

FRAMING THE NATION:  
THREE RIVAL VERSIONS OF CONTEMPORARY NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY\*

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*1. Introduction*

In *Nationalism and Modernity*, Anthony Smith, one of the foremost contemporary analysts of nationalism, states that "social scientists are clear: nationalism is a modern movement and ideology, which emerged in the latter half of the eighteenth century in Western Europe and America" (1). Analysis of these two ingredients of nationalism - ideology and social movement - has indeed been treated as essential for an understanding of nationalism by a large proportion of active sociologists and political scientists. One of my purposes in this paper is to stress that viewing the concept of nationalism in these terms does not amount just to examination of new facets of the object of study, or to emphasis of aspects that have hitherto received insufficient attention; rather, it brings to the fore the decisive importance of the dynamic interplay between these ingredients - in other words, the importance of nationalism as an eminently *political* phenomenon (2).

This way of looking at nationalism leads to an abrupt reversal of the causal chain expounded in traditional analyses: nationalism is no longer seen as the inevitable political expression of a pre-extant, objectively delimited nation, but as the agent which, given favourable circumstances, shapes the nation by means of social mobilization and discourse. The nation itself is thus no longer an *a priori* fact, objectively crystallized in history, but the contingent product of a process

of social and political construction that, driven by nationalism, can take place in certain institutional and social contexts.

This new concept of nation that, not without difficulties, is gradually gaining ground in the social sciences, is thus a practical rather than an ontological or substantial category (3). It serves to capture the political perception, shared by relevant social agents, of specific national identity; but the internal homogeneity and external particularity of this collective entity is not the exteriorization of a pristine natural essence, but the result of complex political and discursive processes of mobilization and conflict, and of selection and even invention of the distinguishing features of the community in question.

In this situation, the analyst of nationalism must be careful to reject the realist concept of the nation as an indisputable natural entity rather than the result of a social process of national construction, while at the same time recognizing that this realist concept is an extraordinarily persuasive and effective constituent of the nationalist discourse - words, too, can generate reality - and that the mechanisms of this efficacy are part of the object of study.

## *2. Nationalism and ideology*

Bar a few exceptions, traditional analyses of nationalism were dominated by the extreme realism of their epistemology, nations being discussed as substantial collective entities that were largely immutable, internally homogeneous and externally clearly differentiated: a nation, supposedly definable *a priori* in terms of a specific ethnicity (i.e. a set of objectively differential characteristics - typically race, language, culture, history, tradition and territory), was held to

constitute a collective identity, the common national interests of which were expressed and defended by nationalist movements that at the same time acted to arouse nationalist sentiments by making the relevant community aware of its essential idiosyncrasy. But following Kuhn, Laudan, Bhaskar, Putnam and others, such extreme realism must be regarded as implausible, for the objects of knowledge are in part constituted by the conceptual, ideological and linguistic frameworks that we use to capture reality. Acceptance of this does not in any way mean adherence to the theses of radical constructivism or postmodernism, according to which reality (in this case nations) is totally generated by theory (in this case nationalist ideology); rather, we must adopt a *realist constructivism* according to which reality is a complex of phenomena that exist independently of our conceptual and discursive resources - and which therefore set limits to the content of our understanding and interpretation of the world - but which only constitute significant facts in so far as they are conceptualized within some interpretational framework. The "Nation" as objective reality is not something external to or totally independent of our ideological and conceptual schemes.

For our present purposes, the foregoing considerations imply that nations are not *extant*, but continually *under construction*; they are not the given starting points of politics, but the contingent results of on-going political and social processes of indeterminate course. Differential ethnic characteristics (language, history, traditions, myths, symbols) do not constitute the irrevocable definition of the nation, but merely the raw material of these on-going processes, a material that is reworked, selected and sometimes blatantly invented by nationalist intellectuals and movements. Nationalist ideology must therefore be considered, not as the external expression of

a pre-existent nation, but as one of the threads - a capitally important one - of the political mobilization that is the true stuff of the nation. In short, ideology is not a merely expressive, exogenous factor, but is strictly constitutive of and endogenous to the reality of the nation.

In a social context with certain initial inherited ethnic conditions (culture, history, myths, symbols, etc. - themselves the product of prior intellectual and political elaboration by élite groups of earlier times), and in which political and/or economic conditions are favourable to processes of differentiation (at critical moments in the construction, democratization, centralization or decentralization of the State, for example, or when the labour market exhibits socioethnic division), nationalist movements create, by means of more or less lengthy processes of organization and discourse, a nation with specific characteristics. Since the nation created is just one of the many that might have been constructed from the same inherited ethnic materials, it is essential, in order to delve behind the apparent simplicity of the complex nationalist discourse, to distinguish between nationalist ideology and the inherited ethnic repertoire by which it is often severely constrained - the myths, symbols, tales, folk culture and similar baggage taken on by nationalists and by a more or less extensive part of the population. These constraints consist not only in nationalist ideology having to produce a discourse in tune with prevalent ethnic interpretational frameworks - the history, folk history and myths produced by earlier, supposedly cultural but actually politically active stages of nationalism - but also in a more fundamental kind of limitation: it is by no means ideologically irrelevant that the foundational myth associated with a given nation concern a wargod such as Rama (in the case of Hindu nationalism) or universal nobility, descendance from

Tubal and fundamentalist Catholicism (as in early Basque nationalism). Note that the complexity of nationalist discourse and of the roles of nationalist ideology and mobilization in the genesis of nations involves at least two main questions: the constitutive efficacy of ideology (i.e. its effectiveness, together with the necessary structural factors, in the construction of nations); and the fact that the nationalist issue is not reducible to a false choice between identity and interest. The second of these areas will be discussed in the next section; here I concentrate on the first.

It is somewhat surprising that many characterizations of nationalist ideology offered by specialists consider claims for self-government, self-determination or sovereignty to be, if not the defining feature, then at least a central one. To mention only two reputed authors that I have already cited, Anthony Smith states that nationalism is an ideological movement designed to obtain and maintain the self-government and independence of a group, some of whose members believe to constitute an actual or potential nation (4), while Hechter asserts that "nationalism is a collective action designed to render the boundaries of the nation congruent with those of its governance unit" (5). The action of nationalist ideology nevertheless goes far beyond setting up self-government, secession and Statehood as objectives. The task of nationalist ideology is in fact to constitute the nation itself: to use common traits such as race, language or religion to construct an "us" from a population divided by class, local interest and numerous other differentiae; and at the same time, necessarily, to define "them" - foreigners - as the antithesis of the members of the nation. For the ingredients of the nation are not given *a priori*: as Hans Kohn (6) pointed out, none of the elements that can confer nationality is essential, multiple variations

and combinations of these elements being observed in practice.

At its positive pole, nationalist ideology constitutes a certain group of individuals as a collective subject with a remote origin, common forebears, a shared history, a set of patriotic myths and symbols, and a future in which freedom is identified with self-determination and self-government. At its negative pole, it creates a concept of foreignness through a series of binary oppositions (nation vs. State, own vs. alien, friend vs. enemy, racially pure vs. half-bred, etc.) that through opposition or negation relate the objective facts of the group's ethnic character with other kinds of entity (other ethnic groups or nations, undesired political institutions, etc.) so that the construction of otherness is just another way of constructing sameness and the antagonistic stereotype of foreignness becomes a vicarious bearer of the national identity that is being asserted (7).

Summing up, and without wishing to understate the complex role that we have seen to be played by nationalist ideology, we may nevertheless consider the content of an ideal traditional nationalist ideology to centre on the following core postulates.

1. Humankind is composed of a number of natural, substantial communities, i.e. nations.
2. Each nation is internally homogeneous, possessing a national identity based on its differential ethnic features.
3. These specific national traits show the fundamental difference of a given nation from other human groups and nations, delimiting the frontier between "them" and "us".
4. The freedom and, in the deepest sense, the authentic existence of individuals requires that they identify with a nation, to the extent that loyalty to the nation is required to prevail over loyalty to other groups.
5. Nations can only be free and realize their potential when

possessing an independent sovereign State.

6. The State should serve a single nation, tending to its language, culture and interests.

7. Freedom and peace can only prevail worldwide when all nations are free and independent.

### 3. Nationalism and political mobilization

Although nationalist ideology takes as its starting point a given ethnic capital - an inherited ethnic repertoire created by earlier intellectuals and movements - it acts not only by selecting and emphasizing certain differential characteristics at the expense of others, but also by relating them to very specific social and material interests, to the advantage of certain groups and the disadvantage of others. Nationalist ideology is thus a highly effective combination of interests and affective ties (8), being the role of emotion a short-cut to attain political ends, an overriding consciously desired value (9). Ethnic identity is configured as a unique mythico-symbolic complex composed of emotional, expressive elements (feelings and loyalties) and instrumental political interests that are only meaningful through the former. In fact, nationalist ideology is a particular way of creating an identity for collective subjects that possess certain interests, linking, as it does, signs of identity and interest. It must nevertheless be stressed that, like identities, interests (preferences) are not completely given *a priori* and independently of political process, but are constituted ideologically (politically) through endogenous processes, one of the most decisive of which is the definition of collective subjects with their own interests, i.e. of ethnic and national groups (10). Processes of national construction thus consist in the establishment of links between élite groups and the masses, and the crystallization of a national community within which both material and symbolic intercourse are conducted. In this way the genesis of national identities is not an obstacle to the politicization of conflict regarding material interests, such as class struggles, but a decisive factor in favour of this process. Without on-going processes of national



construction the kindling of conflicts based on class identity is much more difficult; in fact, the spread of class ideology among large groups is more a result of the process of national construction than an autonomous phenomenon that is alternative to the latter (11). As we shall see later, it is this internal ideological conjunction of a) the differential characteristics of nationality (race, language, history, etc.) and b) the interests of the groups composing the national community, that dictates the political orientation of each particular nationalism.

In recent years, analyses of social movements have placed increasing emphasis on considering their cultural nature, as phenomena capable of formulating and propagating collective identities and worlds of meaning (12). This viewpoint is of enormous value for analysis of nationalism as mobilization and ideology. The complex reality of ethnicity is political and cultural, it is not a given social bedrock but the product of politics and collective action; as we have seen, its properties derive less from objective attributes than from the meaning given by a group to certain of its cultural, territorial and historical characteristics and to its interactions and shared experiences, initially by certain élite subgroups and subsequently by the majority (13). In producing its version of ethnicity, nationalist ideology revises and stylizes its references to the objective facts, preferring to generate symbols; the realities of a distinct national language and relevant history are continually reinterpreted mythico-symbolically and through political action (14). Nations are not only "imaginary communities" (15), but "phenomena of the masses, not of elites" (16), so it would be vain to attempt to grasp the resulting elusive collection of myths, traditions, values and symbols without regard to the nature of the discourse by which

this idea of the nation is generated and propagated out towards the masses from élite groups and nationalist movements or parties. It is therefore necessary to complement an analysis of the social preconditions and rationale of mobilization with both ethnosymbolic examination of the ethnic raw material of nationalism and case-by-case analysis of ideological specifics - the internal organization and transformations of ethnic differentiae and the manner in which their political significance is created by the formation of external relationships with political ideologies and values (17).

For this purpose a very useful concept is that of the *frame*, a set of elementary, schematic collective beliefs that bestow meaning upon participation in collective action (18). Sometimes intentionally created, by means of "framing strategies", sometimes unconsciously as the result of such strategies having created a "mobilization frame", interpretational frameworks synthesize the fundamental elements of the discourse of nationalist movements: a sense of historical injustice or oppression (grievances), membership of a homogeneous, well-differentiated community, and motivation for political action (19). We have already seen that the significance of national oppression must often be analysed as a *relative deprivation*, so to speak, as the frustration of expectations that have been generated ideologically by nationalist discourse (see, for example, point 5 of the list presented at the end of the previous section). We have also stressed that nationalism generates collective identity by means of mechanisms that involve the aggregation and selection of differential traits (language, religion, race, history, etc.) and that produce stereotypes of the distinction between "us" and "them" by exaggerating differences from things foreign and minimizing internal differences within the community. For the

purposes of mobilization, the ambiguity of myths and symbols- what Barthes called their "happy clarity"- is a marked advantage that makes them extremely effective in bringing a community to see itself as, naturally and self-evidently, and regardless of internal disputes or external similarities, a "Nation". Finally, let us recall that sharing a common ethnic matrix and socioeconomic interests constitutes potential for mobilization but is not sufficient for mobilization actually to come about; for this, it is also necessary for the potential to be activated, and to this end the mythico-symbolic complex constructed by nationalist discourse not only exacerbates the "us"- "them" distinction but provides emotional elements that fuel mobilization by spurring to altruism, cooperation, self-sacrifice for the motherland, heroism - and possibly atrocity (20).

It is clear from the above that the interpretational frameworks of nationalism do not express or reflect a pre-existing objective national reality, but instead support rhetorical strategies for the construction of ethnonational differences by highlighting certain differential traits and blurring others, by pressing certain political objectives and ignoring others, and so on. Because of this capacity to shape evidence of an age-old, homogeneous nation, they are invaluable tools for the promotion of collective action. The more emotional, radical and discriminatory a nationalist discourse, the deeper it digs the trench between "us" and "them", the more effective it is in mobilizing its audience. But such intensity is not without its drawbacks: it presents nationalist leaders with a problem of "frame dealignment" consisting in limited political credibility due to excessive radicality. It is the difficulty of striking a balance between effective emotivity (only acceptable to a minority) and the moderation necessary to

broaden support (in elections, for example) that gives rise to the ambiguity and polysemy that are characteristic of nationalist discourse, and to its oscillations between radical diatribes addressed at unconditional adherents and more temperate formulations aimed at a wider public.

From the point of view of ideology, our interest in this paper, a nation is the result of a process of "frame alignment" (Snow and Benford 1988), the mythico-symbolic overemphasis of an original community as an entity that is natural and self-evident not only for nationalist intellectuals and leaders but also, because of its resonance with a pre-existing frame of popular beliefs concerning ethnicity, for a large part of the society to which nationalist discourse is addressed. This heuristic process efficiently spreads a perception of the community as not being politically and socially contingent, one possible outcome of many that might have emerged from the same ethnic and structural context, but substantial and immutable, rooted in antiquity and essentially defined by its central ethnic differentiae: a collective name, a myth of common ancestry, a shared, linear history, a distinct culture, association with a particular territory, patriotic solidarity, a rejection of all things foreign, etc. In this way, a given nationalist account of the nation it promotes is constructed by "symbolic packaging" of various specific interpretational frames, and is thus the political result of a particular nationalist framing strategy. And it is this strategy - the short-cut and saving-time device in which the complexity of values, ethnic differentiae, socioeconomic interests and political objectives are simplified, coordinated and marshalled - that determines both 1) whether a nationalist ideology will succeed in taking root among the masses (for which purpose its version of history and its myths and symbols must be attuned with the "received ethnicity"

installed in popular awareness, so as to create consciousness of nationality), and 2) the political orientation of the nationalist movement (its strategic repertoire, the identity of the "genuine" members of the nation, the proposed form of self-government, potential allies, whether community and future State are democratic or authoritarian, etc.).

To explain the extraordinary attraction and power for mobilization of nationalist ideology, attention must be paid to the detailed fabric of nationalist discourse, to the structures and devices it employs. To begin with, it makes use of moral, factual and aesthetic framing devices that are so woven together as to create a world of meaning in which the identity of the individual dissolves "naturally" in the collective identity of the nation: morally, the relationship with the motherland is presented as a duty owed to a collective entity endowed with rights of self-determination, linguistic standardization, etc.; factually, the identity of the nation is supported with "objective" evidence of its singularity (language, race, territory, etc.); while aesthetically, myths of a "golden age", of common ancestry, etc. reaffirm a notion of the nation as an unescapable natural fact in contraposition to the State, an artificial entity. Summing up, the nationalist framing strategy employs the following three main devices.

1. An appeal to objective facts that aims to prove that the national question constitutes a real grievance by showing both a) the objective existence of a nation founded on common ancestry, unquestionable internal cultural homogeneity and objective difference from other nations, and b) this nation's lack of liberty, its oppression by other nations within or outside the State it belongs to, and the threats to its survival.
2. An appeal to moral responsibility that rallies its audience

around values and principles which cast the current situation of the nation in a gloomy light (contrasting modern decadence with the golden age), point to a need for regeneration and liberty, and inspire mobilization and the defence of the nation regardless of personal sacrifice.

3. Propagation of a style of thought that accepts the nation as the only setting for the genuine existence of the individual and as the object of ultimate loyalty.

These devices act to pursue three tasks that are decisive for nationalist political mobilization and national construction: the creation of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational interpretational frameworks (Fig.1). I shall examine each of these types in turn.

Nationalist *diagnostic frameworks* identify certain events or realities as intrinsically problematic, as symptoms of a broader syndrome that lends them meaning and urgency: the national question. They not only point to objective causes of national grievance, but also to the agents responsible for those causes (another nation preventing the creation of the nation's own State; foreigners whose presence threatens cultural homogeneity; a neighbouring nation threatening annexation; etc.), charges of responsibility that in turn involve the attribution of motives, spurious interests and malignancy to the culprits, be they foreigners or nationals. This kind of framework is highly effective for the purposes of mobilization because it identifies communities and other national minorities to which it assigns the role of antagonists, thereby simplifying rejection of the *status quo* by personifying the causes of the nation's ills.

*Prognostic frameworks* present an alternative, a plan, a solution for the problems diagnosed, both as regards the regeneration of society as a community that is internally

homogeneous, externally well-differentiated, culturally and linguistically standardized, and endowed with a politically expressed nationalist conscience; and as regards the political objectives of mobilization (self-determination, sovereignty, secession). The plan includes identification of its protagonists, the leaders of the movement that promises to be the nation's salvation, by designation of nationalist intellectuals and parties as self-legitimated spokesmen of the whole collective entity.

Finally, *motivational frameworks* provide a repertoire of stimuli to mobilization: dramatization of the problem, a sense of belonging in which emotion plays a key role, reverence of the real or supposed precursors of current nationalist leaders, exaggeration of the nation's internal homogeneity and of its differences from other nations, insistence on the inevitability of the success of the nationalist struggle (which acts to reinforce the plausibility of its objectives), etc. And these frameworks also include a repertoire of actions - of means proposed as fitted to nationalist ends - that may veer between nonviolent expression of claims, presentation of candidates at elections and participation in parliamentary process, to violent attack upon the external (or internal) enemy.

#### *4. Ideological variants of contemporary nationalism*

Now we have seen the general structure and functional relationships of nationalist discourse, in this section I shall sketch the main variants that may be observed at the start of the 21st century, although in this essay my characterization of these variants must be very brief. Before doing so, however, some preliminary remarks are in order.

Firstly, it may be as well to state explicitly that we are not concerned here with a typology of contemporary nationalisms

based on their social and political context, i.e. with their classification as nationalisms in plurinational States, as nationalizing States, as based on national minorities, as involving *irredenta*, etc.; this kind of classification has been attempted elsewhere (21). Nor are we concerned here with the analysis of the key inner relationship between nationalism and its intersecting ideological "host-vessels": liberalism, conservatism or fascism (22). What is of interest here is a typology of nationalisms as regards their ideology, a typology based on differences in the nature and morphology of, and relationships among, the elements appealed to in the construction of ethnicity, and on differences in the relationships among ethnicity, group interests and politics; in short, a classification in terms of variations in the ideological structure discussed in earlier sections of this paper.

The classification of the latter type that has hitherto been used most frequently is perhaps the distinction between *ethnic* and *civic* nationalism. According to this scheme, in ethnic nationalism the nation is conceptualized exclusively on the basis of the ingredients of ethnicity (race, in more biologicistic versions; culture or language in others), whereas civic nationalism defines it exclusively on the basis of territory and of the rights and safeguards of its inhabitants - all of them. Consequently, even the more culturalist variants of ethnic culturalism are held to tend inevitably to exclusivity, thereby curtailing the rights of citizens as individuals; while civic nationalism is held to be culturally neutral and hence clearly political, inclusive, and beneficial for the establishment of the principles of citizenship, democracy and freedom. As we shall see below, although this dichotomy highlights certain real issues concerning the democracy of



ethnic nationalism, it is not generally tenable because its excessive Manichaeism not only creates more difficulties than it solves, but in fact makes no attempt to address the nub of the problem, the relationship between culture and politics.

In the first place, protection of the cultural context of the individual need not necessarily crystallize as the imposition of restrictions on individual rights and safeguards, for cultural health can be viewed and treated as an unavoidable requisite for the freedom and autonomy of the individual and the pluralism of society. Secondly, civic nationalism has never actually been neutral with regard to culture, since all States, including France and the United States (the classical examples of civic patriotism), have imposed upon their citizens a specific culture, a specific language, a specific account of history and a specific set of myths and symbols. Thus ethnic and civic nationalism both feature cultural determinants and both ignore, albeit for different reasons, the demands of democracy with regard to the cultural nature of citizens.

The ethnic-civic dichotomy thus leaves unanswered the question of what ideological characteristics lead to some nationalisms being liberal, pacific and democratic and to others being violent, xenophobic and authoritarian. An approach to this problem that is very common in analyses of nationalist ideologies consists in focusing on their external relationships with other kinds of ideology (liberal, conservative, fascist, etc.) and to deduce the political orientation of each particular nationalism from the relationships observed in that case. Nevertheless, although interaction with other ideologies evidently influences the political configuration of nationalisms, I shall sketch here, in keeping with the arguments of earlier sections of this paper, a typology constructed on the basis of the *internal* structure of nationalism, i.e. with regard

to differences among the sets of rhetorical practices and framing strategies that are observable in its discourse.

Specifically, I suggest that there are three main types of contemporary nationalist ideology: namely, *organicist nationalism*, centred on the concept of nation as ethnic group and heir to the xenophobic, authoritarian tradition that has so often surfaced to fuel past and present ethnic conflicts; *culturalist nationalism*, which by ridding its concept of ethnicity of its more biologicistic and determinist elements endeavours to reconcile the protection of national culture and language with the normative requirements of liberalism; and *pluralist nationalism*, an emerging type that, while shunning cosmopolitanism in its defence of national culture and language as the context of citizens' autonomy, nonetheless radically democratizes the concept of nation, compensating any loss in mobilizational capacity (compared with ethnic nationalisms) with the greater inclusiveness achieved by its welcoming a broader collection of groups to participate in the national community. It is perhaps as well to stress that these three kinds of nationalism are ideal types that are intended to act as points of reference allowing location of particular real contemporary nationalisms, in accordance with the ideology inherent in the internal structure of their discourse, in a continuum that ranges from extreme ethnicism to thorough democratic politicization of the concept of nation. It should also be pointed out that upon close inspection it is the rule, rather than the exception, for nationalisms to exhibit considerable internal heterogeneity, different groups with substantially different politico-ideological positions vying with each other to impose their own criteria in the construction of the nation. With these caveats, let us now examine each of the above three ideal types in turn.

*Organicist nationalism* is based on a "thick" ethnic concept in which the nation is fundamentally defined by extremely determinist criteria, whether biologicistic (race) or culturalist (*Volksgeist*, national history); see Fig.2. This determinism entails that the national community is internally homogeneous and exclusive, defined not only by classical differentiae such as race or language, but also by the nation's appropriation of ethical values (as reflected in custom) and, in some cases, religion, which are made specific to the nation in question. The "objectivism" of this concept of nation, founded on a thick ethnicity that presents itself as ontological evidence of the nation's existence as a natural entity, has three main ideological consequences. Firstly, it not only implies the establishment of a sharp distinction between "them" and "us", but also promotes the radicalization of this distinction as outright rejection or even hatred of all things foreign, as a distinction between friend and foe. Secondly, it leads to irredentism, i.e. to claims for the reintegration of ethnically kindred minorities of neighbouring States, generally with their "corresponding" territories. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly - although often overlooked because of the political nature of nationalists' external claims to an independent State - it degrades the internal role of politics, making it the mere expression or exteriorization of practices that, as characteristics of the unalterable nation, are treated as immutable. Thus the political will of the nation's citizens is sequestered, virtually all discussion of specific demands - and, above all, of their desire to belong to the nation at all - being deemed otiose, given that all such questions are in principle settled *a priori* by appeal to ethnic nature and custom. This *ersatz* politics effectively prevents the participation of citizens in all real debate, excluding them

from the process of shaping the nation; in short, it excludes democracy.

In keeping with these ideological traits, the logic of organicist nationalism not only rejects inclusion within a more extensive plurinational State, wherefore it pursues secession as a separate, independent sovereign State (in accordance with the fifth postulate listed above at the end of Section 2); but would also suppresses plurality within the resulting State, which would be founded as an ethnocracy as the result of applying the organicist concept of nation in implementing the tenet that the State should serve a single nation (the sixth of the postulates listed in Section 2). Externally, this organicist interpretation of the maxim "one nation, one State", which rejects all accommodation to actual current situations deriving from historical vicissitudes, favours belligerence in the form of annexionist irredentism and/or militarist expansionism, depending on whether its concept of ethnicity lays emphasis on race, language, religion or national history. Internally, it tends to lead to policies of compulsory assimilation of minorities, which are deprived of their own national rights and forced to adopt the language and culture of the majority; to positive, inequitable discrimination of the majority group both economically (for example, by giving it preference in job applications) and politically (by granting it preferred suffrage); and to various degrees of ethnic cleansing, including expulsion of non-nationals and, in extreme cases, genocide.

*Culturalist nationalism* differs significantly from organicist nationalism, the most important difference undoubtedly being that although ethnicity still lies at the heart of the concept of nation it is a considerably more refined concept of ethnicity that is employed, an ethnicity limited to cultural considerations (language, history, etc.) that avoids,

at least to a large extent, dependence on biologicistic, determinist or axiological notions (race; *Volksgeist*; religion, national values). The resulting concept is that of a thinly ethnic nation that is culturally homogeneous and monistic - it postulates one nation, one culture, one language - but is nevertheless clearly more accommodating, both as regards the positive and negative determinants of nationality and in its attitude to political processes proper (Fig.3). Its rejection of organicistic differentiae results in a pronounced reduction of both internal and external tensions: externally, "foreigner" is no longer synonymous with "foe", and recognition of cultural affinity with the inhabitants of neighbouring territories does not imply irredentism or political interventionism; and internally, the "thinning" of the concept of ethnicity facilitates political freedom and citizens' participation in the shaping of the nation. Although political freedom is still external to the concept of nation itself, which is constructed exclusively in ethnic terms (albeit of a cultural kind), the culturalist nation, unlike its organicist counterpart, is open to consideration of contributions from the democratic political notions of participation, rights, safeguards and pluralism when it comes to implementing its cultural monism in policies and institutions.

Since cultural nationalism countenances a degree of openness and democracy there arise tensions that may resolve in either direction: towards hardcore ethnicism or towards liberal pluralism. In itself, however, its maintenance of the ideal of cultural homogeneity implies rejection of cultural pluralism and the possibility of a multinational State. Ethnocultural nationalist ideology still demands that there be a single State for each nation and a single nation in each State; and although it may, for strategic reasons, soften its attitude in the face

of processes of decentralization and accommodation, this tends to be a temporary, unstable phenomenon lacking conceptual solidity. Generally, the fundamental ideological train of thought that leads from culture to nation to State eventually gives rise to demands for sovereignty and secession if the nation State in question does not already exist, and if it does to a nationalizing State that is dedicated to the promotion of the culture and language of the national majority and that by means of policies of standardization and integration relegates minority languages and cultures to secondary status.

Finally, among contemporary nationalisms there is also beginning to emerge a third ideological model, *pluralist nationalism*, although it is still less widespread than the two described above. Pluralist nationalism goes farther than culturalist nationalism in modifying the conceptual universe of organicist nationalism. In fact, it radically reformulates the concept of nation by treating the nation as a political community, i.e. by introducing political activity as a core element of this concept along with a cultural view of ethnicity (Fig.4). This politicization of cultural ethnicity differentiates pluralist nationalism not only from culturalist nationalism, but also from the civic nationalism or patriotism of other typologies, the former of which falsely presents the State as culturally neutral while in the latter an attempt is made to substitute republican virtue for culture; for both civic nationalism and patriotism regard recognition of ethnic differences as incompatible with democracy, thereby courting a banal nationalism that under the disguise of shared civic values proceeds to impose the language, culture and version of history of the majority through assimilation and integration. By contrast, pluralist nationalism aims to protect the cultural contexts of the nation's citizens as media that give meaning to

political actions; and for this very reason does not consider them as fossilized structures overloaded with history and tradition, but as an arena for the pursuit of democratic politics. Thus the *internalization* of politics democratizes the ethnocultural concept of nation; to belong to a particular nation is no longer a passive experience of immersion in tradition, but an opportunity for the individual to deliberate and participate, with all due rights and safeguards, in pluralistic processes of continual national construction.

The democratic politicization of the concept of nation markedly moderates its implications. In particular, it means that national differences no longer imply antagonism, which allows not only tolerance but also ideological and cultural pluralism. The nation is not defined by objective characteristics, but rather as the arena of political deliberation, encounter and participation, as the medium in which the nation's citizens continually shape their mutual life and future - including their objective characteristics. As a result, solid foundation of the nation no longer requires ethnocultural homogeneity; instead, the flexible and negotiable superposition of multiple, non-exclusive identities becomes possible.

A further consequence is the erosion of the "ideal" nationalist argument that leads "inexorably" to the idea that each nation must necessarily have its own State in order to be free. Claims to a right of self-determination are replaced by claims to a right of self-government and shared government, making it possible to conceive of a plurinational State that has been democratically structured in accordance with formulas such as asymmetric, multinational federalism or consociationalism. For lack of ideological support, secession becomes merely a last resort, to be considered only if all efforts at free, plural shared government and self-government have clearly failed. Thus

the notion of a democratically structured plurinational State allows pluralist nationalism to aim beyond the ethnocratic or nationalizing State, devoted to serving just a single ethnic group or culture, and instead propose the construction of a State serving a plural, multiethnic, multicultural political nation composed of majorities, minorities and individuals of diverse origin who settle conflict between their collective and individual rights by means of negotiation (23).

The incipient pluralist nationalism described above faces, among others, two particular kinds of problem. Firstly, it has a much smaller capacity for mobilization than ethnicism or ethnoculturalism. For its adherents, this creates an undeniable temptation to return to the rhetorical strategies and interpretational frameworks of thickly or thinly ethnic nationalism. Their dilemma is to choose between a discourse that is highly effective for nationalist mobilization but in general democratically unjustifiable, and a discourse that is normatively justified but much less effective for the purposes of political competition.

The second, related, problem is that pluralist nationalism diverges so sharply from the typical ideology of mainstream ethnic nationalism that it can appear not to be nationalism at all, at least to many of those who regard themselves as nationalists of one sort or another. And this reduces not only its external attractiveness (the point made above), but also its ability to steer nationalist movements from within.

##### *5. Conclusions*

The human groups known as nations are not reified, "objective" realities, internally uniform and unchanging with regard to characteristics such as language, history or culture. Rather, they are communities that are continuously undergoing



complex processes of national definition as the result of political and ideological antagonism and mobilization spurred by intellectuals, movements and political parties in response to ever-changing cultural, social and political contexts. They are not given *a priori*, but are sempiternally under construction, as the contingent, ever-provisional results of internal contention among diverse specific national projects with their associated ideological orientations and political objectives.

All nationalist ideologies feature both "civic" components (concepts of citizenship, of the configuration of the State, of priorities among various group interests) and "ethnic" components (national differentiae, a specific version of history, a particular set of national myths and symbols, a distinction between "them" and "us"). These core elements of a particular concept of nation largely predetermine other components of nationalist ideology, such as the diagnosis of the causes of the national problem, the institutional remedial measures to be taken, and the identities of those who are to lead the process of social change.

The discourse of contemporary nationalisms can be referred to three ideal ideological types: *organicist* nationalism based on thick ethnicity (race, *Volksgeist*, etc.); *culturalist* nationalism based on thin ethnicity (language, culture, institutions, etc.); and the emergent concept of *pluralist* nationalism, which radically rejects the strong realist concept of nation shared by the other two. Unlike both organicist and culturalist nationalisms, pluralist nationalism democratizes the concept of nation by placing *politics* - conflict, pluralism, negotiation, participation, open ended processes of nation building - at its heart. The nation is reformulated as a *political community*, defined by neither merely ethnic nor merely civic traits; a community that is contingent and plural, and in

which the constituent characteristics of ethnicity themselves are subject to deliberation and evolution. Though normatively in harmony with the requirements of pluralist liberal democracy, with which organicist and culturalist nationalisms (always in the first case, very often in the second) clash, the political competitiveness of pluralist nationalism is weakened by its discourse being less attractive to the leaders than traditional and more mass-mobilizing essentialist rhetoric, and by its importantly falling outside what has constituted the master frame of nationalist ideology throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

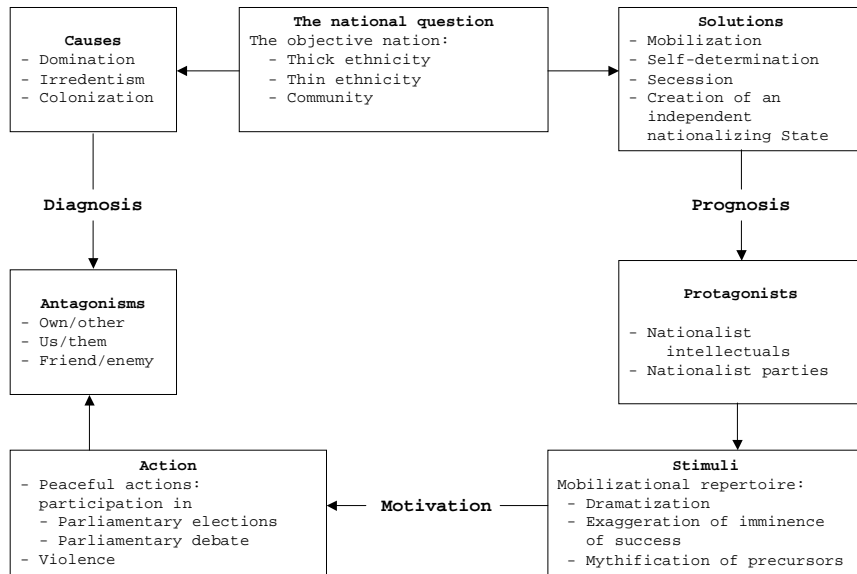
**\*The author is particularly grateful to the anonymous referees of the journal for their helpful comments and suggestions.**

#### Notes

- (1) A. Smith *Nationalism and Modernism* London: Routledge, 1998: 1
- (2) "To focus upon culture, ideology, identity, class or modernisation is to neglect the fundamental point that nationalism is, above and beyond all else, about politics and politics is about power. Power, in the modern world, is principally about control of the state" J. Breuilly *Nationalism and The State* Manchester: Manchester U. Press, 1993:1
- (3) R. Brubaker *Nationalism reframed. Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe* Cambridge: CUP, 1996: 15
- (4) A. Smith *Theories of Nationalism* London: Duckworth, 1983: 181
- (5) M. Hechter *Containing Nationalism* Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 200: 7
- (6) H. Kohn *The Idea of Nationalism* New York: Collier, 1949
- (7) U. Hedetoft *Signs of Nations* Dartmouth: Aldershot, 1995
- (8) D. Rothschild *Ethnopolitics* New York: Columbia U. Press, 1981
- (9) M. Freedden "Is Nationalism a Distinct Ideology?" in *Political Studies* XLVI, 1998, 748-765
- (10) R. Brubaker "Myths in the study of nationalism" in J. Hall (Ed.) *The State of The Nation* Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2000: 57ç
- (11) S. Bartolini *The Political Mobilization of the European Left* Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2000: 551
- (12) B. Klandermans *The Social Psychology of Protest* Oxford: Blackwell, 1997; E. Laraña, H. Johnston & J. Gusfield *Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* Philadelphia: Temple U. Press, 1994; D. McAdam, J. McCarthy & M. Zald (eds.) *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1996
- (13) A. Smith *The ethnic origins of nations* Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1986 *passim*
- (14) A. Melucci & M. Diani *Nazioni senza Stato* Milano: Loescher, 1983: 23-45
- (15) B. Anderson *Imagined Communities* London: Verso, 1983
- (16) W. Connor *Ethnonationalism: the quest for*

- understanding* Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1994: 87
- (17) R. Máiz "Politics and the Nation: nationalist mobilization of ethnic differences" in *Nations and Nationalism* 9(2), 2003, 195-212
- (18) D. Snow & R. Benford "Framing Processes and Social Movements: an Overview and Assesment" *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, 2000, 611-639.
- (19) D. Snow, R. Benford, S. Worden "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation" *American Sociological Review*, 51, 1986, 464-461
- (20) P. Brass *Ethnicity and Nationalism* N. Delhi: Sage, 1991: 34
- (21) R. Brubaker *Nationalism Reframed* cit.; R. Máiz "Democracy, Federalism, and Nationalism in Multination Sates" In W. Safran and R. Máiz (eds.) *Identity and Territorial Autonomy in Plural Societies* London: Frank Cass, 2000, 35-61
- (22) M. Freedden "Is Nationalis a distinct ideology?" cit. p. 759
- (23) Cf. Y. Tamir *Liberal Nationalism* Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1993; M. Seymour "Québec and canada at the Crossroads" *Nations and Nationalism* 6(2), 2000; J. Arregui *La Nación Vasca Posible* Barcelona: Crítica, 2000

**Fig.1. Interrelationships and structure of the interpretational frameworks of nationalist ideology**



**Fig.2. Organicist (Type I) Nationalism**

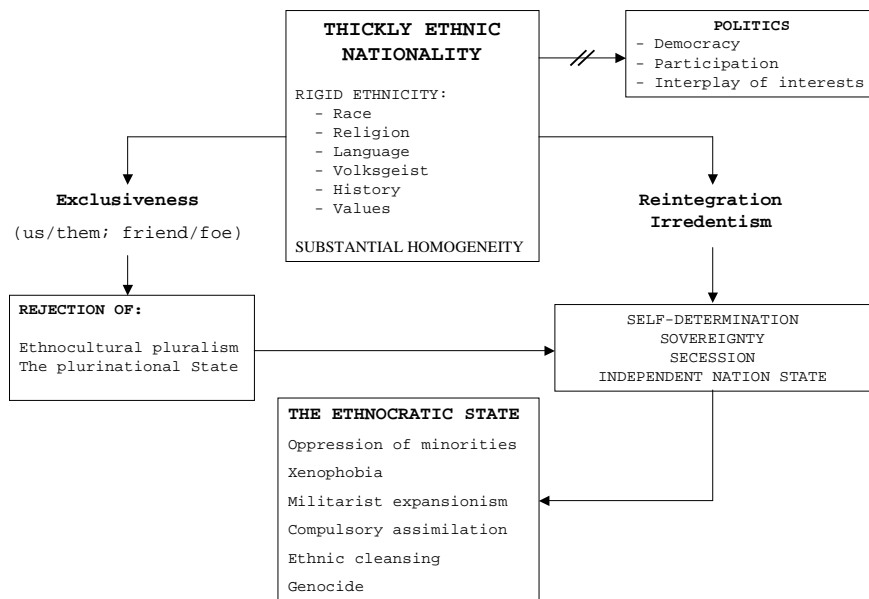


Fig.3. Culturalist (Type II) Nationalism

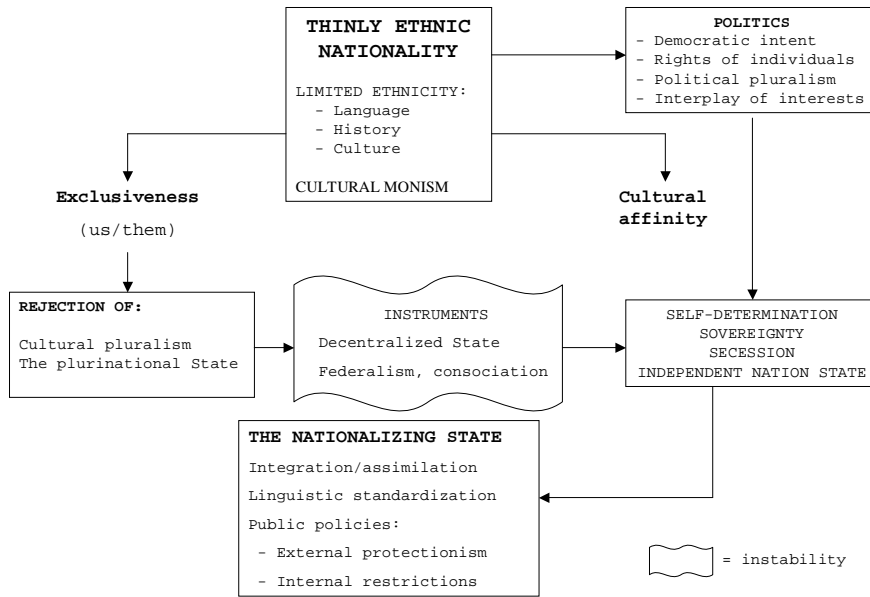


Fig.4. Pluralist (Type III) Nationalism

