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I started working on nationalism as a postdoctoral fellow at Ottawa University and then at McGill, from 1994-1996. My doctoral dissertation was about the relationship between the individual and community in major works of contemporary liberalism. It argued that in Rawls's and Kymlicka's work, people's embeddedness in a community is morally contingent, since community is only valued in as much as it promotes individual autonomy. I compared that trend of thought with Taylor's work. As a postdoctoral fellow, I intended to work on impartiality of norms in public institutions and political decision-making (is impartiality possible? What kind of impartiality could be achieved, and building on what kind of arguments and principles, from the moral point of view?). The first significant paper I wrote in English tried to answer the question of whether nationalist claims can be considered moral reasons, in liberal public discourse: from a liberal point of view, the legitimacy of such claims still depends very much on their content (eg, they cannot override liberal constitutional essentials); however, they may express legitimate concerns (particularly when one makes clear that no state is ethnoculturally neutral), and there are ways to argue for nationality-based claims from a disinterested point of view (for example, understanding that some people value the sense of a shared identification to a particular community). My concerns with impartiality then brought me to work on multiculturalism, more specifically on the problems liberal democracies encounter when faced with a kind of pluralism which does not neatly fit the model of religious toleration developed in the West from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on; this is the case, for example, when liberal credentials face religious claims that contradict liberal basic rights, as when parents refuse medical treatment for their kids, arguing that these contradict their faith's basic tenets. At that time, I also had the opportunity to work with Luc Tremblay on his research project on the philosophical background of Article 1 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Dr. Tremblay was working on "The normative foundations of reasons that justify restricting fundamental rights in a free and democratic society". I contributed to that research as a political philosopher specializing in contemporary liberalism.

When I got my tenure track position in 1998, I started working on the relationship between citizenship and territory in the modern state model, and the ways in which globalization challenges that relationship. I was then concerned with what may be called 'post-national citizenship' seen as a way to loosen/untie citizenship rights from statehood and of extending those rights in a deterritorializing world, one in which state boundaries have less significance from the social, cultural, political and economic point of view. The funding of the preliminary research helped me to focus on a triadic relationship — that of identity, citizenship and territory; it allowed me to explore what may be considered as the end of the Westphalian paradigm (namely, the international system based on the sovereign territorial state). In fact, I built a critique of that paradigm, from both an empirical point of view (as globalization challenges the prevailing conception of social space associated with the Westphalian paradigm) and from a normative one (as the Westphalian paradigm is built on a territorialist epistemology, restricts our political obligations to fellow citizens, and has contributed significantly to the assimilation of minority nations and national minorities). Elaborating that intellectual framework, I also worked on the principle of personality (as opposed to that of territoriality) as a possible contribution to a more peaceful coexistence of nations within multinational states. I have been particularly interested in the model developed by the Austro-Marxist Karl Renner, as it stands in sharp contradistinction to the the prevailing view of the nation-state model.

In the meantime, in 2002, I joined the *Groupe de recherche sur les sociétés plurinationales* (GRSP) (with Alain-G. Gagnon, François Rocher, Pierre Noreau, José Woehrling, André Lecours, James Tully). Our team was then working on minority nationalism. However, we are now also interested in



studying majority nationalism, more specifically, its impact on (and relationships with) both minority nations and the cultural diversity resulting from immigration. We intend to help clarify the normative foundations of majority nationalism, its cultural and identity basis, as well as the way it manifests itself institutionally and how it 'deals' with cultural and national pluralism. We organized, in 2004-2005, several conferences on that subject, with lectures from Liah Greenfeld, Alain Dieckhoff, Louis Dupont, John Coakley, John Loughlin and Angel Castiniera (a book is forthcoming, with the introduction chapter wrote by A. Lecours and I).

In 2004, I set up a research unit with Pierre-André Tremblay, a colleague of my department working both in sociology and anthropology. We both share an interest in 1) trends that may be considered as destabilizing conventional ways of organizing social life and 2) the ways social relationships are actually reconfiguring. Those trends are manifesting themselves at many levels: cultural pluralism and minority nationalism, forms of solidarity (eg, in the struggle against poverty), deterritorialization/reterritorialization processes, regionalism and supranational integration, etc.

My current research work is thus concerned with the general challenges that face liberal democracies in a context of a) globalization and b) cultural/national pluralism. I am particularly interested in issues relating to democracy and sovereignty, which necessarily arise in such a context. Those issues follow from the fact that pluralism, as well as the trends associated with globalization, challenge the Westphalian paradigm (the conventional model of the modern state). Since June 1st, 2005, I have held the Canada Research Chair on Democracy and Sovereignty ([www.uqac.ca/crcds](http://www.uqac.ca/crcds)). The Chair's research program focuses on multilevel democracy. It is concerned with the growing gap between citizens and decision-takers, and with fairness issues related to the coexistence of minority and majority nations within states (e.g. aboriginal claims) as well as to distributive justice at an international level. Since democracy requires that people actually decide for themselves, democratic theory must now be reworked to meet those challenges.