defenders of a linguistically determined 'multinational' Switzerland. The results in German-speaking Switzerland, on the other hand, are less balanced because the main attachment goes to Switzerland (43 and 44%) and to local municipality (21 and 25%) whereas other four identities range between 6 and

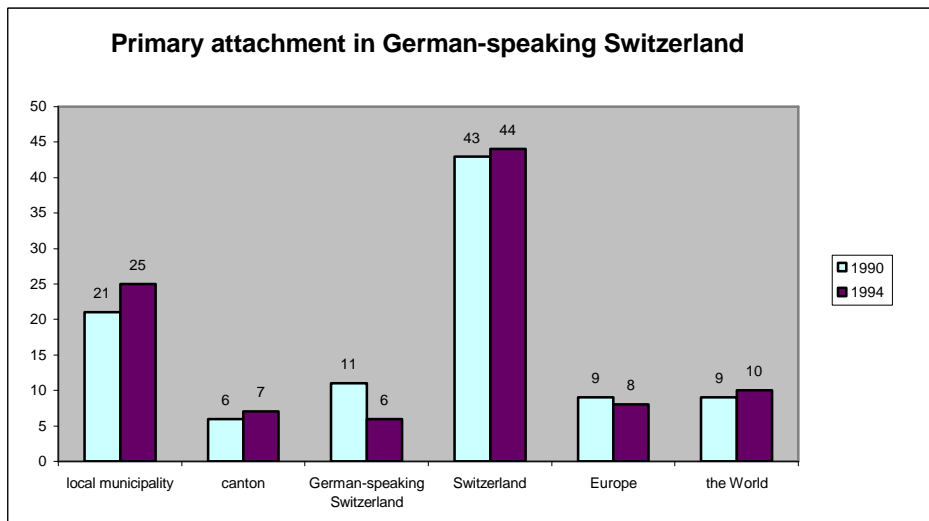
11%. The attachment to the German-speaking Switzerland varies between 11% in 1990 and 6% in 1994. In 1994 the attachment to Switzerland as primary identity in the Italian-speaking Canton Ticino was of 34%.

Figure 1. Primary attachment in French-speaking Switzerland (1990 and 1994)



Source: Kriesi et al. (1996: 55)

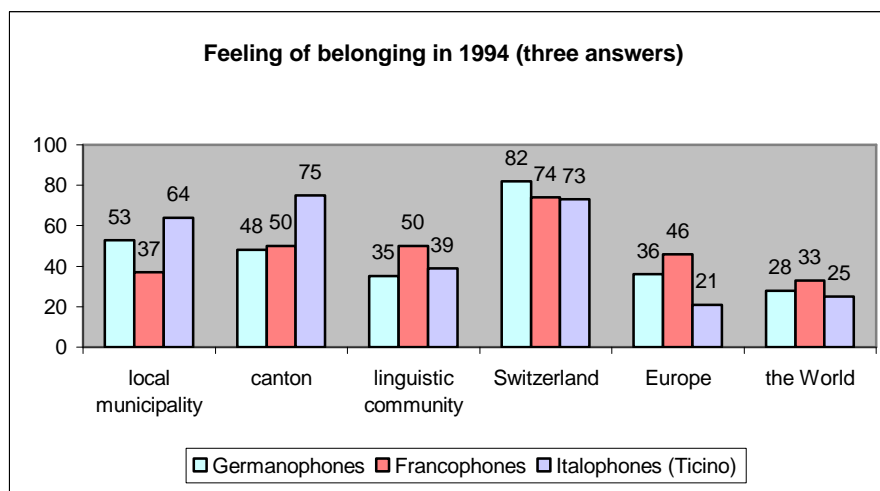
Figure 2. Primary attachment in German-speaking Switzerland (1990 and 1994)



Source: Kriesi et al. (1996: 55)

It is also interesting to display the results of the same survey but this time through accumulation of *first three preferences* of the interviewees (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Feeling of belonging in 1994 (three answers)



Source: Kriesi et al. (1996: 56)

Again, we can observe a great degree of dispersion of identities among Swiss citizens. The attachment to one's linguistic community is important, and slightly more so among the Francophones, but it is by no means a 'primary focus of identification' and it is well counter-balanced by other identities.

Moreover, it is especially relevant to point out a *high degree of patriotism, in other words the attachment to Switzerland as such*, among all three linguistic groups. The differences between Germanophones, Francophones and Italophones from Ticino are here minimal. Such an outcome is also confirmed by another question asked in the same survey. The interviewees were invited to qualify their attachment to Switzerland on a scale ranging from 1 ('not attached at all') to 6 ('very attached'). The average outcomes were 4,9 (Germanophones), 4,9 (Francophones) and 5,1 (Italophones). Such patriotism among all language groups has also been found in another study (Melich 1991) in which 28% of the interviewees declared themselves as 'very proud' (*très fiers*) of being Swiss, 43% as 'proud enough' (*assez fiers*); only 13% felt 'not very proud' (*pas très fiers*) and 5% 'not proud at all' (*pas fiers du tout*) (cited in Kriesi et al. 1996:57). These proportions were generally valid for all linguistic regions.

All these results put Kymlicka's argument on a very shaky ground. Contrary to his idea on the importance of the language of nationhood the Swiss language communities neither describe themselves as 'nations' nor do they appear primarily attached to such communities.

However, it is interesting to note that Kymlicka does not ignore this strong attachment to Switzerland among its linguistic groups. However, he claims that we deal here with 'patriotism' and not with 'national identity'. "To say that these countries are 'multination' states is not to deny that the citizens view themselves for some purposes as a single people. For example, the Swiss have a strong sense of common loyalty, despite their cultural and linguistic divisions.... Some commentators describe this common loyalty as a form of national identity, and so consider Switzerland a nation-state. I think this is misleading. We should distinguish 'patriotism', the feeling of allegiance to a state, from national identity, the sense of membership in a national group.... [T]his sense of patriotism is so strong that the Swiss are, in some ways, a single 'people', as well as being a federation of peoples." (Kymlicka, 1995: 13 et 187)

My aim here is not to engage in a sterile debate about terminology. After all, everything depends on definitions that one assigns to terms like 'patriotism', 'nationalism', 'nation' or 'national identity' (Viroli, 1995). Therefore, the above-cited passages from Kymlicka, if taken on their own, are not misleading per se.

Where Kymlicka must be challenged is, rather, in his elaboration of the concept of 'multination' state as applied to Switzerland. As a matter of fact, he seems to have a deep misunderstanding of the Swiss case. First, Switzerland *is not* a 'federation of two or more European cultures' or a 'federation of [linguistically defined] distinct peoples' (Kymlicka, 1998: 13). Second, it is inaccurate to say that the members of its 'minority nations [i.e. linguistic groups]' have a 'strong *national* consciousness' (Kymlicka, 1998: 187; emphasis added) or that Switzerland contains 'powerful minority nationalisms... with [its] French and Italians' (Kymlicka, 1998: 127). There are no 'French' or 'Italians' in Switzerland. The French- and Italian-speaking inhabitants of Switzerland were members of the Swiss Confederacy well before the establishment of France or Italy as nation-states and much more before the creation of French and Italian nationhood. To consider them as 'French' or as 'Italians' is simply wrong and anachronistic. Third, when discussing Switzerland he rightly affirms that 'there are all too many examples of countries where the institutionalization of national identities and rights has not prevented civil strife (e.g. Lebanon; Yugoslavia)' (Kymlicka, 1998:187) Although it is not very clear whether he thinks that this is the case of Switzerland, it must be clearly recalled that there is *no institutionalization of linguistic groups in Switzerland*. Fourth, the kind of federalism that exists in



Switzerland is not 'asymmetrical'. In fact, Kymlicka is very attentive to draw the distinction between 'symmetrical' and 'asymmetrical' federal arrangements. The former are more suitable, he claims, to nation-states like Germany or the United States, whereas the latter are a much more appropriate solution to 'multination' states.

I suspect that much of these and other misperceptions of Switzerland stem from the fact that Kymlicka seems very much influenced by Canadian contest. The desire to provide fresh insights and alternative solution to the 'Canadian impasse' is certainly welcome but it shall not be arbitrarily projected on other countries and on other social contexts. Switzerland has its own specific historical development, a unique political culture and a very particular pattern of resolving its internal (by no means only linguistic) conflicts (Schmid, 1981; McRae, 1983; Linder, 1994). Reducing it to the status of 'multination' state does not render justice to its political experience.

### ***Is Switzerland becoming a multination state?***

Until now I have shown that Kymlicka is wrong in his assessment of the Swiss case. Switzerland is not a multinational country from both historical and sociological point of view.

However, it is still worth discussing whether Switzerland is in a process of *becoming* a 'multinational' country, linguistically defined. I will proceed here in the following manner. I discuss (1) the impact of external circumstances upon Swiss identity; (2) increasing influence of the mass media on the linguistic segmentation of public opinion; (3) the potential of division through mechanisms of direct democracy; and (4) decrease of non-linguistic cleavages.

To sum up, the recent developments in Switzerland show that there is a *potential* for the development of a 'multinational Switzerland'. The fact that the Swiss identity has partly been a product of foreign menace, that the rapid development of the radio and TV influence the segmentation of the public space, that direct democracy provide structural basis for possible 'minorizations' of language communities and that other societal cleavages are in decline - all this suggests that Switzerland might one day become a multination state. In that case, Gellner's claim that Switzerland represent an anomaly and that usually the cultural and political nation show a tendency to become the same thing, would prove true (O'Leary, 1997: 216).

A question arises: if Switzerland were to become a multinational country some day, should we regret it? I think that there will be something to be regretted and this

will make up my next section where I provide some final normative remarks on the Swiss nation.

### **C - Normative considerations**

There are five basic normative reasons for putting forward the idea of a single Swiss nation: (1) it is a 'thin' nation of citizens; (2) it provides stability; (3) it is a good example of constitutional patriotism; (4) it prevents the politicization of identities; (5) it safeguards individual freedom and multiple identities.

First, Switzerland constitutes a 'thin' nation. Its historical (cantonal), regional, linguistic, religious and other diversities have always prevented a strong or 'thick' sense of nationhood. It is, what Habermas (Habermas, 1992) would term a 'nation of citizens'. Being 'Swiss' can never be as 'thick' as being 'French' or 'German'. Concepts of 'liberty' and 'diversity' have always been at the center of the Swiss identity. For these reasons being Swiss cannot be but, first and foremost, a *political* identity. This does not mean to negate that over the centuries a truly Swiss culture has been created<sup>26</sup> but, if such culture exists, it will always have to be open to discussion and possibly negation. I have already mentioned the 1992 World Exhibition at Seville where the Swiss pavilion bore the title *La Suiza no existe!* ('Switzerland doesn't exist!'). Most of the people found this *mise en question* of existence of Switzerland rather amusing, a sort of self-irony. I doubt that the reaction would be the same in, say, France or Germany.

Why is common political identity to be preferred to a cultural one? In multicultural settings (and all countries are, to some extent, multicultural), a certain allegiance to a common political community is needed (Kymlicka, 1995, ch. 9). Habermas (Habermas, 1992) qualifies this as 'constitutional patriotism'. To be sure, Kymlicka also argues that the Swiss are patriotic but that this is not expression of common *national* identity (Kymlicka, 1995: 13).<sup>27</sup> As I said earlier, my aim is not to engage in a fruitless discussion about the terminology. What is important is to deny that '[i]n Switzerland... national groups feel allegiance to the larger state only because the larger state recognizes and respects their distinct national existence'. The Swiss state has never recognized its linguistic groups as 'nations' (nor have these groups ever demanded it). It did recognize, however, the four languages as national languages, it promoted and protected the one endangered language (Romansch), it cherished within and without its plurilinguism. But it also protected its religious peace, it supported the less wealthy Alpine cantons, it provided free heroin to drug addicts etc. Moreover, the Swiss linguistic groups do not consider themselves as nations. The phrase should thus follow: in Switzerland citizens feel allegiance to

the larger state only because the state *does not hinder their individual development*. One can live all one's life in one's village on the top of the mountain and speak only dialect on every-day basis and never see other parts of Switzerland or learn other languages. But this makes one no less Swiss than a cosmopolitan, urban person who speaks fluently all national languages and travels all around Switzerland.

Second, there is the issue of *stability*. We can only speculate whether Switzerland as a state would lose its stability if the Swiss linguistic groups were to become nations. Kymlicka, however, seems to share such a view: "The sense of being a distinct nation within a larger country is potentially destabilizing. On the other hand, the denial of self-government is also destabilizing, since it encourages resentment and even secession. Concerns about social unity will arise however we respond to self-government claims. A *fundamental challenge* facing *liberal* theorists, therefore, is *to identify the sources of unity* in a democratic multinational state. The nineteenth-century English theorist A. V. Dicey once said that a stable multinational federation requires 'a very peculiar state of sentiment' among its citizens, since 'they must desire union, and must not desire unity'. Henri Bourassa made a similar point when he said that 'special development' of the French-Canadian nation 'must come about in conjunction with the development of a more general patriotism that *unifies* us, without *fusing* us' (Cook 1969: 149). Liberal theory has not yet succeeded in clarifying the nature of this 'peculiar sentiment'. (Kymlicka 1995: 192)

I believe that Switzerland offers an interesting example of such 'peculiar sentiment' that 'unifies without fusing'. Kymlicka's failure to recognize that such a sentiment is truly *national* makes him misunderstand the Swiss case and draw flawed conclusions from it. I believe that one of the 'secrets' of Switzerland lies in the fact that it was never conceived of as a state composed of distinct nations.

Third, as I noted earlier, the 'peculiar sentiment' that holds together the Swiss is *national* one. At the same time, however, the bulk of Swiss common national identity lies in their common *political culture*. Perhaps those who look for 'the ties that bind' should look closer into the political nature of Swiss identity. The concept of *constitutional patriotism* jumps again onto mind here.

According to Armingeon (Armingeon, 1999: 238) the notion of constitutional patriotism (i.e. the feeling of solidarity based on the attachment to legitimized democratic institutions) was first proposed by Sternberger (Sternberger, 1990) in an attempt to reflect on the bases of a common European identity, that to many seem as indispensable for stability of a future European federal state. In order to find out if there are any actual examples of such patriotism today, Armingeon tried to operationalize such a concept for international comparison. He first focused on 'the trust in those core institutions of democracy, which are somewhat detached from

political conflict and societal cleavages' - that is, the legislative body, public administration and the legal system (Armingeon, 1999: 239). As these are only minimal requirements meeting the criteria of Sternberger, the author added the feeling of pride of belonging to the country that possesses these institutions. The findings have been based on a secondary analysis of the European Value Survey 1990 and the Swiss Value Survey 1988/89 and they are presented in Table 1. They are also compared with a subsequent Habermas' (Habermas, 1992) notion of constitutional patriotism according to which individuals need to be attached to the democratic institutions and *practice* democracy (i.e. be active participants in the democratic process). So a citizen is coded as constitutional patriot 'if he or she trusts in two or three core institutions, discusses politics sometimes or frequently with friends and does not refuse, in principle, to participate in legal demonstrations' (Armingeon, 1999: 239).

Table 1: Constitutional patriots (% of respondents)

Country	Constitutional patriots (Sternberger)	Constitutional patriots with national pride (Sternberger)	Constitutional patriots (Habermas)
Belgium	42	34	14
Canada	45	42	22
Denmark	56	48	30
France	47	39	22
Germany	50	35	26
Great Britain	45	41	27
Iceland	55	52	34
Ireland	51	50	20
Italy	26	24	10
Netherlands	54	40	31
Norway	60	50	42
Portugal	36	34	14
Spain	38	35	12
Sweden	44	36	30
<i>Switzerland</i>	71	59	17
United States	52	50	22
Mean	48	42	23

Source: Armingeon 1999: 240; European Value Study 1990; Les valeurs des Suisses (Enquête Valeurs) 1988/89. Highest and lowest scores on all scales are in italics.

For the author the main finding is that Habermas' constitutional patriotism cannot be seen as suitable for the future source of common identity in European Union and that Sternberger's vision seems more adequate for it. This is especially the case with Switzerland, which scores best on both scales based on Sternberger.<sup>28</sup> 'Switzerland, having no common culture, language or idea of common origins, is a case in point' (Armingeon, 1999: 239).

The fact that a country like Italy, which I assume Kymlicka would label 'a nation-state', scores lowest on all three scales indicates that Kymlicka is probably pointing in the wrong direction when he takes national allegiances in linguistically defined states (such as Italy) for given and tries to find out 'the ties that bind' in 'multination' states. Is it just a coincidence that Italy, despite its (supposed) cultural and national unity has known a powerful autonomist-secessionist movement in Sicily until the late 1940s as well as in its Northern regions in the 1990s in its Northern regions? On the other hand its neighboring 'most multinational country', Switzerland, has never known secessionist movements.

Fourth, there are arguments against making Switzerland a multinational state that refer to some fears expressed in the concept of *politicization of identity*. Public recognition of a given identity may be divisive for the society as a whole as well as oppressive for single individuals. Over time such policies might well create 'a spiral of competition, mistrust, and antagonism between ethnic groups' (Kymlicka and NORMAN, 2000: 10). While this must not necessarily lead to an open conflict or civil war, 'they will erode the ability of citizens to fulfill their responsibilities as democratic citizen - e.g. by weakening citizens' ability to communicate, trust, and feel solidarity across group differences'. As Kymlicka and Norman (Ibid. 10) rightly note, many defenders of minority rights have dismissed such worries and manifested their skepticism about appeals to citizenship. 'This is understandable since in many multi-ethnic and multinational states the rhetoric of citizenship has been used historically as a way of advancing the interests of the dominant national group' (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000: 10-11). In other words the discourse of citizenship has not provided a 'neutral framework' and has rather served as a 'cover by which the majority group extends its language, institutions, mobility rights, and political power at the expense of the minority'.

Now the Swiss experience does not bear these critiques. In Switzerland the 'rhetoric of citizenship' was *not* used to foster the interests of a dominant group. This is, at least partly, due to the fact that there was not a stable, rigid, 'dominant group'. German-speaking Swiss, although they make up for 63,6% (1990 data) of the Swiss population (citizens and foreigners alike), do not form a homogeneous linguistic bloc. It is certainly a fortunate historical and social circumstance that they actually *do not*

speak 'German' (*Hochdeutsch*, or literary German) on every-day basis (Altermatt, 1997). Instead, they speak a variety of cantonal and local dialects quite distinct one from another. It is certainly no coincidence that in 1994 only 6% of them declared 'German-speaking Switzerland' as their primary identity. In other words, majorities and minorities in Switzerland are interchangeable and they by no means follow only linguistic lines.

Therefore, if some of the fears of 'politicization of identity' are justified and if the historical evidence of Switzerland show that citizenship has not been used as a means of advancing the interests of one specific group, then to engage in such policies of recognition would represent an unnecessary risk and, in that specific case, they would not be justifiable.

Fifth, there is the issue of *individual liberty*. Let us imagine that the Swiss state recognizes its four linguistic communities as distinct 'nations'. What consequences would this have on individual liberty? One of the major aspects of liberalism is its emphasis on the value of freedom of individuals to choose how to pursue their idea of 'good life'. This includes the freedom of defining one's own identity. Kymlicka claims that the question 'Who am I?', central in the works of some 'communitarian' authors, does not belong to the liberal discourse. A liberal should rather ask 'What kind of good life do I want to pursue?'

Now why would the recognition of distinct nations in Switzerland represent a violation of this liberal principle? The risk, in my opinion, is that the people's primary identity would supposedly go to their national (i.e. linguistic) community. For instance, the jobs in administration would be almost certainly divided according to a 'national key'. A person would be primarily seen as, say, a Romand (that is, French-speaking Swiss) and only after as man or woman, Catholic, Protestant or atheist, citizen of a given canton, etc. This, it seems to me, would constitute a severe prejudice on one's freedom to define his or her identity.

Moreover, the question would arise how to *define* the nationality of an individual. On the one hand, the fact that the Swiss nations would be based on language implies that the acquisition of nationality would correspond to the acquisition of a given language. For this reason I do not believe that there would be the risk of 'ethnically' defined nations. But, on the other hand, the fact is that in Switzerland the languages are territorially defined. This 'principle of territoriality', contrary to the 'personal principle', implies that an individual adopts the language of territory in which he or she decides to settle. Today a German-speaking Swiss cannot expect to correspond in German, either in oral or written form, with cantonal authorities in a French- or Italian-speaking canton; and vice versa. There are here some questions that we one should ask. If I decide to settle in a canton of another

language would my nationality immediately change, according to the principle of territoriality? Or would I maintain my original nationality 'for ever' (as Karl Renner, one of the first defenders of 'personal principle', argued)? Or would I maintain my original nationality only until the point I become fully fluent in the language of my new canton of residence?

To be sure, a certain 'key of repartition' has always existed in Switzerland. It is certainly no coincidence that since its establishment in 1848 the Swiss government, the Federal Council, has never been 100% German-speaking. But, at the same time, the language has *never* been the *only* criterion. The party, religion, canton and, in the recent years, gender, have also played a role.

The main point is the following: if Switzerland were to become a country composed of four linguistic nations then the question of who belongs to which nationality would become crucial in repartition of government posts and, for instance, individuals with a bilingual identity would be obliged to 'choose sides'. The members of government would feel obliged to respond first to their linguistic nation and only after to the country as a whole. This is in contrast with the present-day situation. As the former Italian-speaking Federal Councilor Flavio Cotti once declared, a member of government cannot be said to represent a canton or linguistic community (Steinberg, 1996: 120). There are fair chances that this would change if Switzerland were to become a multination state. Of course, the example of government is simply emblematic and a similar case could be made for many other contexts where the national qua linguistic identity would undermine one's individual liberty and autonomy.

I have tried to show that there are various normative reasons for preferring the idea of a single Swiss nation. It is a 'thin' nation of citizens that has been able to provide institutional stability through a political allegiance of its members while permitting the flourishing of multiple, sometimes competitive, identities. In this way the individuals/ citizens have been granted a higher degree of personal freedom, which is the quintessence of liberal thought. By making Switzerland a 'multination' state many advantages of such a political pattern would be potentially endangered.

## **CONCLUSION**

My aim, however, is not to present an alternative 'Swiss model' of multiculturalism to the one developed by Kymlicka. This is partly due to the fact that Switzerland appears to me as a nation risen in rather peculiar historical, political and social circumstances, which prevents its direct export into other multicultural contexts. On the other hand, many authors have already dealt, directly or indirectly,

with the idea that Switzerland might constitute a model for resolving 'multicultural dilemmas'<sup>29</sup>.

Nevertheless, I would like to point out several interesting lessons that we have drawn from the Swiss experience, in the light of this essay.

- ? *Identity-pluralism.* Every individual and, as a result, every country have multiple identities. If a community based on a given characteristic (e.g. religion, 'race', language, social class) becomes predominant and/or overwhelming for determining one's identity, then the individual freedom of choosing one's own way of life will be seriously compromised. If I am primarily and continuously seen as, say, a person with the green eyes, then my sense of autonomy and self-esteem will be endangered because I possess other significant identities as well. Thus the societies that never give predominance to one given identity at the expense of the others are more respectful of individual freedom. Even though the imposition of one identity over the others may be, and often is, a social and not necessarily a political fact, we should at least strive for political non-recognition of only one kind of identity. In Switzerland, historical circumstances have provided the context of a very high degree of 'identity-pluralism'. At the same time, the Swiss state has never officially recognized only one specific identity but has, rather, underlined its general 'multicultural' character (linguistic, religious, social, cantonal, regional, urban/rural etc.).
- ? *Common political/national identity as a condition since qua non of a liberal polity.* It has been argued that for the purposes of a liberal state (i.e. need for trust, social justice and deliberative democracy) citizens of a given polity need to have some kind of attachment to the country they live in (Miller, 1995). This goal is, arguably, best achieved if the kind of attachment we need is *national*. Although one may list many reasons why Switzerland has had a long history of stable and just institutions, there is no doubt that the fact that its citizens perceive themselves as members of one nation has greatly contributed to this goal.
- ? *Relativization of the link between nation and culture.* It is a commonplace argument among contemporary liberal defenders of rights of minority cultures to claim that 'states' cannot be 'culturally neutral'. Although such an assertion can be accepted in general terms we should make distinction in terms of *degree* of such a recognition. A state might be obliged to recognize a given language as 'official' but it need not recognize only one. Switzerland has recognized its four languages as 'national languages' and three of them as 'official'. But what is even more relevant here is that the choice of public language resides within single cantons, and that is where the every-day life of



a common citizen is based in. Thus in a sense the Swiss state has remained 'neutral' in its linguistic policy. The Swiss nation, rather than being unilingual, is quadrilingual. This relativizes the link between nation and culture and permits a more appropriate development of the ideal of a 'nation of citizens'.

- ? *Principle of territoriality.* Principle of territoriality assumes that a territory provides the basis for a political community which, within its limits, possesses its own sphere of jurisdiction. Some argue that borders can be drawn in such a way as to make a specific group self-governing on a given territory. This is often seen as a form of official recognition of such a group. However, I believe that this is misleading in the case of a liberal polity. In fact, once set up, a new territorial unit belonging to a broader democratic and liberal state ceases to be simply an entity in the possess of a given cultural group. Membership to it must be regulated in terms of *citizenship* and not in terms of culture. Thus it is possible to change the cultural preferences of such an entity if its citizens desire it. In other words, by drawing borders in a certain way we do not recognize a given group as *moral person* but, rather, make it full political participant within a common liberal state. In Switzerland splitting up of territories has been a common practice at least since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The case of Jura shows how a political conflict based on alleged cultural differences has been appeased through political means. The new Canton Jura is, of course, French-speaking, but that is all that is left from once much more narrowly (and often ethnically) defined Jurassien identity. Being Jurassien today simply means being a *citizen* of the Canton Jura.

I have tried here to focus on some features of the Swiss experience that might be useful in resolving some contemporary multicultural dilemmas. These are only general suggestions that can be found, in a less explicit way, in different sections of the essay. They are not meant to constitute any specific 'model' of multiculturalism but, rather, a general overview of what I find being the most interesting lessons that we can draw from Switzerland.

Switzerland is far from being a 'paradise in the Alps'.<sup>30</sup> It is presently struggling with some unpleasant memories from its not-so-old past (e.g. Nazi gold); it still has very restrictive naturalization laws based on 'ethnic' rather than 'civic' grounds (Froidevaux, 1997; Kriesi, 1999a: 17); it has witnessed serious displays of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in the recent years; it remains rather conservative and closed towards the 'external World'. Despite all that, in this essay I wanted to argue that the idea of a Swiss nation still bears normative importance and is still worth being preserved. In an increasingly pluralistic world the Swiss experience, while not immediately available as a ready-for-export product, might still indicate interesting

ways for dealing with 'multicultural dilemmas'. As Karl Deutsch (Deutsch, 1976: 64) once put it: "The Swiss diversity is not an exception. Hundred years ago people used to think that linguistic and cultural uniformity of France was normal and that the diversity of Switzerland constituted an exception, something out of ordinary. Today the very opposite has come about.... *Untypical* is only the Swiss *success* in arriving at and in consolidating its political integration. And the experiences of the Swiss - how to motivate people to work together, how people learn together and maintain what they have learnt - have the greatest significance for the future of the World"<sup>31</sup>.

## NOTES

1. This paper is a short version of the authors MA Thesis "The Idea of a Swiss Nation. A Critique of Will Kymlicka's Account of Multination States" presented at the McGill University, Montreal, 2000
2. Even though I cannot develop the point any further here, let me stress that the example of Switzerland indicates that the 'context of choice' was not necessarily provided by linguistic community. One could think here, for instance, of the context of 'ghetto' in which Swiss Catholics lived (Altermatt 1972).
3. The term 'canton', however, comes into use only in 1798. Generally speaking, it is not easy to describe the exact political nature of such entities in Medieval Europe. Steinberg (1996: 19) speaks of 'Alpine valley communities'. Perry Anderson (1974; cf. Steinberg 1996: 19) has pointed out that, since feudalism had no clearly articulated legislative or executive functions, 'justice' is perhaps the best way to describe the type of power in such communities. Thus the term 'sovereign states' seems inadequate. In the following pages I shall maintain the label 'cantons'.
4. On recent historical controversies over what is 'myth' and what 'reality' in the Swiss historiography in relation to the 'founding date' of Confederacy, see Steinberg (1996: 14-26).
5. 'Im politischen System des schweizerischen Ancien régime konnte eine Nation schon deshalb nicht entstehen, weil kein einheitlicher politisch-rechtlicher Raum vorhanden war - auch nicht auf der Ebene der einzelnen Kantone nicht.... Der politische, aber auch der wirtschaftliche, soziale wie kulturelle Raum war stark segmentiert. Der politische Rahmen zur Lösung der Wichtigsten Probleme der Bevölkerung in diesem mosaikartigen Gefüge war primär die Gemeinde.'
6. In his discussion of the 'republican question' in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Meadwell (1999: 26) notes: 'It was difficult... to argue for republican institutions without referring to the nation in order to specify for whom these institutions were to be designed, and the group of individuals over which these institutions would range.'
7. For France, for example, see the classical study by Weber (1979).
8. I shall return to the issue of national festivities and associations later on.
9. 'Die Kantone vereinigen sich als schweizerische Nation.'

10. Such a model had already been proposed by James Fazy, a radical from Geneva, in his 1837 'Projet de constitution fédérale'.
11. This provision was eliminated in a 1999 February referendum and replaced by a less binding article that states : 'Les diverses régions et les communautés linguistiques doivent être équitablement représentées au Conseil fédéral' (Art. 96, al. 1 et 1 bis). The 'less binding' character of this article is proved by a subsequent decision of the Federal Tribunal to reject the recourse of an Italian-speaking Swiss lawyer who claimed that the failure of the Parliament to elect a new Italian-speaking Federal Councilor, in March 1999, was 'anti-constitutional'.
12. The influence of the United States' Constitution on the Swiss one has been object of many studies (e.g. Rappard 1941; Troxler 1848). However, as Kölz (1992: 613) rightly notes, one should not overestimate the link between the two. The Swiss advocates of a more centralized state often referred to the American model out of political pragmatism and were careful not to mention other sources of inspiration (for instance, the name of Jean-Jacques Rousseau was mentioned only once in the 1830s discussions). In fact, apart from the general concept of a bi-cameral parliament, Switzerland did not follow the US institutional model.
13. For other examples see Hilty (1875), Bluntschli (1915 [1875]), Spitteler (1915).
14. 'Die Deutschen glauben uns dadurch hauptsächlich zu Schweigen zu bringen, dass sie behaupten, das schweizerische Volk gehöre seiner Abstammung nach gar nicht zusammen, sondern die deutsche Schweiz gehöre eigentlich zu Deutschland, die französische zu Frankreich... das ist vorsätzliche Nichtbeachtung unseres Nationalcharakters.'
15. The best example is Habermas' (1992) concept of 'constitutional patriotism'. According to this author Switzerland and the United States would be the best examples of such a patriotism. I shall return to this point in the section 2.3.
16. Altermatt (1996: 140-155) uses the term 'anti-thesis' in order to describe the Swiss experience.
17. In this respect, the present essay takes part in a similar debate.
18. 'Das alte, bewährte Beispiel der Schweiz braucht nur erwähnt zu werden. In solchen Staatswesen versteht sich die gleiche Anteilnahme beider oder aller drei Nationen am staatlichen Wesen von selbst.'
19. 'Il canone dei temi patriottici e morali - ampiamente noto a tutti i presenti - ricorreva in ogni occasione ed era in grado di trasmettere una forte esperienza collettiva a cui nessuno poteva sottrarsi.'
20. The same study, however, has shown that national festivities were also a source social polarization. The working class, in particular, could not identify itself with the rhetoric of 'equality and fraternity' and developed their alternative festivities (cf. Kreis 1995: 47). The shooting (or marksmen's) festivals also imposed 'unanimous consensus' and did not tolerate conservative attitudes (see Henzirohs 1976, cited in Kreis 1995: 47).
21. Various researches have been summarized by Kreis (1995).
22. Although 'Bundesfeier' (Federal Holiday) is the official term for August First in German-speaking Switzerland, I have recently discovered that sometimes the term 'Nationalfeier' (National Holiday) is also used (cf. 'Für eine weltoffene Schweiz', *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2 August 2000).
23. For a critical review, see Grin (1997).

24. I acknowledge that there are many potential flaws in this type of surveys which look into the issues of personal identity. For instance, the respondent's answers may vary upon context and within a given period of time. But I would also like to recall that I am simply using the type of survey that Kymlicka himself relies on in order to prove that it is a 'general trend' that the members of national minorities designate their national groups as 'primary foci of identification' (cf. Kymlicka 1995: 89-90).
25. The margins of error have not been presented.
26. Steinberg (1996: 257-258) powerfully illustrates this culture in his recount of border-crossing at the Swiss-Italian frontier in the Canton Ticino. Only a river divides two small villages both called 'Ponte Tresa'. But the one is in Italy and the other in Switzerland. People behave differently, read different newspapers, watch soccer games with different passion, their buildings have different architectural traits.
27. In a recent co-edited volume Kymlicka and Norman (2000: 19) write: '... the Swiss share a common national identity despite speaking four different "national" languages.' I cannot say at this point whether this phrase represent a substantial change in Kymlicka's perception of Switzerland, or, indeed, whether it can be really taken as his personal statement.
28. My intuition is that the poorer score of Switzerland on the scale of Habermas has to do with the notoriously low participation of the Swiss in public protests. Although I cannot develop the issue any further here, the reason of such situation is to be linked, once again, to direct democracy and its balancing effects. For instance, since the 1937 accord between trade-unions and patronal associations (also known as 'La paix du travail') strikes and public protests are very rare in Swiss society. See, for example, Kriesi (1995).
29. See, for instance, Weilenmann (1925), Siegfried (1948), Kohn (1956), McRae (1964), de Rougemont (1965), Deutsch (1976), Lijphart (1977), Watts (1991), Gillett (1989), Linder (1994). It suffices to read the titles of some of these works in order to notice the extent to which they are concerned with discussing the 'Swiss model'.
30. This is the title under which appeared, in the early 1990s, an article in *The Economist* in which Switzerland was declared the best country to live in.
31. '[D]ie Verschiedenartigkeit der Schweiz ist keine Ausnahme. Man dachte vor 100 Jahren, die sprachliche und kulturelle Uniformität Frankreichs sei normal und die Verschiedenartigkeit der Schweiz bilde eine Ausnahme, etwas Ausserordentliches. Heute hat sich das Gegenteil herausgestellt....*Untypisch* ist nur ihr *Erfolg* in der Erreichung und Behauptung der politischen Integration. Und die Erfahrungen der Schweizer, wie man die Menschen zur Zusammenarbeit motiviert, wie man zusammenarbeiten lernt und das Gelernte festhält, das scheint heute von grösster Bedeutung für die Zukunft der Welt.'

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