Nationalism and Modernity

JOHANNES U. MÜLLER
and
BO STRÅTH (eds)

EUI WORKING PAPERS

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

EUI Working Paper **HEC** No. 99/1

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JOHANNES U. MÜLLER
and
BO STRÅTH (eds)

Contributions by:
OTTO DANN (Köln),
JOHN BREUILLY (Birmingham),
JOHANNES U. MÜLLER and BO STRÅTH (Florence)

BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO (FI)

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Preface

The two essays in this volume are the result of a workshop[1] within the framework of the ongoing research project at the EUI in co-operation with the Humboldt University in Berlin "The cultural construction of communities". Given the *Leitmotiv* of this interdisciplinary research enterprise, stated in the project-outline as investigation in a comparative perspective of "how the construction of community and identity has occurred through language and symbols and through delimination into 'we'-'they' categories in different historical situations" and how it thus "informed important points of departure for political action"[2], it is obvious that the nation and all its derivative issues are a recurrent topic on the agenda. The variety of research on nations and esp. the boom in studies in cultural and anthropological aspects of nationalism after the so-called 'linguistic turn' have led to an extraordinary richness of perspectives. At the same time the political roots of the concept of nation and its anchorage in the political process of modernity have somehow dropped out of sight. In order to define a common platform for further research and to hold together the many different approaches, it seemed appropriate to return to the political bases of nation and nationalism and to reconsider their relationship with modernity and modernisation. After all, it would be pointless to study the iconography of national monuments or of national art, the construction of national histories, the choreography of national festivals or the invention of national languages, if we forget to ask why this is relevant to modern societies.

John Breuilly and Otto Dann are two major scholars in the field of nationalism who both have elaborated theoretical accounts of nationalism that stress its political character and emphasise its inherent modernity. Our workshop was intended not only as an opportunity to bring together these two scholars, to confront and to discuss the similarities and differences of their views, but also as an occasion to reconsider the meaning and relationship of terms that risk becoming marginalized without substitution of better alternatives, terms such as modernity, nation and nationalism.

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[1] The workshop was held at the European University Institute at Monday, 6th April 1998. For a presentation of the project see *The cultural construction of communities in the process of modernization: Sweden and Germany in comparison.* A research project in co-operation between the European University Institute and the Humboldt University, Berlin, Arbeitspapiere "Gemeinschaften" v. 1c; Berlin 1997.

[2] *The cultural construction of communities in the process of modernization: Sweden and Germany in comparison.*, cit., p.7

We are particularly grateful that both authors preserved the structure of dialogue from the original meeting in their written contributions. This gives us the opportunity, instead of simply commenting on texts, to act as a sort of mediator and to participate in the discussion. Since both contributions had been solicited within a precise framework, however, the standpoint of the editors can not be unbiased and impartial. If in our introduction we will underline certain aspects and set apart some others, it is only to link the arguments with our own questions and to continue the dialogue.

Florence, February 1999

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Johannes U. Müller and Bo Stråth (EUI)

Nationalism and modernity - an outdated relationship ?[3]

In this introduction it is our aim to draw some conclusions from the discussion between John Breuilly and Otto Dann and to tie these to the broader aim of the project. In doing so we will at first approach the two basic concepts - modernity and nationalism - separately and then see how their relationship may be defined. In each section the positions of Breuilly and Dann will provide the guidelines from which we will try to forge links to our project - links which will be recalled in a final section where our questions concerning the cultural construction of communities will be addressed more specifically.

Looking back on modernity

To consider the place of nationalism within modernity implies that there is such a thing as modernity - that is: an epoch which is characterised by some common traits of development which are recognisable and can be generalised. Broadly speaking, historians are used to refer to modernity as an epoch in which traditional social, economic and political orders are fundamentally transformed by means of overlapping processes of rationalisation, functional differentiation and emancipation. An epoch which conceives of itself as an ongoing or even never ending project towards 'more modernity' and in which the prevalent state of mind is one of restlessness.[4] As a consequence, modernity is generally framed as a developmental and multivariate process. Hence theoretical approaches to modernity have long focussed on 'modernisation' and indeed the theoretical frameworks of John Breuilly and Otto Dann have to be located within this conceptual range.

During last decades the concept of post-modernity has emerged to indicate that modernity has come to an end. We are not going to take up that discussion here, but we just want to select some points of departure. Political modernity over the last two hundred years and more has been characterised by a tension between experiences of atomism and attempts to come to terms with such feelings by the creation of images of holism. Utopias and dystopias, technological optimism and criticism and pessimism about civilisation have interacted and stimulated the re-creation of lost communities. The connection between two such interpreters of the modern world as Nietzsche and Weber is clear although the one is often placed in the post-modern camp while the other is seen as the prophet of

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modernity. In other words, so-called post-modernity has been an element of modernity from the very beginning as a corrective to absolute beliefs in politically governable progress. Consequently, modernity and modernisation are, so seen, still very relevant concepts.[5]

What is striking while surveying the development of theories of modernisation is the constant 'modernisation' of the theory of modernisation itself.[6] Initially a rather clumsy cold-war-legitimisation-ideology, in which the USA, or at least western industrialised democracies, figured as the measures of modernity, modernisation became a model of evolutionary change with historical scope.[7] The combination of social theory and historical research steadily weakened the dichotomy of 'traditional' versus 'modern' and its normative claims were substituted by functional or structural features. The teleological, or at least linear, conception of progress was replaced by an ever more flexible conception of complex development, and current theories of social, economic and political change and transformation[8] offer an highly differentiated analytical framework of varied patterns of change on the road towards 'multiple modern civilisations'.[9] In spite of this extremely refined apparatus, the modernisation theory is still an object of criticism. The criticisms, too, developed and modernisation theories are no longer reproached for being deterministic, normative, ethno- or Euro-centric or reductive and one-dimensional. Instead questioning is increasingly concentrated on one of modernisation's most fundamental premises: the presumption of a directed development, however it maybe defined. The very term 'modernisation' thus presupposes an evolutionary change which is informed by certain criteria and for which both a point of departure (the traditional, pre-modern, or not-so-modern state of affairs) and an alignment (the envisaged modernity) is recognisable.[10]

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[5] For a development of this idea see Shmuel N. Eisenstadt: *Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization*, in: Almut Höfert, Willfried Spohn & Bo Stråth (eds.): *Religion and Modernity in Europe and the Middle East: Self-Images of the Other*, forthcoming. See also the 'Introduction' in: Bo Stråth and Nina Witoszek (eds.): *The Postmodern Challenge*, Amsterdam 1999.

[6] For the historical use of modernisation theories and their critique cf. Hans-Ulrich Wehler: *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte*, in: Hans-Ulrich Wehler: *Die Gegenwart als Geschichte*, München, Beck, 1995: pp. 13-59.

[7] See for example the theoretical efforts of Talcott Parsons, Seymour M. Lipset, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, Stein Rokkan or Reinhard Bendix.

[8] Besides Wehler, cit., whose critique still seems to be valid and exhaustive, cf. e.g. Thomas Mergel: *Geht es weiterhin voran ? Die Modernisierungstheorie auf dem Weg zu einer Theorie der Moderne*, in: Thomas Mergel & Thomas Welskopp (eds.): *Geschichte zwischen Kultur und Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Theoriedebatte*, München, Beck, 1997: pp. 203-232.

[9] Cf. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt: *A Reappraisal of Theories of Social Change and Modernization*, in: Hans Haferkamp & Neil J. Smelser (eds.): *Social Change and Modernity*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1992, pp.412-429 - this reader offers an impressive overview on the variety of modernisation approaches elaborated so far.

[10] Ernst B. Haas, in a recent reformulation of his evolutionary modernisation theory obviously tries to integrate some of the recent critique via a highly complex model of development. Here, the various

Yet, contemporary experience is inconsistent with a conception of modernity as a never-ending project and as a continuous progress towards 'more modernity'. Roughly speaking, the major projects of modernity seem to be exhausted[11] and, moreover, many modern achievements have proven to be, to say the least, difficult to control generating dysfunctional outcomes. Today the question is no any longer one of continuing modernisation, but rather of keeping modernity going, of coming to grips with modernity.[12] Thus, evolutionary 'simple' modernisation theory is challenged by a stationary 'reflexive' theory of modernity.[13] This shift follows an epistemological shift. The insight that 'reality' is only to be achieved through the mediation of language has meant a collapse of a Newtonian world image, where 'explanation' and 'cause' were key concepts, and the emergence of 'reflection' (instead of explanation) and 'consequence' (instead of cause) as new heuristic tools. Do we therefore have to replace 'simple' modernisation theories with 'reflexive' ones as some interpreters seem to suggest ?[14]

'Reflexive modernists', however, seem to claim much more than simply to replace former approaches, but to theorise the outlines of a new epoch which follows that of modernising modernity. In fact the very rise of reflexive approaches indicates an epistemological rupture in the 'semantics of time'[15], a watershed between 'first' and 'second' modernity (Beck) or 'pre-modern' and 'post-traditional', 'high' modernity (Giddens). Indubitably there is a sharp difference between a modernising and a modernised modernity. This, however, suggests to us a complementary rather than a competitive relationship between the two kinds of modernisation theory. In our view, modernisation theories still

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contradictions and flashbacks of modernity are explained through a concept of collective learning which accepts a kind of 'trial and error' structure within the unfolding of modernity which nevertheless is explicitly conceived of as an evolutionary process. Cf. Ernst B. Haas: *Nationalism, liberalism, and progress*, Ithaca, Cornell Univ. Press, 1997, pp.1-21

[11] See the famous essay by Francis Fukuyama: *The end of history and the last man*, New York, Free Press, 1992.

[12] Cf. Ulrich Beck: *Risk society towards a new modernity*, London, Sage, 1992, whose main paradigm is that of the ecological crisis. See also Anthony Giddens: *The consequences of modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990; Alain Touraine: *Critique of modernity*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1995.

[13] Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens & Scott Lash: *Reflexive modernization politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994. The distinction of 'simple' and 'reflexive' theories of modernisation is elaborated by Ulrich Beck: *The reinvention of politics rethinking modernity in the global social order*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1997, p.20ss.

[14] Cf. Norbert Götz: *Die Modernisierungstheorien schlagen zurück. Diskussionsstand, kulturwissenschaftliche Anwendung und das Beispiel des Nationalismus*, in: Bernd Henningsen & Stephan Michael Schröder (eds.): *Vom Ende der Humboldt-Kosmen. Konturen von Kulturwissenschaft*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 1997, pp. 151-173 who argues that at least for cultural approaches a reflexive concept of modernity is more appropriate.

[15] To use the concept developed by Reinhart Koselleck in order to identify epochal shifts. Cf. Reinhart Koselleck: *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp, ²1992

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provide a useful interpretative framework if attention is given to this difference and its underlying epistemological shift. Reflection, then, means above all an openness to the inner contradictions or dialectics in the course of modernity (which still is our epoch - 'first' or 'second', whatsoever).[16] It is functional models based on implicit or explicit assumptions about an internal logic, where history has a direction towards ever higher levels, that become problematic, not the idea of modernity and modernisation in itself.

Clearly Dann and Breuilly with their respective concepts of modernity try to frame a large-scale development. Both hold to some kind of juxtaposition of 'traditional' and 'modern' contexts and try to locate the underlying principles which characterise the process of transformation that leads from the former to the latter situation. However, their main focus of interest is nation and nationalism. Modernity and modernisation are parameters which they hardly problematise in the light of the post-modern rhetoric. One key problem is how to keep an eye open for alternatives, for openness and contradictions in historical processes: if not, we will repeatedly be writing the history of the winners. The reflexive approach to modernity, therefore, can be of great value, since it makes an explicit distinction between our knowledge *ex post* of what happened, and the ignorance *ex ante* of the actors we study, their ignorance of their future which has become our past.

Otto Dann essentially applies a political model of modernisation which is primarily descriptive and builds upon the political features of the stage-theory of modernisation elaborated by the 'Committee on Comparative Politics'. The guide-line of this model is the transformation of political systems and their social bases, from personal rule to democratic rule, and the transformation of the populace from a political object to a collective political sovereign. Hence the characteristic processes considered by Dann are those of emancipation, mobilisation and politicisation of the individual, the dissolution of traditional orders and the formation of new social and political structures founded in equal rights. The nation, as the one of these new structures that especially informs the redefinition of the political sphere, becomes central in this model - up to the point that the realisation of the political project of the nation becomes inseparably interwoven with the unfolding of political modernisation.

John Breuilly emphasises a social model of modernisation based on analytical categories from the classical sociology of Max Weber. The central motor of the transformation from 'privileged distinctions' in traditional societies towards a 'concept of principle equality' in modern society lies in his approach in

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[16] It had been proposed to distinguish these different approaches as 'modernisation theory' on the one hand and 'theories of modernity' on the other. But in our view this would ignore the contributions a reflexive modernisation theory can supply in explaining the shortcomings and contradictions within modernising processes. Cf. Thomas Mergel: *Geht es weiterhin voran ? Die Modernisierungstheorie auf dem Weg zu einer Theorie der Moderne*, cit.

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the differentiation of social functions. His main interest is the consequences for states and state-power that result from this new functional division of social life and its direct outcome, the separation or creation of a 'public' and a 'private' sphere. In his view, only the idea of the modern territorial state as the 'public' power agency in service of the 'private' sphere of society made concepts like political equality or the sovereignty of the people possible, and thus enabled movements seeking to take state-power to build upon cultural characteristics in order to gain the support of private society, hence to develop nationalist claims.

In Dann one may criticise a rather optimistic faith in progress and the unlimited benefits of individual and political emancipation, two assumptions which are called into question not only by historical actuality, but also by historical analysis. Nevertheless Dann's approach is not naïve, since the attention he pays to moments of crisis encloses an element of openness, of contingency. Social challenges and crisis in this sense in many cases can be understood as flashbacks within the development of modernity. A similar observation can be made about Breuilly's at first sight rather functional model of transformation with 'the State' in the key role. His focus, however, is not the macro-structural level which demonstrates a functional development, but the series of resistances and of conflicts that shape this development. From this perspective, the outcome of political modernisation - the separation of a private and a public sphere - is not at all an uncontested 'modern' acquisition, but becomes profoundly questioned.

Theory of Nation and Theory of Nationalism

When we look at the theoretical efforts concerning the systemisation and analysis of nationalism,[17] it should be noted that what is usually referred to as 'theories of nationalism' actually can be divided into two different sets of theories: theories of nations and theories of nationalism in the strict sense. The first group puts its emphasis on the formation and development of a particular kind of community - the 'nation' - and the ways in which it becomes involved with different kinds of political, social or cultural behaviour. Nationalism in this approach is certainly crucial, but rather as a derivative issue than as the proper object of theorisation. The second group looks at particular forms of political, social or cultural movements which are based in - variously defined - national claims. From this perspective a national community is not necessarily the predominant agent of nationalism and is in turn a derivative concept. This division does not imply that theorists of the nation take its existence for granted while theorists of nationalism do not, or that the nation-approach is emphatic and the nationalism-approach critical. It simply illustrates that arguing about 'theories of

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[17] For an overview cf. Dieter Langewiesche: *Nation, Nationalismus, Nationalstaat. Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven*, in: 'Neue Politisch Literatur', 2/1995, pp.190-236; for a most recent account see Anthony D. Smith: *Nationalism and Modernism*, London, Routledge, 1998.

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nationalism' quite often ends up in comparing apples with pears if the different focus or starting points and the different questions which are informing the theory are not taken into account.

These two perspectives have been present in theoretical writings on nationalism from the very beginning: the pioneering works of Hans Kohn and Carlton Hayes, writing within the framework of the history of ideas, can be distinguished in this way. Kohn, who introduced the distinction of a 'western' and an 'eastern' conception of the nation, was interested in different types of nations and the difference that makes for their respective nationalisms.[18] Hayes was above all analysing the different forms and contents of nationalist ideologies and their effects.[19] The shift from intellectual history towards social history did not reform this twofold approach. From the 50s onwards, Karl Deutsch developed a sociological theory of the nation in which its formation was explained in terms of intensifying communications.[20] At the same time Elie Kedourie traced the origins of nationalism back to German romanticism and underlined the importance of doctrines for nationalist movements right up to the present.[21] The focus on processes of state formation in the following decade on the one hand led to inquiries into the origins of nations and nation-states,[22] while on the other hand the various functions of nationalism within these processes were analysed.[23] Approaching recent times, the unexpected revival of nationalist movements asked for a theoretical reconsideration and led to new explanations, but again the two basic perspectives remained: Benedict Anderson's study of 'imagined communities' is a theory of nation,[24] whereas Ernest Gellner's most influential essay on the role of nationalism within the process of industrialisation is rather a theory of historical development and the functional role of nationalism in history, than of nations or nationalism per se.[25] Further, two of the latest theoretical accounts which deeply influenced the debate on nationalism are to be

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[18] Cf. for ex. Hans Kohn: *Nationalism its meaning and history*, Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1955, or id.: *The idea of nationalism a study in its origins and background*, London, Macmillan, 1961.

[19] Carlton J. H. Hayes: *The historical evolution of modern nationalism*, New York, Russell & Russell, 1968 (orig. 1931) and id.: *Nationalism: A Religion*, New York, Macmillan 1960

[20] Karl W. Deutsch: *Nationalism and social communication an inquiry into the foundation of nationality*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, MIT Press, 1966 (orig. 1953).

[21] Elie Kedourie: *Nationalism*, 4th ed., Oxford, Blackwell, 1993 (orig. 1960); id. (ed.): *Nationalism in Asia and Africa*, London, Cass, 1971.

[22] Hugh Seton-Watson: *Nations and states an enquiry into the origins of nations and the politics of nationalism*, London, Methuen, 1977.

[23] Cf. for example the German reader edited by Heinrich A. Winkler (ed.): *Nationalismus*, Königstein i.Taunus, Athenäum, 1978.

[24] Benedict Anderson: *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, London, Verso, 1983., 2nd. ed. 1991

[25] Cf. Ernest Gellner: *Nations and nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1983. The anthropological background of his interpretation gets even clearer in id.: *Plough, sword and book - the structure of human history*, London, Collins Harvill, 1988.

distinguished in this way: Anthony D. Smith 'primordial' explanation of nations seeks the origins of a particular type of community[26]; Eric J. Hobsbawm is more concerned with the economic and political usages of national concepts.[27]

It would be worthwhile to elaborate this very brief survey based on the distinction between nation and nationalism into an in-depth analysis of the theoretical debate, since many of the current misunderstandings and reciprocal criticisms could be clarified in this way.[28] This cannot be our task here. We merely seek to draw attention to a recurrent pattern in the theoretical discussion, which could shed light also on the differences between Breuilly and Dann.

Two general assumptions which are shared by Dann and Breuilly should be underlined: (1) Nations and nationalism are above all political phenomena that, however, can radiate into virtually all sections of human activity. (2) Political movements based on national ideas are not only modern, but constitutive of modernity. Yet the differences between both approaches are already recognisable in the respective understandings of *'das Politische'*: Dann is analysing polities, whereas Breuilly analyses politics.

Otto Dann clearly is advancing a 'theory of the nation'. The nation in his definition is a political community which through historical experience developed a common culture, reciprocal allegiances and a particular political consciousness - in other words: the members of a nation conceive of themselves as being part of a particular polity entitled to political self-determination. The progressive extension of this socio-political construction, its modern breakthrough on the base of egalitarian principles, the development of this kind of polity into a nation-state and the different political attitudes it may adopt are the issues he is concerned with. Thus he emphasises the social dimension of individual and/or collective political behaviour and uses a society-centred concept of politics as social bargaining. In that sense the nation is not at all a well-defined 'objective' unit, but in continuous transformation according to the polity's process of shaping and reshaping its profile. In order to escape a simply descriptive perspective, his political analysis makes use of an historical ideal-type which in his view is the

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[26] Anthony D. Smith: *The ethnic origins of nations*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986. He developed his ideas in id.: *National identity*, London, Penguin, 1991, and id.: *Nations and nationalism in a global era*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995. Although Smith seems to accept the label 'primordialist' it should be underlined that his conception draws a sharp distinction between the original, 'primordial' Ethnos and the modern nation, emphasising the latter's modernity.

[27] Eric J. Hobsbawm: *Nations and nationalism since 1780. Programme, myth, reality*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992. (orig. 1990); Some perspectives according to which Hobsbawm is framing Nationalism were already present in Eric J. Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.): *The invention of tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983.

[28] Anthony D. Smith, in a recent historiographical essay made a first attempt to disentangle the controversial debate. What he calls the 'contextual' approach to nationalism is similar to our distinction, but seems to be meant as a criticism of such studies. Cf. Anthony D. Smith: *Nationalism and the Historians*, in: Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.): *Mapping the Nation*, London, Verso, 1996: pp. 175-197.

concept of the modern nation as it was developed during the Enlightenment and put into practice for the first time during the French Revolution. This explicitly normative concept of the nation then serves as a measure for evaluating the different phases of national movements and politics. The kernel of this norm can be found in its political character, since Dann insists on a strictly political definition of the nation: as an historically evolved polity the nation might be strengthened by and usually will show a certain degree of cultural homogeneity, but the common ground of nationality is political culture, not ethnicity, culture or language as such.[29] This enables him to rule out a wide range of political behaviours and attitudes which make use of national claims as illegitimate and allows him to distinguish between 'national' and 'nationalist' policies. Any political movement that extends beyond the political space of the nation by emphasising non-political traits no longer encompasses the whole polity and is necessarily discriminating or favouring some groups above others. The term nationalism, in Dann's view, should be reserved for this kind of movement, especially when accompanied by disdain towards other nations, since the term itself first appeared in such radical groups.

With the focus on the nation as a political community, however, it is rather difficult for him to fully take account of all the variants of nationalist policies which are put forward by particular interest groups, nor can he provide a satisfactory explanation for the enormous appeal of nationalist policies beyond his polity-framework.

This is the kind of question which matters for John Breuilly in proposing a theory of nationalism. Whatever the nation may be is not important for his analysis, because it is the political use of national arguments - real, constructed or invented - that counts. This declared agnosticism towards the nation is accompanied by a tendency to ignore the social dimensions and dynamics of the 'nation' as a collective actor. Thus his concept of politics is state-centred (politics are framed against or with it) and stresses power-politics.[30] Since Breuilly considers national arguments as tools of a particular political strategy, it is of no importance if the nation exists or what the nation is. What matters is that people believe in these and that there are existing national convictions.[31] His task is therefore twofold: to explain the structural conditions which enable political

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[29] For a similar approach, although with an emphasis on culture rather than the polity, in an analysis of Scandinavia, see Sørensen Øystein & Bo Stråth (eds.): *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, Oslo, Scandinavian Univ. Press, 1997.

[30] This difference between Dann and Breuilly becomes most evident when comparing their conceptions of sovereignty. Dann is emphasising the 'sovereignty of the people', Breuilly's focus is state-sovereignty.

[31] This is to some extent similar to Benedict Anderson's concept of nations as 'imagined communities' whose interest, however, is in these imaginings as such. In his earlier writings, Breuilly seems to refer to the nation as a given cultural community, but recently he has abstained completely from any consideration of the nation's substance.

movements to make use of national arguments and to show the workings of the different strategies for employing these. A distinction between legitimate or illegitimate usages of national arguments in such a framework is neither necessary nor reasonable: if there is anything to denounce, this is to be found within certain structural traits of modern societies and states. In doing so, Breuilly provides an illuminating analysis of the mechanisms and the levers of political manipulation within modern states. His strictly analytical approach explains very convincingly the working and the force of nationalist policies, but it remains largely indifferent regarding questions about the internal construction of a polity.

Evading the question of the nation leads to an external view of politics that tends to reduce political processes to power politics and institutional conflicts, or to functional systems. In contrast, the internal perspective on national societies risks missing the external and structural factors which are constitutive of its very existence. This, in our view, suggests that theories of nation and theories of nationalism should be seen in reciprocal dependence rather than as mutually exclusive. The debate should acknowledge the different contributions the respective models are each providing and ignoring.

The interdependence of these two sets of questions - the nation and nationalism, polity and politics - is of special interest when considering the construction of communities: which structural factors have to be taken into account in analysing the formation and change of collective identity ? Which forms of collective imagery can be instrumentalised and under which conditions ? Which forms of social allegiance within a society are politically suitable and useful in supporting cohesion between the members of a polity, and under which circumstances can such allegiances become a potential danger to the polity itself ? In which types of political conflict are existing collective social ties endangered through their possible instrumentalisation ?

These questions, necessarily, revolve around the political community, its origins and its development. Thus, in a rather pragmatic way, we are acknowledging the existence of nations as large-scale political communities. Accepting the nation as given, however, does not imply taking national narratives for granted or dismissing the idea of nations as constructed, imagined or fictive communities. But it entails taking the collective image, construction or invention seriously and considering this a powerful, real force which de facto is shaping the nation as a political community. This is not unlike Breuilly's conception: his agnosticism is in a similar way presupposing that whatever the nation is, for nationalists it becomes a powerful tool and argument of politics.

Given the uproar nationalist arguments can still create within typical modern contexts, a would-be-cosmopolitan rejection of national categories seems as thoughtless as the naïve acceptance of an objective idea of the nation. The task of the historian could, in our view, then be the de-ideologisation of the national dimension in order to make it available to the political sphere on the one hand and

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to withdraw it from political manipulation on the other. In this sense a normative approach as proposed by Otto Dann, that is the application of a concept of nation strictly restrained to the space of political culture, seems to be appropriate if used as a heuristic tool. At the same time the exposure of the mechanisms of politics in which the nation is conceived as a political goal in itself is crucial for this process of de-ideologisation. To yet consider the national idea as a possible fundament of the democratic polity and to denounce the instrumental risks of nationalism, however, in our view is not to be confounded with the fashionable position which characterises nationalism as an ambivalent force of both participatory and aggressive impetus - a view which eventually leads to indifference and analytical indistinctness before a complexity which is in need of conceptual clarity.

Nationalism and Modernity

Despite continuing scholarly debates it is by and large uncontested that the nation is a typically modern construction of community and that national or nationalist movements and ideologies have had a major impact on politics and political thinking only in modern times. What is debated is rather how and where nations and nationalism are linked to modernity.[32] Even more controversial is the question of whether national conceptions may still be of value in the contemporary world, and if so, in which ways.

Even those who stress ethnic or medieval origins for the idea of the nation agree in identifying 1789 as a watershed in conceptions of the modern nation, and since Friedrich Meinecke there has likewise been unanimity in regarding the modern state and its development as a major factor in the development of national doctrines and nationalism. The impact of industrialisation and the consequent shift in the role and meaning of culture in the socio-economic world, classically analysed by Gellner, became another common-place regarding the modernity of nationalism, as is the case of the communication argument which presupposes a modern structure of media and public debate for the very idea of a national community.[33]

Breuilly and Dann do not deny any of these aspects of the question, but both emphasise the central importance of political modernisation. John Breuilly is interested in how nationalism functions as a political strategy, and it follows from his way of working that he finds answers about nationalism's modernity. As

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[32] See e.g. the essays in Bernhard Giesen (ed.): *Nationale und kulturelle Identität. Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewußtseins in der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt/M., Suhrkamp, 1991. In a recent account, Joseph. R. Llobera critically reviewed the different approaches to the relation of nationalism and modernity. Cf. Josep R. Llobera: *The God of modernity. The development of nationalism in western Europe*, Oxford, 1994.

[33] Cf. Benedict Anderson: *Imagined communities*, cit., but in this respect Anderson is echoing the approach of Karl Deutsch.

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already the very question implies, this is basically a functional relationship: nationalist politics take account of and use the transformed structure of the modern state, the new relationship that is established between the power agency and the society, the new role ascribed to cultural issues. In this sense, nationalism is inherently modern, as nationalist strategies are only conceivable within the context of the modern state. But Breuilly remains somewhat ambivalent, since nationalism appears to be both a response to and a reaction against modernity - that is: nationalism can be both an appropriation of and a rejection of modernity.

Dann is interested in what the national idea was originally aimed at and it is in the unfolding of this original utopian project (deriving from the enlightenment) that he sees the connection between nationalism and modernity. This is therefore a normative informed relationship in which the character of an ongoing project is still preserved. That is to say, Dann asserts that the national project is a modern path up to the present. But his political concept of modernisation converges to such a degree with this project that they are difficult to distinguish. Nation-forming and development for him seem to be the essence of political modernisation itself, and this makes it hard to understand, why the nationalist radicalisation of national ideas should be the very opposite of and contrary to modernisation.

This is possibly where a different approach to modernity is fruitful. Both the ambivalent results of Breuilly and Dann's distinctions of 'national' and 'nationalist' could be framed within a reflexive model of modernity which would not put into question the modern character, but could help to illuminate the Janus-faced outcomes of national(ist) politics.

The basic trajectories of political modernity have been, and probably still are, the emancipation of the individual and the rationalisation of social relationships. Politics, however, is concerned with the organisation of a community of individuals and needs to (re-)establish bonds between them. Since the idea of the nation is an effective link between these divergent claims - enforcing the autonomy of the equal individual, encouraging or at least preaching rational forms of socio-political order, and providing a collective identity - the national idea and nationalism was to become so prominent in modern times. Given the functional interdependence of the elements, it resulted in a very precarious balance, susceptible to different kinds of adaptation, manipulation and radicalisation according to the historical situation and the interests involved and quite often at the expense of one of these elements. The different forms of nationalism, we would argue, can be interpreted as different outputs of a typical tension within political modernity between tendencies of social disintegration and of social aggregation. Such a general reformulation covers both Breuilly's and Dann's findings, and indicates a way in which to confront the apparently contradictory phenomenology of nationalism.

The tension between disintegration and aggregation, between atomism and holism, between destruction and construction of identities is a lasting one and apparently belongs to modernity, as our contemporary experience confirms. Contemporary political language, with regard to both the chauvinist, or populist, variants of radical nationalism in western Europe and the post-89 ethnic nationalism in eastern Europe, and especially the atrocities it has recently provoked in the Balkans, usually refers to nationalism as an atavistic, anachronistic and anti-modern movement. At the same time, these political behaviours become linked to broader developments of the contemporary political world to which nationalism appears to react, namely the breakdown of a bipolar world order, the fading away of political utopias, the effects of globalisation and the crisis of liberalism and of the liberal nation-state. [34] This, again, points not only to problematic aspects of national doctrines and nationalist policies, but moreover to major inner tensions within the unfolding of modernity itself. The violence unleashed by ethnic nationalism might be a relapse into pre-modern atavistic barbarism,[35] but the clash in favour, against or in the name of a collective identity is typically modern.

With the unfolding of political modernity, however, the notion of collective identity did not only change its role in politics (as shown by Breuilly) and for polities (as emphasised by Dann), but also its very meaning. While in pre-modern times collective identity was given and undisputed, in the age of modernity the concept of identity, as a consequence of both the emancipation of the individual and the rationalisation of social bonds, became 'individualised'. Modern identity is optional and it is up to individual choice how we shape and how we relate to the different identities we encounter. This applies to national identities, too. In this respect radical chauvinist or ethnic nationalism, indeed, is to be seen as a rejection of modernity, as an opposition against the 'liberalisation' of identity. The basic problem, however, which enables such absolute conceptions of identity to become dominant, seems to be the linkage between collective identities and politics highlighted by Breuilly. Under the conditions of modernity, collective identities are at constant risk of becoming politically out of control insofar as they are considered as pre-political or even as a constitutive premise of politics, since such an understanding is open to political instrumentalisation.[36] It is exactly

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[34] In this quite reductive sense Ulrich Beck considers nationalism a 'counter-modernity', showing a surprisingly narrow-minded concept of nation and nationalism, given the possibilities his own framework could offer in explaining the phenomena. Cf. Ulrich Beck: *The reinvention of politics*, cit., pp.68-74ss.

[35] But even here various connections with modernity can be drawn, as was argued on a recent conference held at the European University Institute on November 9-10, 1998 on "Modernity, enlightenment and genocide".

[36] Cf. the excellent critique of recent usages of the concept of 'collective identity' by Lutz Niethammer: *Konjunkturen und Konkurrenzen kollektiver Identität. Ideologie, Infrastruktur und Gedächtnis in*

because modern identity is optional and to a certain extent up to individual choice, that it rather should enter into political debate and become a political issue to be discussed, negotiated and openly debated by the various interested groups. Thus, it could be argued, the concept of identity as such should be de-politicised, while the claims made by groups of different collective identities should be a matter of political debate. From this perspective, the question of collective bonds within modern political societies can be framed differently, reflecting the risks highlighted by Breuilly and Dann.

The modern nation:
A political community under permanent (re-)construction

The leading, indeed even uncontested, institutional form of modern societies is the nation-state. In its liberal democratic version, the sovereign modern nation-state is increasingly challenged from the outside and from within. Globalisation - a modern phenomenon itself - puts pressure on the sovereign nation-state by imposing global restraints on national decisions and removing national competencies to international regimes. Supranational institutions weaken democratic legitimation, since they usually are detached from the single national polity - the European Union may serve as an example. At the same time the liberal nation-state is confronted with the limits of its own individualist bases and has to cope with experiences of an ever more atomised society, in which lack of political commitment, solidarity or social cohesion undermines the preservation of the liberal political order itself. Nevertheless the nation-state as both "sovereign decision-making unit" and as a "framework for collective identity" by now has no alternative, since any supranational construction of democratic character is and will continue to be bound to be built upon it.[37] What kind of national framework, then, would be flexible enough to act within a globalising world, ensuring individual liberties, political participation, social justice and some kind of collective solidarity without falling back into tribal exclusiveness ?

During the last decade a useful contribution for a redefinition of the national dimension in modern societies had come from the Anglo-Saxon debates on 'communitarianism'. Starting from a critical discussion of liberal theory the debate has been mainly about finding the right balance between the individual and the social collective within modern liberal democracy, pointing to the difficulties of maintaining universal values on the base of an individualist and purely

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der Zeitgeschichte, in: Universität Jena-Philosophische Fakultät: Antrittsvorlesungen I, Jenaer Universitätsreden, Bd.2, Jena, Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena, 1997, pp. 175-215.

[37] Cf. Dan Smith & Oyvind Osterud: Nation-state, nationalism and political identity, Oslo, ARENA working papers, 1995, p.6s., who argue - besides the fact that the number of nation-states has constantly increased during the last decades - that the nation-state within a globalised world will even have a reinforced role.

procedural approach to liberalism. Authors like Michael Sandel or Alasdair MacIntyre plead for a reconciliation of liberal individualism and collective values to re-establish ties of solidarity between the citizens.[38] This revaluation of the dialectics of universalism and particularism has continued through contributions more concretely committed to the reconciliation of liberalism and nationalism. Typically 'liberal nationalists' advance a theory of nation and try to avoid a concept of nationality as a political purpose in itself, but underline the legitimate claims deriving from collective bonds based on national identity.[39] The legitimate right to national self-determination in such a framework is cautiously separated from the right of self-rule and occasionally tends to be cut down to extensive minority-rights within the broader logic of state-sovereignty.[40] Despite all their precautions, however, liberal nationalism still seems to accept the predominance of ethnic and cultural ties in the political order.

Yet, the opposite would be needed: a political framework that permits the co-ordination and the co-existence of different cultural groups, and at the same time provides collective ties strong enough to keep the polity alive.[41] In such a polity social cohesion would strongly depend upon a common political culture of shared political values and a common consent to the institutional order. In this sense, the nation could be imagined as a political community of different communities, unified by a national consciousness which is based on an historically grown, discursively shaped and continuously adjusted political culture.[42] Accepting the nation as a collective body which through historical experience gained political consciousness, at the same time implies accepting that such an entity is exposed to constant change. Thus, in an early stage nation-forming was dependent on the respective historical constellations, and now, too, the nation's development remains situational and changes shape according to the circumstances - that is what the history of nations is all about.[43] To relate national

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[38] An excellent reader of communitarian writings and liberal answers in German is Axel Honneth (ed.): *Kommunitarismus. Eine Debatte über die moralischen Grundlagen moderner Gesellschaften*, Frankfurt/M., Campus, 1993. English readers are Shlomo Avineri & Avner De-Shalit (eds.): *Communitarianism and individualism*, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 1992; Amitai Etzioni (ed.): *New communitarian thinking. Persons, virtues, institutions and communities*, Charlottesville, 1995; and Amitai Etzioni (ed.): *The essential communitarian reader*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 1998.

[39] Cf. e.g. David Miller: *On nationality*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995.

[40] As is the case with Yael Tamir: *Liberal nationalism*, Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1993.

[41] From an american perspective, but somehow reduced to the particular shape of US-american society, such a view had been developed by David A. Hollinger: *Postethnic America beyond multiculturalism*, New York, Basic Books, 1995.

[42] This is close to Michael Walzer's conception of the liberal community as a plurality of communities linked by liberal values of democracy and reciprocal tolerance. Cf. Michael Walzer: *The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism*, 'Political Theory', 1/1990, pp. 6-23.

[43] For a situational interpretation of nation-forming instead of typological approaches pleas Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde: *Die Nation - Identität in Differenz*, in: Krzystof Michalski (ed.): *Identität im Wandel*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1995, pp. 129-154.

identity strictly to a given state of ethnic identity is not only misleading (since ethnic identity itself is fluid), but also ahistorical. National identities, consciously or not, have always been shaped by different ethnic influences and will continue to be so as long as migration constantly changes the demographic bases of nations. The essential question is not so much whether different ethnic groups are culturally compatible, but under which conditions these different ethnic groups are willing to play down ethnical differences and demarcations and to run a common polity together - and this, necessarily, is mainly a political problem.

An important factor in promoting such a 'de-ethnisisation' and national integration is economic stability. The success of national frameworks in the future probably will increasingly depend upon economic success, on a capacity to ensure a minimum level of social and economic welfare and on an ability to shape economic processes. Under the conditions of a globalising world, this cannot be done on the national level alone, and inter-national or supra-national co-operation is urgently needed to control developments that tend to escape political responsibility. An ever more intensive international collaboration is not at all a post-national perspective, but a central goal of national thinking since its earliest formulations.[44] The ongoing revision of a Mazzinian type inter-national co-operation model as proposed by liberal nationalists in this sense could be a useful starting point for a redefinition of the national dimension within an era of globalisation.

The concept of nation, understood as a polity based on a specific, but flexible political culture within a global world, still seems to us a basic model for modern societies, which within a 'post-traditional' world continuously will have to debate the bases of their political, that is: their *national* identity. It is probably within such a perspective that the risks of nationalism as a political strategy can be diminished.

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[44] Cf. Alan Milward: *The European rescue of the Nation-State*, London, Routledge, 1992

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Otto Dann (Köln)

Modernity and the Project of the Modern Nation

Today, the term nationalism is of an almost inflationary circulation, especially within the Northwest-European intelligentsia. It is used to cover all nation-phenomena, but increasingly we have problems in defining what exactly we mean when we are using terms like 'nation', 'national' or 'nationalism'. For example: are cultural phenomena essentials or only accessories of nationalism? Bo Stråth's and Øystein Sørensen's stimulating book on "The Cultural Construction of Norden" presents recent contributions to the question, showing that the radius of a culture goes beyond national boundaries and that it quite often constitutes a broader human community than a nation – an instance of this is northern Europe.[1]

Nationalism is basically a political phenomenon, – this is a conviction shared by John Breuilly and myself. But we are also aware of some noteworthy differences in our views on nationalism and its characteristics. Following our Florentine discussion I'll take the opportunity to sharpen my argument by inserting some comments on where and how our opinions diverge.

I'd like to start with some remarks on my own development in the field of nation-research. Especially in this field the national – and personal – roots of a scholar are of particular importance for his research and I consider it useful to give account of these.

As a German, my thinking about nationhood is marked by the disasters caused by the ethnic nationalism in the first half of our century. As young historian I became part of a research-group on nationalism which examined the developments of national movements in Europe and worked with Theodor Schieder in his Cologne project on national organisations in comparative perspective.[2] Further, my understanding of national politics was shaped by my PhD-research with Werner Conze and Dieter Henrich on the political development of the Kantian philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, in which I had an opportunity to study the transition from a Jacobin human-rights position to a

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[1] Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth (eds.): *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, Oslo et al. 1997. - Concerning recent research on national cultures and their problems see below the considerations in section III.

[2] The results of this research group had been published in several volumes, e.g.: Otto Dann and Theodor Schieder (eds.): *Nationale Bewegung und soziale Organisation. Vergleichende Studien zur nationalen Vereinsbewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts in Europa*, Muenchen 1978. Cf. also Theodor Schieder: *Nationalismus und Nationalstaat. Studien zum nationalen Problem im modernen Europa*, ed. by O. Dann and H.-U. Wehler, Göttingen 1991.

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resolute national commitment against Napoleonic occupation.[3] In an early phase I was involved in the great Heidelberg project on the history of concepts (Begriffsgeschichte) directed by Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, and there I learned to pay attention to the correct contemporary usage of central terms in our academic language – a decisive experience also for my understanding of the term nationalism in past and present.[4] The historical period to which I have addressed most of my work is the age of the emergence of modern societies in Europe from the middle of the 18th to the late 19th century. Thus I learned to go beyond the magic date of 1789 and ask about the early modern roots of modernity and nationhood.[5]

In this essay I will begin with a few remarks on the concept of 'modernity', because this concept marks the broader framework in which we see the phenomena of nation-forming and nationalism in history. Secondly, I will focus on the age of enlightenment and its importance for the formation of nations in Europe. Finally, I will discuss our recent understanding of nationalism.

Modernity

Obviously there is a close relationship between 'nationalism' and modernity, but in which dimensions? Both phenomena emerged in the late middle ages and were at the centre of major changes around 1800. Thus they seem to be apt to explain each other. The term modernity, used to denote the historical epoch we live in, certainly is the broader context and thus it figures as the *explanans*, while nationalism is the *explanandum*.

Employing the concept of modernity we suppose that in our times each society is involved in a special development. They had left archaic and ancient times, where they lived under traditional authorities, circumstances and destinies, and passed into an era of change and innovation, from which there is no way back.

Since the radical changes around 1800, characterised by the political break-through of the new nation of citizens, it has been a major task of contemporary intellectuals to reflect this development historically and to frame it within an evolutionary context. Amongst the first the elder Immanuel Kant, responding to

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[3] Cfr. Otto Dann: *J.G. Fichte und die Entwicklung des politischen Denkens in Deutschland am Ende des 18.* Jahrhunderts, Diss. phil., Heidelberg 1968, and idem: *Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Die 'Bestimmung des Gelehrten' in der Gesellschaft*, in: P. Alter, W.J. Mommsen & Th. Nipperdey (eds.): *Geschichte und politisches Handeln. Studien zu europäischen Denkern der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart 1987, pp. 102-127

[4] *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. by O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck, Stuttgart 1972-1992

[5] Cf. Otto Dann (ed.): *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit*, München 1986; Otto Dann and John Dinwiddy (eds.): *Nationalism in the Age of French Revolution*, London 1988.

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the challenge of the French Revolution, modified his ideas on history and elaborated a concept of progress as the continuous development of mankind.

It certainly was not accidental that in the 1960s, when intellectuals had been challenged by the end of colonialism and by the competition of ideologies, new efforts occurred to frame this development. In America for example the Committee on Comparative Politics, promoted among others by the unforgottable Stein Rokkan, came up with new approaches to modernity.[6]

In applying the term modernisation the development of political culture in modern times became systematised as a special dimension of modernity, and several distinct phases of development were distinguished. Each phase was confronted with the challenge of a fundamental crisis within the prevailing political system and reacted with a new central project like state-building, the formation of a political identity, the enforcement of political participation, and the organisation of social justice through new ways of distribution of resources.[7]

This model and its evolutionary perspective was discredited by postmodernist cultural critics in the 1970s and 1980s. In my view much of this criticism was thoughtless. Rather we should acknowledge that the model mentioned above does not fall back upon any reductionist dichotomy of ancient versus modern, that it offers a structured concept for understanding modern societies and their changes over a long period, and that it is open to modifications. Hence I'd still claim its relevance, especially within the scope of nation-research, and I'm using it in a modified version. Today I distinguish five phases or projects within the context of modernity, which I'll outline very briefly.[8]

Political modernisation in European societies began with state-building as a new form of government; it meant the transition from personal rule to rule by political institutions, which were able to guarantee security and justice for all inhabitants, and it included the establishment of the state's territory by clearly defined boundaries. The successive process of a complete administrative penetration of the territory is part of this development and it underlines the need for sharp boundaries. Breuilly in his recent studies emphasises the increased

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[6] Cf. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan (eds.): *Building States and Nations*, 2 vols., Beverly Hills 1973; Wolfgang Zapf (ed.): *Theorien des sozialen Wandels*, Köln 1968 (with contributions by G.A. Almond, R. Bendix, K.W. Deutsch, S. Rokkan et.al.).

[7] I outlined in greater detail the use of such a model for the study of nations and nationalism in: *Der moderne Nationalismus als Problem historischer* Entwicklungsforschung, in: Otto Dann (ed.): *Nationalismus und sozialer Wandel*, Hamburg 1978, pp. 9-22 and 209-222. Since space is limited and the idea of this paper is to present a general outline rather than an elaborated account, I'll indicate in the footnotes studies and writings of mine, where I developed the various themes of this essay.

[8] I have elaborated this argument in greater length in *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland. 1770-1990*, München 1996³, pp. 11-26

relevance of boundaries for the modern nation-state.[9] Unlike fortunate Albion, the insular nation, for the Germans the question of borders was a constant problem in nation-building until recent times. The importance of boundaries in politics, however, is older than Breuilly seems to assume, and it is rather the consequence of modern administrative authority, for example its economic and customs policy, that gives rise to the need for well-defined borders than the malicious nations and its nationalism. Certainly, within the context of the rise of popular nations and their patriotic commitment to the country, boundaries also acquired greater relevance as national symbols.

Returning to the unfolding of modernity, in the second place we have to mention the process of nation-forming. This means the rise of a new collective political subject with a new identity. The political leading classes, in feudal societies generally the aristocracy, supported by the intelligentsia, developed a new political identity as nation, that is, as members of a people with a particular political past (and history) belonging to a particular country (patria). This new national, rather than ethnic identity, was related to the claim of being the only political basis of the state – a claim mostly made in competition with and sometimes against a king. Similarly, articulate and politically mobilised groups from other classes developed this kind of national identity and patriotism. Hence nation-forming was an extensive process of the political socialisation of an increasing number of inhabitants of a given territory. In some states this process even came to be promoted by the government, since political legitimisation of power before the nation became more and more important.[10]

An important consequence of this formation of identity was the rise of patriotism, a new form of socio-political behaviour, in which ones own interest are relegated to the 'bonum commune', the 'general welfare'. Based on this new social morality the middle classes committed themselves to the public good of their country (Patria) and established themselves as the modern civil society.

In enlightened societies during the last third of the 18th century patriots organised themselves and demanded participation in political institutions and a role in the decision-making process. In doing so they promoted a new, third phase of political modernisation which was marked by a process of democratisation. In this phase a completely new political system was established, which overcame the traditional feudal order of estates and was influenced by theories of liberalism

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[9] Cf. John Breuilly: *Sovereignty and boundaries: modern state formation and national identity in Germany*, in: Mary Fulbrook (ed.): *National Histories and European History*, London 1993, pp. 94-110).

[10] For a more elaborated account of nation-building in modern Europe cf. my essay: *Nationsbildung im neuzeitlichen Europa*, in: A. Bues and R. Rexheuser (eds.): *Mittelalterliche nationes – neuzeitliche Nationen. Probleme der Nationenbildung in Europa*, Wiesbaden 1995, pp. 27-41.

and constitutionalism. Its realisation often led to a revolutionary situation, since it required the abolition of the aristocracy's political privileges. A new concept of nation, based on universal human rights and the principle of the sovereignty of the people, served here as the leading model. In the 'age of democratic revolution' it was realised for the first time outside Europe - with the independency of the United States of America. After 1789 it was then the French revolution which constituted the leading model of this transformation.[11]

In the second half of 19th century a new great project of socio-political modernisation emerged: the demand for social justice. It evolved out of the revolutions of 1848 and gained new impetus in the labour movement and the women's movement. The central issues of this phase were claims for universal suffrage and civil rights for women and workers and a fair re-distribution of the resources of state and society, where social privilege and inequalities still prevailed. The character of the nation as a community of solidarity here proved to be an effective rhetoric. At the same time the political mobilisation of large sections of the population, which accompanied this project, on the one hand led to politically relevant class-conflicts and on the other hand to an imperialistic competition of nation-states. Both of these developments provoked or facilitated the emergence of a new form of nationalism in the age of mass society, an organised nationalism, which arrayed itself in opposition to the fundamental elements of the modern concept of nation.

The most recent challenge of political modernity is the growth of internationalism in many dimensions of the political world after the Second World War. It has meant a remarkable extension of international communication, co-operation and organisation on the basis of equal partnership. We all know about the limits of this development, but we should recognise the progress made in this area. There are reasons to hope that colonialism and iron curtains will never return.

In such a revised version I still consider a model of political modernity an useful and necessary tool in order to localise and to analyse social and political developments in modern societies. Breuilly, too, uses a concept of modernity.[12] His model, however, concentrates on a specific symptom, the transition from a

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[11] Cf. e.g. the two classic studies: R. R. Palmer: *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, 2. vols., Princeton 1959/1964; R. Bendix: *Kings or People. Power and the Mandate to Rule*, Berkeley 1978

[12] Apart from his contribution in this working paper see his essay *Approaches to nationalism*, in: Eva Schmidt-Hartmann (ed.): *Formen des nationalen Bewußtseins im Lichte zeitgenössischer Nationalismustheorien*, Munich 1994, pp.15-38 and translated in German in John Breuilly: *Nationalismus und moderner Staat. Deutschland und Europa*, transl. and ed. by Johannes Mueller, Köln 1999

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corporate to a functional division of labour. Here, the characteristics of modernity are condensed into one dimension and analysed at a central turning-point. It could be labelled a functionalist model which basically supports a dichotomic view of history, whereas the concept of modernity which I favour emphasises the evolutionary aspect of history. I'd stress that such an evolutionary model is more suitable as a framework to classify and to analyse many different sorts of dates, developments and changes.

Nota bene: It is a model that concerns in the main the political sphere and its changes. To fully understand socio-political developments in all their complexity it is necessary to consider also the two other dimensions of modernity: economy and culture. In these dimensions, however, patterns and periodisations of their own have to be identified and taken into account in order to achieve a deeper understanding of modernity. Its courses are our destiny and our opportunity, since the concept of political modernity assumes a tendency towards the self-determination of societies in a world with limited exploitation, suppression and warfare.

Applying this model we may identify a chronological and evolutionary sequence in each particular case, but it would be a serious misinterpretation of its heuristic purpose and scope, if the model were to be used to establish chronological or teleological regularities. At the end of our century we know of the variants and also the catastrophes which may occur in political developments around the globe. Our common future is open indeed.

Confronted with such an uncertain perspective on modernity many western intellectuals in the last quarter of our century preferred a general scepticism and declared modernity at an end, even a failure, and there are historians in search of arguments to question the dating of modernity in history. In particular nationalism and its aftermath in our century seemed to be suitable as an argument for calling into question the concept of modernity.[13] This concept has provided an orientation in European societies for about three hundred years, serving as a regulative idea especially within educated elites. In the course of the 20th century, however, substantial sections of the European intelligentsia twice failed to interpret the ways of modernity: in the first half by engaging in nationalism and fascism, in the second half by accepting leninism. Thus the current uncertainty about modernity is understandable, but it should not be exaggerated.

The modern nation

To understand the genesis of the modern nation, it is necessary to look back to the age of enlightenment. Here the concept of the civic nation based on

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[13] See for example the ongoing debates on the dialectics of enlightenment. It is not by chance that hardly any of the recent studies on modern nationalism ends with a promising or optimistic prospect, as is also the case with Breuilly's book.

universal rights was first formulated as a new political language which revolutionised the modern world.[14]

In examining the origins of the modern nation we are confronted with particular difficulties, not the least with terminological problems. Notions employed in the 18th century differ considerably from our political and academic terms. Today, the concept 'nation' is always thought of in a political context and in relation to the state, while in the 18th century there were still two meanings attached to the term: nation as a group of people of identical origin - the old Latin 'natio' - and nation as the collective holder of sovereignty. Towards the end of the century these two concepts gradually merged, with explosive results in some countries.[15] The term 'nationalism' was hardly used at all. It can be found occasionally, used in a pejorative sense to denote an exaggerated pride in one's own nation. The favourite term was 'patriotism', used to describe all forms of national thinking and acting.

In the second half of 18th century a new concept of patriotism was formulated, outside the old circles of privilege, by the educated middle classes. Influenced by theories of natural law, a new social model ensuring the inclusion of the non-privileged classes in the nation was formulated. The aim was the reorganisation of society according to this enlarged concept of the nation.

In the last third of 18th century some societies in advanced countries went a step further: they demanded participation for the patriots, posed the question of sovereignty, and began to organise. They desired full political autonomy for civil society as the nation. In the prevailing circumstances this was a revolutionary program which opened a new phase of political modernisation.

Such a development presupposed a consensus that envisaged civil society as a political nation. Rousseau was one of the first to formulate the concept of a society in which a nation of citizens with equal rights would govern itself democratically, and in which all aspects of social life would be regulated on the

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[14] Breuilly describes the concept of nation as already a relevant factor for the 18th century. But he doesn't pay much attention to its evolution, since he denies any continuity from universalism and patriotism to nationalism. The genesis of nations is not the focus of his interest, thus he tends to describe nations as ethnic realities and is interested only in national movements and nationalism. My main interest, by contrast, is the emergence and the development of modern nations as political, i.e. state oriented societies, in which national movements and nationalism are temporary phenomena. I discuss some of the following issues more appropriately in *Begriffe und Typen des Nationalen in der frühen Neuzeit*, in: B. Giesen (ed.): *Nationale und kulturelle Identität. Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewußtseins in der frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt/M. 1991, pp. 56-73

[15] For the German case the terminological questions are even more complex. I discussed the variety of national concepts in Germany in *Nationale Fragen in Deutschland: Kulturnation, Volksnation, Reichsnation*, in: E. François, H. Siegrist and J. Vogel (eds.): *Nation und Emotion. Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich*, Göttingen 1996, pp.66-82

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basis of popular consensus. This nation would include all inhabitants, none being excluded; 'people' and 'nation' would become one.

This concept of a new nation was based on four main principles:
* the idea that every individual has inalienable human rights,
* the principle of sovereignty and the self-determination of the people,
* the right of all members of the nation to participate in all institutions of political culture and in the solidarity of the nation,
* the principle that every people has the same right of existence, of nation-forming and self-determination within it's territory.

These principles, formulated in the age of enlightenment, are still valid for democratic societies today;[16] they express the identity and the basic conception of modern political societies in a general sense. Many political and social functions derive from these concepts: political legitimisation, social integration, the education and mobilisation of subjects as citizens.

While my interest in nationalism is focused on the evolution of nations as political societies, this is hardly a central question for John Breuilly. Although he, too, stresses the political character of nationalism, he does not conceive of the nation as a political community. Nations for him seem to be above all ethnic communities, characterised by a cultural identity, but he considers the nation largely as an indeterminate unit or construction, – as a term used by nationalists. Thus he cannot think of the nation as the community of all citizens of a given or potential state, and consequently he is not interested in the processes of nation-forming and he ignores or even explicitly refuses to consider patriotism as the root of national movements.[17]

The new concept of the nation entails a fundamental revision of the political constitution. A modern nation could not co-exist with feudal societies. Its emergence required the propelling force of a wider political mobilisation, of a national movement.

This points to other important conditions for the success of a modern nation. The educated class which had developed the new concept of a democratic nation was unable to mobilise within its milieu the social forces necessary to overwhelm

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[16] See e.g. the recent study on the concept of nation as a modern idea by Dominique Schnapper: *La Communauté des citoyens. Sur l'idée moderne de nation*, Paris 1994. For the development of central issues of the concept of nation cf. my article *Gleichheit* in: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, cit. see fn. 4, Vol. II. The most comprehensive contribution to the history of the concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism' in their respective contemporary meanings is the article *Volk-Nation-Nationalismus-Masse* in: ditto, Vol. VIII, pp.141-431 which goes far beyond the German case.

[17] Nevertheless Breuilly is aware of the problems which arise from this. Cf. *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester 1993, 5ff.

the entrenched position of the privileged. It needed allies who were interested on their own account in altering current political conditions. Such allies could occasionally be found among impoverished aristocracy, but they were mainly to be found among the middle classes, also among the female population, and not least in the working people.

Since circumstances and influences varied, there were many different ways in which modern nations emerged. But if one takes a broader view of European countries and their different modes of development, two general tendencies can be distinguished. If a nation-state had already been in existence during the period of the ancien régime, the crucial point was the problem of sovereignty and participation. The new nation had to conquer the existing state, because the national movement was identical with the struggle for democratic reforms and institutions. France and, in a different way, also America provide the classical examples. Other countries followed a different route, one involving a gradual evolutionary change of the nation-state and its constitution. It should be noted that this was the route most favoured by the enlightened public opinion in Europe.

If, however, the foundations of a nation-state did not exist, the conditions for the political success of a modern nation were very different. For all the peoples in this situation the formation of a modern nation and the achievement of its autonomy were considerably more difficult and lengthy processes. As a first step, an ethnic community living under foreign rule had to develop into a self-confident nation. This process of nation-formation was especially difficult in those territories where several ethnic groups lived together, and it could lead to alternative and competing conceptions of the modern nation. In any case new methods of nation-wide communication and organisation had to be found, and thereafter the most important step still remained to be taken: the political realisation of national autonomy, the creation of a nation-state. Sometimes this was only possible through a national war of liberation.[18]

From the age of enlightenment, where the modern concept of nation was formulated and also realised for the first time, we have to look into two directions.

First we should go back, because in early modern times we can also find political nations. Above all we have to consider here the process of a political nation-formation. Since the higher middle ages, the so-called nation began to emerge as a new force in the process of state-building in Europe. Leading social groups which shared a common language intensified their mutual links in order to

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[18] Only this specific form of the emergence of a nation is treated by Breuilly, but even in this context he is only interested in nationalism as political strategy, not in its genesis. Breuilly doesn't adopt the classical definition of the nation as the people of a state. He sees the nation above all as an ethnic minority, which challenges the state by its nationalism as a separatist movement. For a good Briton as he is, Ireland is the classical nation type, defined through its separatist nationalism.

pursue their common interests. A new sense of identity, of national consciousness, came into being and formed a new basis for common politics. We must bear in mind, however, that a political nation in these periods never included - nor did it ever claim to include - the whole population, but only those classes which had developed a sense of national identity and begun to act politically and to organise within it.[19]

In close conjunction with the process of nation-forming, more developed national ideologies emerged. From the later middle ages onwards, we can observe how nations were acquiring their own national historiographies. Individuals of special importance in the shared history became national symbols, and also national stereotypes and prejudices already played significant roles. These national historiographies often developed at the same time as early national movements, such as Hussitism in Bohemia. Hence there are good reasons to identify the origins of nationalism - as 'protonationalism' - in these times.[20]

In connection with nation-forming and the emergence of national ideologies, the process of state-building is of particular importance, mentioned above as the first project of modernisation. In order to integrate all subjects, the administrative system had to be enlarged in a comprehensive manner and a new legitimisation was required for government. Thus national ideas became important as a means of developing a common political identity. The leading groups in the state increasingly had recourse to national arguments in order to explain and justify their political actions. In this way a modern territorial state could evolve into a nation-state. This evolution, however, did not mean a change in the political system or in the distribution of power, rather an alteration in modes of political legitimisation and self-definition.

We must not overlook, however, the fact that modern state-building did not lead everywhere to the growth of a nation-state. In the greater part of Europe another type of modern state came into being: the dynastic state in which a sovereign, with the help of the privileged classes, ruled several peoples or - as in Italy and Germany - only a part of an old people. There were massive obstacles to such a state becoming a nation-state. The realisation of democratic and territorially complete nation-states was the central political project during the 19th and also in the 20th century, – a period which is also marked by the term 'nationalism'.

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[19] Cf. Joachim Ehlers: *Was sind und wie bilden sich 'nationes' im mittelalterlichen Europa ?*, in: *Mittelalterliche nationes - neuzeitliche Nationen*, cit. see fn. 10, pp. 7-26

[20] Cf. Frantisek Graus: *Nationale Deutungsmuster der Vergangenheit in spätmittelalterlichen Chroniken*, in: *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit*, cit. see fn. 5, pp. 35-54.

Nationalism

If we consider 1789 onward we are confronted, regarding the recent literature, with the term nationalism. Today it is common among scholars, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, to apply the term nationalism to any political movement by which a social group, regarding itself as a nation, claims political participation and autonomy. The consequence of this usage is the dissemination of a dichotomic concept in the history of the subject: patriotism in early modern times, especially in the age of enlightenment, followed by a polymorphic nationalism since the French Revolution.[21]

The usage of language and terms in modern societies, however, in fact shows a completely different situation: here, the French Revolution was not a break at all. The term 'nationalism' was already around in the 18th century - although rarely used, as already mentioned above - and referred to an intolerant prejudice against other nations. In the 19th century, too, this pejorative notion of 'nationalism' was recognised, but rarely used. Its entrance into the political language of European societies was connected with the rise of a new political movement in the last third of 19th century: organised nationalism.

This new nationalism was an aggressive, antiliberal movement, which emerged in the age of mass mobilisation and within the context of the phase of modernisation concerned with the renegotiation of social justice. It aimed to agitate within the nation-state for imperialistic commitment. Based on a radical-conservative ideology these nationalistic organisations denied the principles of 1789, the concept of the modern nation. For the first time nationalism here was invented and propagated as a political term of belief and selfidentification.[22]

After its boom in the first four decades of our century, 'nationalism' as an affirmative term of political profession disappeared in the European bourgeoisie after the Second World War. Since that time the democratic intelligentsia could pick up the term and incorporate it, in a strictly pejorative sense, into its political language. Up to now the struggle against nationalism in all its forms is still a common political concern of democratic groups in all nations, especially after 1990, where nationalism became a new ideology of former communist elites trying to preserve their position in politics.

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[21] This definition of the current holistic concept of nationalism is largely in accordance with Breuilly's definition (op.cit., 2f.), which stresses in particular ideology and political strategy. The dichotomic view of history, revolving around the turning point of 1789, can also be traced in Breuilly. "Prelude to nationalism" he titles the chapter on the period before 1800 in his book, but patriotism is hardly mentioned.

[22] For the term 'organised nationalism' see my *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland. 1770-1990*, München 1996³, pp.197-217. - The particular character of this new kind of nationalism is stressed by all historians on the topic, but no common term has been established by now. It has been labelled 'integral' nationalism, right-wing or radical nationalism. Breuilly (*Nationalism and the State*, cit., pp.288) calls it 'reform-nationalism' - and takes the risk of re-evaluating or legitimating this movement.

In this context the role of intellectuals, specifically of academics in their research on nationalism, requires particular attention. Their importance in the development of nations cannot be overestimated. As writers and journalists they were engaged in the European process of nation-building from the outset. In the era of the democratic revolutions their also took on a politically leading role in the national movements. In this period almost all of the arts and the sciences, from literature to economics but above all historiography, were nationally committed.

European intellectuals' patriotic attitude first changed about a hundred years ago when they were challenged both by a right-wing conservative-radical nationalism and Marxist revolutionary internationalism. This led to contradictory forms of national-political behaviour that intensified during the world wars. This was also the background for the emergence of the academic study of nationalism. At Columbia University in New York, far removed from European nationalist rivalries, comparative research on nationalism within a framework of social-intellectual history developed in the early 1930s. There a typology of nations according to the different forms of national ideology was formulated[23] that drew upon ideas developed at the beginning of the century by Friedrich Meinecke and his distinction between state-nations (Staatsnationen) and cultural nations (Kulturnationen).[24]

The intellectual situation in Europe did not change until the end of the Second World War. By then political nationalism had been disavowed among the bourgeoisie and for the first time intellectuals had been forced to critically assess their national attitudes. The post-war generations could not longer identify with what had been national cultures. They looked for new orientations within the European movement or Marxism and at the same time they had to face new types of nation-forming outside of Europe as well as the budding regionalism in Europe.

This fundamental caesura in the national political attitudes of intellectuals created a new context for research on nations and nationalism in Europe. Three major tasks were to be confronted: the explanation of European nationalism and the study of nation-forming in the Third World as well as regionalism in Europe. The breakthrough of the empirical social sciences, emanating from the USA, opened new perspectives to approach these questions: sociological models exploring the role of communication within nation-forming processes[25], the application of theories of political modernisation to the historical analysis of the

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[23] See e.g. Carlton Hayes: *The Historical Evolution in Modern Nationalism*, New York 1931; Hans Kohn: *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York 1967

[24] Cf. Friedrich Meinecke: *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, Berlin 1907; engl. transl.: *Cosmopolitanism and the national state*, Princeton 1970.

[25] Cf. Karl W. Deutsch: *Nationalism and Social Communications. An inquiry into the foundations of Nationality*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1966²

development of nations[26] and the interpretation of regionalism through the perspective of the evolution from ethnic groups to political nations. [27] The study of European national movements and nationalisms also profited from new impulses based in social and political sciences. This is particularly relevant to inquiries into the social history of these movements.[28] The typologisation, formerly focused on political ideologies (e.g. Hans Kohn and Carlton Hayes), again proved itself to be an illuminating method of systemisation and was applied for example to the formation of nationstates (Theodor Schieder) and national movements (Miroslav Hroch).

The role of academics in the western world changed once again in a remarkable fashion due to expansions of the educational system and the development of new forms of mass media in the 1970s. The role that intellectuals played in the shaping of public opinion became more and more apparent, and this recognition resulted in new theoretical programs (e.g. within the context of constructivism and of the 'linguistic turn' of cultural sciences).

As a consequence of this new development the empirical research on nations shifted its focus to a critical analysis of national cultures of earlier periods, their symbols, monuments, literatures and celebrations. [29] Simultaneously we can observe an increased interest in theorising about nationalism in the Anglo-Saxon world. During the last three decades social and political scientist with divergent ideological standpoints put forward concepts explaining nation-forming and nationalism in modern societies in general[30] that have provoked numerous responses from historians. [31]

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[26] E.g. R. Bendix: *Nation-Building and Citizenship*, Berkeley 1974[2] and the works indicated in fn. 6.

[27] Cf. the works of Anthony Smith, especially his *The ethnic origins of nations*, London 1986 and his recent *National Identity*, London 1991.

[28] E.g. Miroslav Hroch: *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, Cambridge 1986 or the publications of the Cologne-project of studies in national movements (see fn. 2). A recent and quite substantial contribution to this area is Andreas Biefang: *Politisches Bürgertum in Deutschland 1857-1868. Nationale Organisationen und Eliten*, Düsseldorf 1994.

[29] E.g. for France the outstanding project directed by Pierre Nora: *Les lieux de memoire*, 7 vols., ed. by Pierre Nora, Paris 1984-92; in English cf. his *Realms of Memory : vol.I: Rethinking the French Past, vol.II: The Construction of the French Past: Traditions*, New York 1996, 1997; for Italy cf. the similiar project edited by Mario Isnenghi: *I luoghi della memoria*, Bari 1996-98; for Germany cf. Wolfgang Hardtwig: *Nationalismus und Buergerkultur in Deutschland 1500-1914*, Goettingen 1994; and within a comparative perspective combining approaches of social and cultural history see also Charlotte Tacke: *Denkmal im sozialen Raum. Nationale Symbole in Deutschland und Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1995.

[30] To cite just the most important Elie Kedourie: *Nationalism*, London 1964; Ernest Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford 1983; Anthony Smith: *National Identity*, London 1991; Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*, London 1983; Rainer M. Lepsius: *Demokratie in Deutschland. Soziologisch-historische Konstellationsanalysen*, Göttingen 1993; Bernhard Giesen: *Die Intellektuellen und die Nation*, Frankfurt/Main 1993.

[31] Cf. the recent studies by Eric J. Hobwbawm: *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge 1990; Peter Alter: *Nationalismus*, Frankfurt/Main 1985 (transl. in English 1989), Hagen Schulze: *Staat und*

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In these Western academic societies, however, the term 'nationalism' did not retain its pejorative sense, and its meaning instead extended to denote all nation-phenomena and national movements in modern times. Following US-English, in which nationalism is also used in the sense of national feeling, the term nationalism became a holistic term embracing all sorts of national behaviour and national ideology.

Thus we now have a special academic sense of the term nationalism apart from and competing with the notion of nationalism in political language. Academic specialists declare their usage to be neutral, but in fact in this way they separate the term from its roots and from the central tradition of political culture in the European past; however, the tradition of ones own nation is often exempted.[32]

This is remarkably different in West-Germany. Here, the intellectuals – affected by international criticism of German history since the Second World War and living without a political possibility of a new nation-forming since 1948 – adopted the US-English usage in order to maintain a critical distance from their own national past. The unification of 1990 has not changed this, but rather, has led to an intensification of fears of a new political nationalism within the unified Germany.[33]

Thus the current usage of the term nationalism reveals a problematic situation in our political culture today. Western intellectuals use the term to dissociate themselves from national traditions, which they consider outmoded. The emancipatory and universalistic claims involved in most of the national movements are largely neglected. Nations are no longer conceived politically, but as culturally based societies: a remarkable 'ethnisation' of the concept of nation seems to take place and gives rise to a lot of questions.[34] Thus we observe an intellectual cultivation of a new so-called 'ethno-nationalism'.[35] Ethnically based politics, however, - we should keep in mind - have already caused in our century tremendous political catastrophes.

Nation in der Europäischen Geschichte, München/Oxford/Bari/Paris 1994; and, of course, John Breuilly.

[32] This is also the case with Breuilly's representation: we cannot find an English or British nationalism in his book, but we find the Irish, Scottish and Welsh nationalisms.

[33] For a consideration of the development of national historiography in Germany after 1945 in the light of the unification of 1990 cf. my account on *National History in Germany after the Second World War*, in: E. Lönnroth, K. Molin and R. Björk *Conceptions of National History. Proceedings of Nobel Symposion 78*, Berlin-New York 1994, pp.123-131.

[34] This trend is confirmed also by Breuilly's most recent publication on German history, in which due to his ethnical understanding of the nation he seems to be unable to evaluate the contribution of the national democratic movement to the foundation of the German state in 1870. As a consequence he is forced to praise Bismarck - as did the contemporaries, who were alien to national-democratic positions. Cf. John Breuilly: *The Formation of the First German Nation-State. 1800-1871*, London 1996, especially pp. 100ss.

[35] Cf. Walker Connor: *Ethnonationalism*, New Jersey 1994

We also observe a strange cynicism in the current debates: a critical evaluation of the former species of nationalism and a differentiation of affirmative and dangerous traditions in national histories is rejected. This in fact results in a position of indifference, a resignation before the issue of political nationalism, which even comes to be reconceived as a movement which includes positive characteristics, as a phenomenon with a Janus-face.[36]

The current debate on nationalism therefore may be revealed to be a risky terrain beset with pitfalls. Introduced no longer than hundred years ago, the term 'nationalism' already has a complex history with contradictory connotations. Still, today, a dangerous force in politics, 'nationalism' certainly is not suited to be used as a 'neutral' academic term.

How should historians use the term in this situation? They should have more respect for the contemporary usage of terms and for topical requirements. Considering this, two versions of the term 'nationalism' are to be found in the European past:

Firstly, nationalism is the name of a political behaviour, which treats other peoples or nations as inferior or as enemies. Such a behaviour can be observed not only in recent times but also for example in the period of the hundred years' war (thus the term 'proto-nationalism' is used). Generally it occurs in connection with national movements or national wars and we have to bear in mind that its propagation is at all times especially the responsibility of leading political and intellectual groups.

Secondly, nationalism is a special epoch of that social behaviour, in which it occurred in organised political movements; the period of European fascism may be considered its peak. This organised nationalism was an attendant phenomenon of the early age of political mass mobilisation and its struggles for social justice, which were characterised by political class-conflicts and the imperialistic competition of nation-states. Only for this epoch from the last third of the 19th to the middle of the 20th century is the title 'age of nationalism' seemingly justifiable.

Modernity and nationalism, we may resume, are not a direct parallelism, but a broken relationship. Political modernity implies the formation of nations as self-determined societies, a project of emancipation. Nationalism means the negation of other peoples' self-determination, and is therefore a contradictory phenomenon of modernity, an example of its dialectic.

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[36] Cf. Dieter Langewiesche: *Nationalismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Zwischen Partizipation und Aggression*, Bonn 1994.

John Breuilly (Birmingham)

Nationalism and Modernity

Introduction

The main argument of this essay will be that nationalism is not merely modern in the sense that it only has developed in the modern period but also in the sense that it is best understood as an especially appropriate response to modernisation, in particular to the political dimension of modernisation. Otto Dann and I agree in regarding nationalism as modern and as political. However, we disagree in two important respects. Dann distinguishes between a phase of national movements engaged in nation-building and a phase of organised nationalism.[1] Dann also views national movements and nation-building in a positive light, as a project of rational and liberal politics derived from the enlightenment, whereas nationalism is regarded in a negative fashion as an irrational and illiberal politics which reacts against enlightenment and modernity. In my view nationalism can be understood without reference to a prior concept of the nation, whether this is seen as the collective and pre-political basis of national movements or as a normative project which subsequently gives rise to such movements. Instead I treat "nation" as a function of nationalism. I also delimit the term nationalism to apply only to political movements which seek to realise the project of national self-determination in whatever form – democratic or undemocratic, liberal or illiberal, civic or ethnic. In other words, I "bracket out" the concept of nation in trying to understand nationalism and I reject the importation of a moral dimension into the definition of nationalism[2].

First I will argue the necessity for "theories" and definitions of nationalism and will present the definition of nationalism which I will use. Second I will critique theories of nationalism which seek to detach it from modernity. Third I will critique theories of nationalism which do relate it to modernity but in ways which do not, in my view, do justice to the political character of nationalism. Fourth I will outline an approach to nationalism which sees it as a response to political modernisation.

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[1] Aside from the paper published here see his book *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland. 1770-1990* (3rd.ed., Munich, 1996).

[2] Dann in his paper rightly criticises me for this "value-free" use of the term nationalism and that is a matter on which we properly differ. However, he also wrongly criticises me for implicitly accepting that nations are "ethnic" communities and this enables him to bracket me with some contemporary apologists for ethno-nationalism. I reject this criticism entirely: I have no idea what nations "really" are because I do not think they are "real" in nationalist discourse they may be described in ethnic terms but they may well be described in other terms as well or instead. Personally I detest ethno-nationalism; as an historian, however, I see no value in bracketing it out as a "nasty" form of nationalism from some other "nice" forms to which some other word/phrase such as "patriotism" or "national movement" is to be applied.

'Theories' of nationalism

Historians are concerned to understand particular events in the past. Historians are suspicious of abstract and generalising social sciences even when they recognise the need to employ general concepts in the study of particular events. Taken in conjunction with the nationalist stress upon the unique history of "their" nation, this can result in a series of national historiographies which implicitly at least accept diversity and fail to set those diverse histories within a more general framework. National historians (not necessarily nationalists) usually look beyond their national tunnel only when it is impossible not to do so, e.g. during periods of war and conquest when one nation climbs out of its tunnel and into one belonging to another nation. Yet the crippling limitations of tunnel vision are clear once one recognises the ubiquitous and recent development of nationalism, suggesting that general and modern processes underlie all particular cases of nationalism.

How can the historian understand these processes without surrendering the focus upon particular cases of nationalism? The answer is comparative history which extends beyond one case whilst treating its subject matter as two or more particular cases. Comparative history requires the explicit use of concepts to construct frameworks within which particular cases can be studied without privileging one over another.[3]

The first requirement is a clear and workable definition of nationalism. From this I develop typologies in order to group cases of nationalism. The next step is to describe and analyse each case within a type. This enables comparisons between cases which in turn makes it possible to identify more enduring contextual features accompanying these cases. The same procedure can be used to compare the types. This led me to a "theory" of nationalism, not as a substitute for histories of particular cases or as a causal explanation of nationalism, but rather as contextual understanding, i.e. nationalism seen as a response to a certain kind of situation.[4]

Definitions of nationalism

Nationalism has been defined in many ways. As a consequence, different writers on the subject of "nationalism" have not engaged in a common debate but have studied different subjects using the same name. Even worse, nationalism is

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[3] For extended considerations of the nature of comparative history see the essay *Making Comparisons in History*, in my book *Labour and Liberalism in nineteenth-century Europe: Essays in comparative history*, Manchester 1992/1994 and the essays collected in: Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (eds.): *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung*, Frankfurt/M. 1996, esp. the introduction.

[4] This is the method I employ in my book *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd.ed., Manchester/Chicago 1993 and which are elaborated in the "Introduction", pp.1-52.

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often not defined at all. Most writers on nationalism focus on one of three aspects of the subject: sentiments, doctrines and politics.[5]

Historians of nationalism as sentiments are concerned with issues such as national identity or culture or ways of life. This may be conducted at the level of elite culture drawing on such disciplines as literary criticism and art history or at the level of popular culture deploying such disciplines as cultural anthropology and sociology. Historians of nationalism as doctrines focus upon the ways in which intellectuals elaborated the idea of a national project. The major discipline involved is intellectual history although there may be borrowings from cultural disciplines such as literary criticism and linguistics. Historians of nationalism as politics are concerned with organised political movements. The major discipline involved is political history, especially the study of parties and governments.

So long as these different histories are recognised as different, there is no problem. In every particular case there will be close relationships between the cultural, intellectual and political histories that are written and that can lead to a more rounded history of each case. However, I would contend that there is no general and typical set of relationships between these histories. Unfortunately, there is a tendency for the three kinds of historians to make such a general claim. The historian of sentiments sees the development of national identity as the basis on which doctrines of nationalism are formed and which give rise to the politics of nationalism[6]. Intellectual historians are tempted to make nationalist intelligentsias the key agent in the broader history of nationalism. Such intelligentsias rise to political prominence and mobilise popular support, thereby producing the very politics and sentiments preached by their doctrines. Finally political historians (I include my former self) have moved from nationalism as politics to its programmes and justifications (doctrines) and its capacity to mobilise a wide appeal (sentiments).

Yet none of these relationships hold true for all cases. Examples such as 18th century England (strong sentiments but no politics) or 20th century Cambodia (strong politics but no sentiments) or 19th century Italy (strong doctrines but no sentiments and weak politics) are extreme in demonstrating the separate nature of these three aspects.[7] More often one finds elements of nationalism as sentiments, doctrines and politics all together but standing in

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[5] I outline this argument at greater length in *Culture, doctrine, politics: three ways of constructing nationalism*, in: J. Beramendi, R. Máiz & X. Núñez (eds.): *Nationalism in Europe. Past and Present*, Santiago de Compostela 1994, pp.127-134.

[6] In the seminar at which I gave the original version of this paper, Miroslav Hroch said he had no problem with my three aspects of nationalism which he would re-name as national identity, national programme and national movement but from this ingenious reformulation of my terms he was then able to suggest that national identity provides the basis for national programmes which in turn provide the basis for national movements.

[7] I put these characterisations very baldly here but I believe I could defend them in a more elaborate way if need be.

different relationships to one another in different cases. For example, within the United Kingdom the doctrine of nationalism is not given an elaborate form within Ulster Unionism but it is impossible to deny the importance of sentiments and politics. National sentiments in the form of. a shared language and culture are more developed amongst the Welsh than the Scottish but political nationalism is far stronger in Scotland than in Wales.

This leads me to the conclusion that any general approach to nationalism must focus on sentiments or doctrines or politics because including all three aspects will produce incoherence. I focus upon politics. I therefore "bracket out" any general consideration of nationalism as sentiment or doctrine. I require "doctrine" only in the minimal sense of enabling me to identify a particular politics as nationalist rather than as something else and I require "sentiments" only in the sense of understanding something about the values of political nationalists and the assertions they make about the "nation" for which they claim to speak.

I define nationalism therefore as any political movement which seeks to take or exercise state power and justifies this in nationalist terms. The minimal or core doctrine of these terms consists of three assertions:[8]

1. There is a nation - usually, but not invariably, identified as a multi-class society occupying a particular territory - which can be recognised by certain collective characteristics which give it a peculiar identity.

2. The nation has an overriding claim to collective loyalty from those who belong to it.

3. The nation has a right to autonomy, usually but not invariably taking the form of a sovereign state for the national territory.

This is only the "core" doctrine. Every nationalist movement elaborates upon these minimal assertions, e.g., in terms of the particular characteristics it appeals to so as to identify membership of the nation, how extremely and exclusively it asserts a claim to loyalty, and precisely what form of self-determination it demands.

Although one can identify sentiments that appear national in character before the modern period, this explicit nationalist doctrine and even more so the development of political movements seeking state power on the basis of this doctrine, are hardly to be found before 1800. Subsequent nationalist movements have often obscured this point by successfully projecting back their values and concerns on to earlier, non-nationalist politics. Thus the constructs of American nationalism in the 19th century were projected back on to the struggle for independence in the late 18th century. However that involved occasional

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[8] This idea of a "core doctrine" consisting of three assertions is taken from Anthony D. Smith. See his *Theories of Nationalism*, London 1971, p.21. However, I modify Smith's version of this, as I explain in *Nationalism and the State*, pp.2-3.

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expressions of sentiments with the more enduring objectives and organisation of political movements.[9]

What this suggests is that to understand nationalism as politics we have to understand something about the way the world changed, first in Europe and later beyond Europe, in the modern period, that is from roughly the time of the French Revolution. However, before developing such a "modernist" view of nationalism it is necessary briefly to consider those approaches which reject this view.

Alternatives to modernity[10]

Primordial

The primordial view of nationalism claims that it is derived from a more basic and enduring form of national identity. This is the view of nationalists who claim that they simply express the desires of a nation which has existed for much longer than their politics. However, that is pure ideology as is much of the history of the nation to which nationalists appeal, a history they often wrote in the first place. It is not a serious argument for historians as it encounters so many insuperable problems about the lack of national self-consciousness in the past and the clear differences between what modern nationalists demand and the forms taken by politics in the earlier ages of their "nation".

However, there is also a version of the primordialist case which has been put by well-qualified scholars of the history of nationalism. Anthony Smith has argued that an enduring ethnic identity with a set of myth-symbol complexes forms an indispensable basis of modern nationalism. However, I would contend that Smith's historical evidence amounts to collecting together some fragmentary expressions of sentiments, usually confined to face-to-face groups, which were only deployed politically by dynastic or religious institutions which never accepted the priority of national values over those which specifically legitimised their own institutions. Furthermore, Smith finds it impossible to set some minimal standard for such forms of ethnicity as a necessary basis for modern nationalism. Finally, nationalists, with their assiduous search for historical legitimacy, deliberately derive much of their rhetoric from terms used in the past, but the

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[9] For the construction of modern American nationalism and its projection back into the 18th century and even earlier see Joyce Appleby et.al.: *Telling the Truth About History*, New York/London 1994, chapter 4, "Competing Histories of America".

[10] I have developed these critiques of other approaches to nationalism at greater length in two places: the `Appendix: approaches to nationalism' in *Nationalism and the State*, pp.404-424 and in *Approaches to Nationalism*, originally published in: Eva Schmidt-Hartmann (ed.): *Formen des nationalen Bewußtseins im Lichte zeitgenössischer Nationalismustheorien*, Munich 1994, pp.15-38 and reprinted in: Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.): *Mapping the Nation*, London 1996, pp.146-174.

connection has to be understood as "projection backwards", not "survival forwards".[11]

Narratives

More recent is a postmodernism which sees nationalism as language, a discourse which constructs identity.[12] This attention to the creative potential of language represents an important corrective to an emphasis on "structures", "conditions" and "interests" which take no account of how these were shaped discursively. I find this a particularly fruitful approach in a modernist form as when Benedict Anderson argues that the imagined community of the nationalist can and does only take shape under modern conditions.[13] However, the extreme postmodernist refusal to include "conditions" on the grounds that there are no realities outside discourse excludes this modernist position. If one cannot move beyond discourse it is impossible not merely to establish the conditions under which discourses of the nation arose but also to plot the consequences of this or to be able to measure the relative significance of competing discourses.

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[11] Smith develops these arguments most elaborately in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford 1986. More recently Adrian Hastings has attacked the "modernist" view and in particular argued for the development of national(ist) sentiments and a type of nation-state in the case of England which can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times. This is a classic case of confusing the use of the term "nation" as a way of identifying certain places and their populations with sentiments, doctrines and politics which make national identity the core identity and legitimator of political action. Hastings goes so far as to claim that Bede was a forerunner of Fichte! Can one imagine Fichte writing Addresses to the German Nation in Latin or making princes or churches the principal subjects (as well as addressees) of his work? Hastings has many interesting things to say about the use of the term nation in the restricted literate world of medieval England, its uses by monarchs and clerics who themselves stood for non-national principles, and the rise of a national vernacular literature. And clearly England with its central and uniform institutions, dominant capital city, island status, and highly restricted nobility (meaning a much wider commoner class than in most of continental Europe) did develop certain senses of national identity much earlier than anywhere else. But to call that nationalism, to confuse it with the mass nationalist politics of the 19th and 20th centuries and the doctrine of national sovereignty and the everyday reproduction of national identity through mass schooling and media and culture, is not helpful. More important is to ask just why the "first nation" did not generate any powerful nationalist politics.

[12] Postmodernism is, of course, a difficult term to define and there is also a difference between those who confine its insights to what they call the postmodern period and those who would extend them to all historical periods, a difference captured by Zygmunt Baumann in his distinction between a sociology of postmodernity and postmodern sociology in *Intimations of Postmodernity*, London 1992. An example of the approach I am considering here is provided by the essays in: H.K. Bhabha (ed.): *Nation and Narration*, London 1990, as well as in the contributions by Gopal Balakrishnan, *The National Imagination* (a critique of Benedict Anderson) and Partha Chatterjee, *Whose Imagined Community?* to Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.): *Mapping the Nation*, cit.

[13] Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* 2nd.ed., London 1991. Nevertheless, Anderson also argued that this was a modern variant on a universal theme: "All communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact.... are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined." Ibid, p.6.

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Functional accounts

There are functional accounts which, even if they recognise the modernity of nationalism, argue that nationalism represents a modern way of achieving some universal function. Thus psychological accounts of nationalism as a means of providing a sense of personal and collective identity in the face of secularisation and the uprooting effects of modernisation, attribute to nationalism the same function that other belief-systems such as religion were once supposed to have performed. Nationalism becomes a modern form of the universal "us/them", "friends/foes" distinction which all human groups need to maintain identity and collective existence.

Marxist accounts which see nationalism as ideology usually accompany this with a functionalist account of ideology. Ideology is a function of class interest which projects that interest as the general or ideal interest. Nationalism works like any other ideology.

Nationalism as the "religion of modernisation" is a similar argument. It appears to give nationalism an especially modern form but this is no different from the way the psychological argument about identity or the Marxist argument about ideology operate. In all these cases nationalism is treated as a belief-system which operates at some pre-political level - personal identity, class interest, collective motivation – which can give rise to political movements.

Each argument has a certain force but they all either instrumentalise the role of beliefs or make such beliefs the non-rational basis of action. They also marginalise the significance of politics. They suffer from the crippling liability of all functional explanations which operate with a "part-whole" relationship, i.e. they argue that a specific belief (nationalism) serves a function for the whole personality, or class, or economy. The vacuity is made obvious when one observes personalities, classes or economies which do not deploy that particular belief or that belief deployed for other goals (e.g. when Gandhi invokes Indian nationalism to block modernisation while Nehru invokes it to promote modernisation). Historians, indeed all social scientists, should only invoke functional explanations in the more modest and specific form of "part-part" relationships. Also, it is often unclear whether function really means "intention", in which case it would be better to focus on the agent that bears this intention rather than an impersonal function. If function does not mean intention, then it is necessary to specify the mechanisms which enable functions to operate beneath the level of intentionality. Finally such functional accounts take as given the transformation from pre-modern to modern which explains why nationalism can be seen as the modern variant of some a-historical function.

It is precisely on this transformation that one must focus in order to understand nationalism. I think one can argue this for nationalism as sentiment

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and for nationalism as doctrine and will just briefly put some arguments in those terms. However, my main concern is to develop this argument for nationalism as politics.

The modernity approach: nationalist sentiments and doctrines

Sentiments

Elite culture: Anderson and the imagining of the nation[14]

Anderson considers nationalism as a particular way of imagining a community – the nation – a limited, exclusive community that is or should be autonomous within a particular territory and to which people should give their ultimate loyalty. That is rather close to my core definition of nationalism but Anderson treats this as imagining rather than as the programme of political movements. For Anderson the most important background conditions of this imagining are the erosion of religious beliefs, the global spread of market relations and the rise of a commercialised and expanding print culture which Anderson calls "print capitalism".

Anderson then considers the elites which imagine themselves as members of a nation. His argument works especially well in areas of European empire (Latin America, British East Africa, French Indo-China) where he unravels the complex relationships of imitation and rejection which underpin the elaboration of colonial nationalist creeds. It is less effective in other cases such as Russia and British India. There is no consideration of the emergence of nationalism in western and central Europe although one could apply the method to the "nation-building" phase considered by Dann in the German lands.

Anderson's arguments work best in cases where there is a close overlap between elites which engage in this new kind of imagining and those elites, often functioning originally as local agents of imperial power, who become the political leaders of the nationalist opposition. However, there are cases where this close relationship does not obtain, for example when traditional elites – landowners, clergy, merchants – lead the nationalist movement. Sometimes such elites borrow from the arguments of the cultural elites but sometimes they do not, or there are no such cultural elites and arguments available. However, in all such types one finds significant nationalist politics.

One must also explain why the cultural values of this nationalist elite become politically significant. The nationalist elite can become the political elite

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[14] I will be very brief in dealing with Gellner and Anderson as I have considered these books at some length in a review article, *Reflections on Nationalism*, in 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences', 15 (1985), pp.65-75, reprinted in Stuart J. Woolf (ed.): *Nationalism in Europe 1815 to the present: A Reader*, Routledge, London, 1996, pp.137-154, and also in `Approaches to Nationalism' in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.): *Mapping the Nation*, cit., especially pp.159-162.

within what is as claimed the national territory. It might help bring a variety of elites together to form a powerful movement. It might mobilise popular support. It might persuade holders of political power – either those whom it opposes or significant external agents – of the legitimacy of its case. The problem is that none of these elements are included within Anderson's explanatory framework.

Finally the very process of giving political shape and significance to the nationalist view changes that view. "Political nationalism" is not simply "cultural nationalism" given political form. The challenge of engaging in political projects of nation-state formation which suddenly confronted political elites in much of Europe in 1848-49 utterly changed people's views of the national question. If one accepted a "stage view" of nationalism which begins with the imaginings of cultural elites, extends to a more politicised but still limited social-political movement, and finally expands to a mass movement, then one might claim that Anderson's approach helps us understand the first and much of the second stage.[15] However, I have already argued that there is no typical relationship between sentiments, doctrines and politics such as is required by this three-stage model. Anderson provides a brilliant account of how certain cultural elites come to imagine they are members of a nation. Sometimes that is a vital component in the development of nationalist politics. However, on its own the approach does not provide an adequate general account of such development.

Mass culture: Gellner and industrial society

One of the weaknesses in Anderson's account is to explain why an elite cultural value should acquire popular appeal, why the national idea should become a key component of popular culture. This is a major concern in Gellner's work.[16] For Gellner modernity is the transition from agrarian to industrial

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[15] This three-stage view is derived from Miroslav Hroch, who focused most of his analysis on the second stage or what he termed "phase B", and links to the criticism he made of my original paper cited in note 6 above. For English readers see M. Hroch.: *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, Cambridge 1985, a much abridged version of his *Die Vorkämpfer der nationalen Bewegung bei den kleinen Völkern Europas. Eine vergleichende Analyse zur gesellschaftlichen Schichtung der patriotischen Gruppen*, Prag 1968. Hroch adopts a distinctive yet marxist position which treats "nation" and "class" as objective realities which combine in different ways to give rise to different kinds of nationalism according to the class structures and relationships that obtain within and between various nations. That statement is completely inadequate to the complex conceptual framework and rigorous empirical comparative research of Hroch's work. For a recent general statement by Hroch of his views on nationalism see *From National Movement to Fully-Formed Nation: the Nation-Building Process in Europe*, 'New Left Review', 198 (1993), pp.3-20, reprinted in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.): *Mapping the Nation*, cit.

[16] Above all see Ernest Gellner: *Nations and nationalism*, Oxford 1983; but see also idem.: *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford 1994, a collection of essays where Gellner works out various aspects of his approach and responds to criticisms. An important set of critiques of Gellner and testimony to his significance as a theorist of nationalism and of modernity is collected in John A. Hall (ed.): *The State*

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society.[17] This transition dramatically increased social and geographical mobility which undermined existing principles of social organisation based on status. Consequently people identified themselves not in terms of the positions they occupied but of the "culture" they carried around with them. Urban immigrants in expanding townships, for example, cluster in communities identified by some cultural component which the immigrants brought with them, such as religion or language or even simply region of origin. Such identities may acquire local political significance in competitions over scarce goods such as jobs, housing or education.

At the same time "culture" became a separate institutional sphere with the growth of a mass print culture and the institution of compulsory elementary education which Gellner explains in terms of the requirement of industrial society for a disciplined labour force with a minimal level of literacy. This contributes to the formation of "standardised" national cultures which Gellner sees as the transformation of a previous "high culture" into a popular culture (the standardisation of national languages being the best example of this process), a process which is interpreted by nationalist intellectuals as the transformation of a folk culture into a national culture.

This is a compelling argument and I accept much of it as a way of explaining the formation of national cultures and even separate national minority cultures within nation-states moving towards industrial society. There are problems to do with Gellner's "functional" account of culture and mass education. Furthermore his approach provides both good reasons for why people from different cultural backgrounds coming together in an industrialising society should all assimilate into the melting-pot of "standard national culture" and why they should become members of separate and competing national communities.

However, my main criticism concerns the relevance of this argument to nationalist politics. One finds such politics in societies which have not industrialised, even in the weaker sense of "modernisation without industry", as Anderson pointed out with reference to the extreme nationalism of Cambodia. Gellner already weakened his concept of industrialism because it was apparent that limited kinds of modernisation (e.g. the penetration of commercial media, state control and market relations into hitherto remote agricultural regions) can diffuse the type of national culture Gellner analyses. However, if this can happen without a rapid acceleration of social and geographical mobility then the key

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of the Nation:Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998)

[17] This enables Gellner to focus on technology and production rather than on market and class relations which is the emphasis of those who instead label modernity with such terms as commercial or capitalist society. However, it has been pointed out to me that Gellner frequently extends his analysis to societies which have in various respects modernised without becoming industrial societies, something which gives his theory a wider application but also weakens it.

element of Gellner's concept of industrialism and its relationship to nationalism has been surrendered. Furthermore, political nationalism is often weak or even non-existent in societies undergoing the transition to industrialism. The best example is that of the first industrial nation – Britain. Indeed, many theorists have argued that it is the response of elites in societies which are not industrialising, which in the views of those elites are being exploited, held back and even underdeveloped by the industrialising/industrial societies, which lies at the heart of modern nationalism.[18]

Gellner's theory can withstand being diluted from "industrialism" to "modernisation" but not surrendering the idea that accelerated social and geographical mobility means a shift from "structure" to "culture" as the principal source of personal and collective identity.[19] Leaving that aside, what Gellner argues about nationalism as sentiments cannot simply be extended to nationalism as politics.

Doctrines

This approach replaces cultural history with intellectual history and focuses on explicit arguments elaborated by intellectuals rather than on "styles of imagining" at either elite or popular level. This kind of argument is often found amongst conservative intellectuals who locate the origins of the irrationality of modern politics and political ideologies in the psychology, arguments and actions of a displaced intelligentsia.[20]

A good example of this approach is the work of Elie Kedourie. Kedourie began his short and important book on nationalism with the striking sentence: "Nationalism is a doctrine invented at the beginning of the 19th century".[21] He

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[18] A pioneering work of this kind was Tom Nairn: *Marxism and the modern Janus*, 'New Left Review' 94 (1975), pp.3-29. For an interesting argument about a pioneering economic nationalist of this kind see Roman Szporluk: *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx versus Friedrich List*, New York 1988, which Gellner reviews in `Nationalism and Marxism', in: *Encounters with Nationalism*, pp.1-19.

[19] It may be, however, that this criticism can be answered once one considers in detail the ways in which nationalist sentiments diffuse within a population and how far they replace or are merely superimposed upon pre-existing sentiments.

[20] This may be why such a style of argument, in many forms and disciplines, was so important in the work of various European émigrés to Britain in the interwar period, as they fled from communist or fascist regimes to what they took to be a settled and traditional culture, systematising and idealising what they idealised as the common-sense and empirical but unfortunately non-reflective values of this culture. A good example is Lewis Namier whose major historical works were detailed studies of 18th century England but who also wrote important essays on interwar European politics and as well as the influential book: *1848: the revolution of the intellectuals*, London 1944, the central argument of which is apparent from the title. This argument about exiled intellectuals was advanced by Perry Anderson in `Components of the National Culture', originally published in *New Left Review* 50 (1968) and reprinted in *idem*: *English Questions*, London/New York, Verso, 1992, pp.48-104.

[21] Elie Kedourie: *Nationalism*, London 1960, p.1.

argued that Kant's ideas of freedom and autonomy were transferred from the individual to the collectivity which itself took on the form of the nation, for example in the writings of Fichte. From this starting point it was natural to progress to the ideas of romantic nationalism developed in Germany and elsewhere. The erosion of traditional values and social structures could then be invoked to explain how existing power-holders were unable to resist the forward march of such an intelligentsia and also why disorientation at a popular level created a susceptibility to the nationalist argument. In a subsequent work, a collection of writings by nationalist intellectuals with an extended introduction, Kedourie extended the argument beyond Europe to Africa and Asia.[22]

There are some criticisms one can make which are specific to Kedourie. The decision to start with Kant and to reason by analogy from his arguments about individual self-determination to arguments about collective (=national) self-determination is, in my view, idiosyncratic and unconvincing. However, unlike the more conventional approach to German nationalism as doctrine, which would typically begin with romanticism, Sturm und Drang and then move on to Fichte and nationalist responses against the French, it does implicate Enlightenment rationalism as equally a source of nationalist doctrine, rather than opposing "reason" and "romanticism" to one another. However, a more sweeping and consistent approach would apply such arguments to Enlightenment values as a whole – seeing in modern creeds of democracy, liberalism and socialism other creeds of an intelligentsia which might under particular circumstances complement or oppose nationalism but which shared with it the modernist arrogance that social and political relationships can be remoulded by a revolutionary act of will.[23]

Whether taken in the narrower frame of Kedourie or the more sweeping form of Talmon this approach shares all the problems I have already raised in my criticism of Anderson in failing to provide a persuasive link to nationalist politics generally, even if it is plausible in relation to certain cases. Nationalist politics is frequently dominated by existing power-holders or new elites who cannot be described as an intelligentsia (itself a highly problematic social category) and who often harness nationalist arguments to conservative rather than radical projects. Even when such elites use some of the arguments of nationalist intellectuals they usually transform their meanings in practice. The sketchy and negative sociology which serves to explain the popular appeal of nationalist doctrine (using such terms as "uprooted" and "masses") does not begin to do justice to the complexities associated with the formation of popular politics under modern conditions.

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[22] *Nationalism in Africa and Asia*, London 1971.

[23] That roughly is the line of argument of J. L. Talmon: *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution*, London 1981.

If one confines "nationalism" only to romantic or organicist doctrines then the whole range of what Kohn calls western nationalism and others civic nationalism is excluded from consideration. If one includes such doctrines as Rousseau's creed of sovereignty then the indictment of modern politics extends well beyond those of nationalism. Finally, there is a danger of a systematic confusion between intellectual and political history, where invalid intellectual connections are traced because they are seen to represent political connections. Precisely because nationalist politics is autonomous, because the rhetoric of politicians is not constructed like the arguments of intellectuals, and because political movements appropriate arguments in eclectic and frequently illogical ways – for all these reasons the attempt to understand nationalism as the translation of doctrine into politics cannot succeed.

The modernity approach: nationalist politics

Modernity, democracy and society

<u>Introductory points</u>

The most obvious transformation in modern terms - whether one calls it capitalism, industrialism, or modernisation - involves the erosion of older, privileged distinctions within society and its progressive replacement by the ethos, if not the reality, that any person can occupy any position within their society. A major distinction, for example, between such concepts as estate, order or corporation and that of class, occupation or party is that the membership of the first kind is legally defined whereas membership of the second kind is situationally defined. Underpinning this second type of category is a view of "society" as the totality of individuals who can occupy these various situations. It is impossible to conceive of a nation as a "whole society" occupying actually or ideally a particular territory unless this notion of "whole society" is regarded both as possible (even actual) and legitimate and that requires the acceptance of the idea that all individuals can move into any position within that society, that the different situations in which people actually find themselves are no more than that – situations rather than destinies associated with birth or honour. This is really no more than a restatement of Gellner's argument about the impact of "industrialism" and the decline of "structure" as a way of fixing social identity. However, I need to restate the proposition in this way in order to move the argument in a different direction from that taken by Gellner.

In this concept of the nation as a "whole society" there is a political and a non-political component. The political component can be briefly summed up as the idea of democracy. The idea of democracy was generally condemned in the Europe of 1750 and praised in the Europe of 1900. In the intervening century and a half the idea that the state was based on the will of a mass citizenry had carried

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the day. Consequently one way of defining the nation was in terms of a mass citizenry.[24]

However, this transition to modernity also led to a distinction between the political and the non-political, public and private, state and society. The idea of democracy can embody the notion of a "political nation", of the nation as the sum of its citizens. There remains the non-political component of the national idea, the notion of a society having a distinct identity and character, rather than consisting of divided estates with little in common. Gellner suggests that only a concept of "culture" can provide the basis of this societal identity. I agree but I think Gellner neglects two crucial issues with respect to nationalism as politics: the significance of territoriality and the way in which appeals to culture are deployed in modern political conflict. In order to develop these arguments I need to outline a more elaborate view of what is involved in the transition to modernity and to show how this relates to issues of territoriality and nationalist politics.

Modernity: the transition from corporate to functional divisions of labour

In my view modernisation most fundamentally involves a transformation in the generic division of labour within a society. I employ this term in the sense it was used by Durkheim, that is not in the narrowly economic conception which stresses the increasing specialisation and differentiation of the occupational structure but rather to mean the way the most basic social functions – economic, social, political and cultural – are defined, distributed and institutionalised. Elaborating slightly I identify these essential functions as the production, exchange and distribution of essential material goods, the reproduction of the species and its care and nurture through the early years of dependency, the exercise of power in order to maintain order and stability, and the formulation and diffusion of values which give meaning to life and the social relationships in which people find themselves. Of course societies do many other things but it is difficult to know what it would mean to describe any human group as a "society" unless these functions were carried out to some minimal degree.

The notion of "pre-modern" is negative and includes utterly different technologies and divisions of labour which have in common only the fact that they cannot be described as modern. More specifically I want to focus on the particular pre-modern division of labour which characterised much of ancien regime Europe. I call this a corporate division of labour[25] and distinguish it from

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[24] Just how extensive was this mass citizenry still varied, although by 1900 it was generally agreed that it comprised at least the majority of the adult males.

[25] Of course, historians of different European regions for the early modern period will understandably object to so sweeping and undifferentiated a label. However, for me the crucial objection is not to show that corporate divisions of labour took very different forms and were in more or less advanced stages of dissolution by the late 18th century, because that objection admits the general legitimacy of the concept. Rather it would be to argue that the very notion of corporate division of labour was

the functional division of labour associated with modernity. By corporate division of labour I refer to societies with complex divisions of labour which include significant non-agrarian sectors in the economy, sophisticated and specialised cultural activity at elite, if not other levels and extensive and specialised systems of administration. "Pre-modern" does not in any sense mean primitive or simple; indeed the process of modernisation in many respects simplified social relationships.

What matters, however, is that the social functions were bundled together within the domain of particular institutions which discharged those functions on behalf of particular social groups. For example, the ideal-typical guild performed economic functions (regulating the production and distribution of various goods and services for the population of a particular locality); social functions (extending from the biological family of the guildsman to the more extended group of "das ganzes Haus"); cultural functions (taking care of the general as well as vocational education of family members, servants and dependent craftsmen, organising much of the recreational and ceremonial activities of guild members, enforcing religious observance); and political functions (running courts which imposed guild regulations both upon members and non-members, having automatic representation on town governments). Churches, lordships, peasant communities and even princes in their capacity as privileged landowners who did not sharply distinguish domain from state revenue – in their various ways these institutions also operated in this multi-functional manner.

It would be misleading to portray such a division of labour as consensual or "organic" in the tradition established by a nostalgic conservatism. There were numerous points of conflict within these institutions. Journeymen rebelled against the authority of the guild master; peasant communities resisted the enforcement of lordship in the exaction of payments or labour; lower clergy resented the power and wealth of the clerical aristocracy. There were also conflicts between institutions, e.g. between legally demarcated town and countryside, between churches and princes, princes and nobility, although one can usually discern close connections and a common sense of identity amongst the elites of church, monarchy (including the high civil and military officials) and noble landowners. Finally one must emphasis that this is an ideal-type and by the late 18th century

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inapplicable. In fact I think this is the case for certain regions, notably England, Holland and areas of overseas settlement such as the north-eastern seaboard of North America and would want to relate that to the particular way in which nationalism developed in those regions. (This relates to the way in which historians of England can identify "nationalism" much earlier; see note 10 above.) However, I think I can defend this concept in relation to much of ancien regime continental Europe. I would also stress that my approach does not necessarily oppose itself to marxist interpretations which insist that status distinctions only conceal class relations, but rather would argue that what matters is that class relationships are articulated through privileged structures of estates and orders.

this division of labour was crumbling in parts of western and central Europe and was being subject to incisive intellectual criticism.

These critiques are usually summarised by the term "enlightenment" although the objects and forms of the critiques were very diverse. Physiocrats and advocates of political economy argued for economic competition which would involve the removal of privileged positions, condemned as monopoly. The right of churches to set out and enforce the Christian values which gave meaning to life and ordered relationships was challenged from such positions as free-thinking, anti-clericalism, scepticism, secularism and rationalism. The powers of the prince were challenged in the name of constitutionalism, although another form of argument had a vision of wise princes operating with able officials to ensure better rather than constitutional rule. The challenges extended beyond the structures of privilege to encompass the forms of knowledge and morality associated with those structures.

Many of those critiques anticipated modern divisions of labour. Physiocracy and political economy anticipated free competition and markets. Religious critiques anticipated a future in which religious communities consisted of free and voluntary associations of believers. Constitutionalism envisaged a central role for representative institutions while advocates of efficient government thought in terms of specialised administrative institutions staffed on the basis of merit. In some cases critiques would take a utopian form, perhaps by envisaging a supreme position for one institution or function – the free market society with a night-watchman state, the all-powerful state expressing the sovereignty of the people, the rulership of a new and virtuous clerisy. It is debatable how far any such critiques and visions really drove forward the transformation and how far modernisation developed principally as an unintended consequence of the general capacity of more modern ways of doing things to prevail over less modern ways.

Whatever the explanation, the result was that institutions came to specialise by function. The monarchy was transformed into a public and accountable office (or replaced by some other institution such as a republic) and divested of religious and economic functions. The church, even where it remained a privileged state church, lost its temporal powers and wealth and defended itself by stressing its role as the moulder of beliefs, for example in the field of elementary education, although that was also to become a major site of institutional conflict in modern society. Peasant emancipation and the abolition of guild and monopoly privileges divested many economic functions of non-economic features.

The concept of transformation makes it impossible to discuss such changes in terms of "growth" or "decline". In some senses it is apparent that the modern entrepreneur or ruler is a more powerful figure than any pre-modern precursor if one measures this in terms of capital mobilised, soldiers recruited, taxes collected. In other senses, however, they are much less powerful because their power is confined to a particular functional sphere – the political ruler cannot

normally impose religious beliefs and the entrepreneur cannot normally administer corporal punishment to his workers.

The specialised nature of politics and the state under modern conditions

Many consequences flow from this transformation which was, of course, complex, varied, long-drawn out and uneven in its working through. Here I can only focus on certain political consequences and how these relate to nationalism.

The modern state developed out of what can be seen as a double transformation. It acquired many of the "political" powers originally held by other institutions. Thus, for example, courts or quasi-judicial institutions run by lords of the manor or guilds or churches were either abolished or became state institutions. The right to raise armies or taxation became a monopoly of the state. At the same time the state lost many of the "non-political" powers it had originally held, such as economic powers associated with princely landholding or the right to grant monopolies.

Consequently the state developed as a specialised set of offices operating in the public sphere, set against the private spheres of economy, family and civil society. As such, rather than as the preserve of particular individuals and corporations, it was necessary to make explicit the rules governing the arrangements and powers of these offices. Modernity in its political form is closely associated with legal codifications and the enactment of constitutions.

This in turn meant that the idea of politics took on both a universal and a specialised meaning. The state was a universal association with powers of coercion over all its subjects although also answerable to those subjects in their capacity as citizens. The state was organised through special institutions such as parliaments and bureaucracies, set apart from institutions with specialised economic or cultural or social functions. To the age-old questions concerning the proper relationship between rulers and ruled there was added the new question of the relationship between state and society. It became possible to conceive of politics as the specialised business of competing for control of the state and to do so by mobilising sections of society in support of this aim. On this basis modern political institutions, notably the party, could take shape. That in turn meant the possibility of parties using programmes and ideologies in search of such support. The next question to consider is why this politics should take on a nationalist form.

Territoriality and the modern state

If one accepts the argument so far one can see why the ideas of democracy and cultural community are central as nationalist responses to the modernising state. On the one hand the state should express the will of its mass citizenry, created through the formation of the state as a universal but specialised political

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association. That is the political component. On the other hand the state should connect to the society it rules. Here political movements, in seeking support from various social groups, appeal to non-political features of that society. Appeals to interests, always a major element in any significant political movement, have the disadvantage of drawing attention to divisions within society. The obvious alternative is to find non-divisive elements within that society and that is found in the idea of a common culture. Indeed, conflicts of interests, values and groups are often transformed in political rhetoric into conflicts of culture. One sees this at an early stage in the French revolution when Jacobins at the centre interpreted regional resistances in the south and west of the country in such terms:

> "We have observed that the dialects called Bas-Breton, the Basque dialect, and the German and Italian languages have perpetuated the reign of fanaticism and superstition, revered the domination of priests and aristocrats, and favoured the enemies of France."[26]

There are two important points to make about this use of cultural arguments. First, it suggests problems about the distinctions between western and eastern, civic and ethnic, objective and subjective, political and cultural nationalism, distinctions which often carry a moral charge in that the first member of the pair is regarded positively and the second member negatively. I do not doubt that some forms of nationalism are morally preferable to other forms – who would choose Mussolini instead of Mazzini, Horthy rather than Kossuth? The problem is that all forms of nationalism are a combination of political elements (how should the state be organised?) and cultural elements (what is the nature of the society which this state represents?), elements which combine in different ways and which change not so much from one nation to another but rather from one epoch or position on the political spectrum to another. The virulent forms of nationalism that developed in the unstable state system of inter-war Europe were more like each other than any of them were like earlier forms of nationalism in their own country. What we are really saying when we make these distinctions is that we prefer certain political and cultural combinations to others, an important point to make as citizens but not very helpful in trying to understand nationalism as historians.

Second, it is customary when explaining the appeal to the nation as a cultural community to invoke the idea of the other, the enemy. Barère constructs a positive notion of the French nation through the process of constructing a negative image of Bretons, Basques, Germans and Italians. However, it is only in the modern era that civil wars or wars between states led to this argument.[27] Only

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[26] The radical member of the National Convention Barère, quoted in Carlton Hayes: *The Historical Evolution of Nationalism*, p.65.

[27] Clearly all conflicts involve constructions of friend/enemy images which are often framed in cultural terms. The very word barbarian is derived from just such a Greek construct. But this was a construct of elites – the rhetoric of Athenian statesmen did not suggest that the "whole society" of their own

in conjunction with the notion of the "whole society" as democratic and culturally unified could such conflict be framed in nationalist terms.

In developing this argument I have hitherto seen two basic positions one can take. The first – I think it is that taken by Otto Dann, Bernard Giesen, Miroslav Hroch and many other important historians of nationalism – is to stress the intellectual conditions for this kind of political argument. Someone like Barère could not just pluck the images I have cited out of the air. The work of shaping these images and arguments had to have already been done before practical politicians could use them in specific situations. I would not deny that but nevertheless would object to the conclusion that one must therefore first see nationalism as a cultural movement which constructs a sense of national identity and then progresses to take the form of programmes and finally movements. First, I would suggest that arguments of this kind were shaped and acquired relevance precisely because they appeared to reflect the patterns of political development. In other words it is the rise of the modern state which stimulates this way of thinking, a way of thinking I would suggest which does not actually call for especially strenuous efforts of imagination. It is the parasitic, mirroring, mapping roles of ideology that I would stress, along with the particular sleight of hand performed by nationalism in systematically confusing and jumping between arguments about political freedom and cultural autonomy. Taken together with the persuasive ways in which nationalism elaborates and adapts its appeal in relation to the actual cultural practices and needs of various groups it seeks to mobilise, I think this provides an adequate way of understanding the formulation and success of nationalist arguments within political movements.[28]

However, there is one further point about the nature of the modernising state and the appropriateness of the nationalist response which I did not sufficiently stress in earlier arguments. That concerns the issue of territory.

The modern state puts an unprecedented emphasis on its territorial character as well as its democratic form and cultural unity. An example of this is provided by the competing justifications which accompanied the outbreak of war between France and the ancien regime states of the Holy Roman Empire led by Prussia and Austria. The French government denied that the jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Empire could apply to "French" territory. Spokesmen for the Holy Roman Empire argued that there were various historically grounded privileges which did provide for such jurisdiction. This argument can be related back to the transition from corporate to functional divisions of labour. Under a system of ancien regime corporations different corporate powers and privileges can be linked to different geographical areas. Property rights in land, church jurisdiction, the extent of a

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city-state (let alone all the other Greek polities) constituted Greece as against the "whole society" of, say, Persia.

[28] I develop these arguments at greater length in chapter 2, 'Sources and forms of nationalist ideology' and the 'Conclusion' of *Nationalism and the State*.

guild monopoly, the fiscal powers of the prince might all operate within different boundaries. However, once the boundary is given one specialised yet universal meaning, namely defined as the boundary of the state this becomes its only meaning. The conflicting rhetorics were not like the boundary disputes between modern states where there is a shared conception about the boundary and the conflict is simply about where the boundary between the conflicting states should be drawn. Rather they oppose two conceptions of what a boundary means to one another. [29]

Why did this "modernisation of the boundary" develop and how did it shape nationalism? One obvious reason was that the French were able to impose their conception of the territorial state upon other European regions. Napoleon abolished the many tiny "states" of the German and Italian lands, political entities which only make sense within a corporate division of labour, and replaced them with a series of territorial states ruled by local princes and officials who allied themselves with Napoleon not merely out of opportunism but also because they agreed with the modernising thrust of this reorganisation. The reorganisation involved not merely the formation of sharply defined territories in terms of the external boundaries of the various states, they also involved the rationalisation of internal boundaries, the elimination of what were regarded as "irrational" enclaves or "merely" historical units of local/regional administration, and the attempt to impose a common system of law and administration throughout the territory of the state.

For a long time the national focus in German or Italian or Spanish historiography emphasised the cultural nationalist rejection of this reorganisation – rejected because imposed by foreign rule, embodying alien, abstract and non-historical values. However, rejections of this kind were of marginal political importance; insofar as there was rejection it was mainly to do with the privations that accompanied French domination; appeals to history had less to do with national sentiments than a nostalgia for pre-Napoleonic arrangements; the post-Napoleonic peace settlement largely confirmed the territorialisation of central Europe which he had carried through; these territorial states were the building blocks of political identity and action which eventually led to nation-state formation in these parts of Europe.

However, this process of territorialisation had a deeper logic driving it than the power of Napoleon. The breakdown of the corporate system of multiple boundaries for various and multi-functional institutions entailed the construction

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[29] I am not suggesting that such differences were important reasons for the outbreak of the war; they were rather justifications used for actions taken for other reasons. However, they were important in indicating two different ways of looking at international relations and reaching political judgements. My argument here is indebted to T.W. Blanning: *The Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars*, London 1986.

of new boundary systems.[30] One brief example will have to suffice. In 1842 the Prussian government passed two laws which made it easier for people to move from one locality to another and to qualify for poor relief in the new locality. On the same day as these laws came into operation, so did a third law which for the first time defined state membership (Staatsangehörigkeit). Once the local boundary had been eroded for the purpose of implementing social citizenship, it became necessary to make a clear distinction between citizens and foreigners at the level of the state frontier.

The Prussian government relaxed Gemeinde controls because the growth of urban and industrial regions and the migration of people from rural and agricultural regions made the pre-modern system of poor relief dysfunctional. Having softened that boundary it had to harden the state boundary. However, boundaries require definitions of membership. Even where there was not a democratic impetus to such boundary definition (that came briefly in 1848 when it was necessary to define the boundaries and citizenry of "Germany" for the purposes of elections to the German National Assembly) or a conflict with another state which ignited the "friend/foe" argument, the more impersonal and largely neglected processes of modernisation pushed forward the sharper territorialisation of the state.

What this should produce, especially if associated with extensions in political participation and conflict with other states, is an increasing sense of common identity with the existing state. This often happens. In such cases nationalist opposition takes the form that I define in my book as "reform nationalism", where there is no challenge to the existing territorial definition of the state but rather to what are regarded as non- or anti-national features of state institutions.

To move towards forms of nationalism which challenge existing territorial definitions of the state, either in the form of "unification nationalism" or "separatist nationalism" requires that one add further to this territorialisation argument. In the short space available I cannot do this adequately and must refer readers to my book. I argue that unification nationalism develops most strongly when one modernising state within the national region is able to exploit the weaknesses of the state system in that region and where that region has already started to acquire certain state-like features. This is why German unification nationalism developed so much more strongly than that of Italy. The Confederation, the Customs Union and various inter-state agreements all provided a political focus for a nationalist politics. This, coupled with the position

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[30] I have developed the arguments which follow more fully in two places: *Sovereignty and boundaries: modern state formation and national identity in Germany*, in: Mary Fulbrook (ed.): *National Histories and European history*, London 1993, pp.94-140; and *Sovereignty, Citizenship and Nationality: Reflections on the Case of Germany*, in: Malcolm Anderson & Eberhard Bort (eds.): *The Frontiers of Europe*, London & Washington 1998, pp.36-67.

and interest of a modernising Prussian state and the weaknesses of a political system which did not concentrate power into territorially defined states but tried, in an increasingly archaic fashion, to share it through the system of Austro-Prussian dualism, provided the platform for unification although that could have come about in other forms than the one it actually assumed.[31]

Unification nationalist movements have rarely been effective because the conditions I have outlined above are rarely established. More often "unification" comes about because a nationalist movement/state in one part of the alleged national territory is able to exploit weaknesses in other parts and/or because it can take advantage of political reconstruction after a major crisis, usually a war. Thus pre-1914 Rumania and Serbia could successfully claim other territory to form post-1918 Greater Rumania and Yugoslavia. Polish nationalists did the same without any "rump state" base from which to work.

Such a "rump state" was usually the product of the most common type of nationalism, namely separatist nationalism. Separatist nationalism arises out of an opposition to an existing state which is concentrated in one particular area of that state. Unlike reform nationalism, separatist nationalism has a clear territorial concern; unlike unification nationalism it is conditioned by just one state. My main concern has been to argue that the extent to which this state creates modern political institutions directly conditions the extent to which a strong and effective separatist nationalism develops. Thus I argue that separatist nationalism was stronger in the late 19th century Habsburg Empire compared to that of the Ottoman empire; just as it was stronger in British West Africa than in the Belgian Congo. In many cases the objective level of exploitation and oppression was weaker in the areas where nationalism was stronger (e.g. Nigeria compared to the Congo). At the same time, because the success of nationalism is dependent not merely upon its own internal strength but also upon the strength of the state it opposes and the degree to which that state can call upon powerful international support, I argued that weaker nationalist movements could have greater success (e.g. Rumanian nationalism in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia within the Ottoman Empire compared to Rumanian nationalism in the Habsburg territory of Transylvania).[32]

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[31] I develop this argument at length for Germany in *The Formation of the First German Nation-State 1800-1871*, London 1996. I compare nationalism in German and Italian unification in chapter 4 of *Nationalism and the State*. I also contrast the unification nationalisms stressing Pan-Arab and Pan-African identity, and the role of individual states such as Egypt and Ghana in chapter 14. The very special case of German (re)-unification in 1989-90 is considered in chapter 17.

[32] See especially chapters 5-12 in *Nationalism and the State* which pursues this argument in relation to colonial nationalism (including "sub-nationalist" movements such as that of the Muslim League) in parts of India, Africa and the Middle East, to the cases of China, Japan and Turkey, and to separatist opposition movements within newly independent states. I also consider separatist nationalism in the former USSR in chapter 17 and, in more depth, in: *Die Voraussetzungen erfolgreicher Nationalbewegungen*, 'Comparativ: Leipziger Beiträge zur Universalgeschichte und vergleichenden

Clearly this is not the whole of the answer. There have to be some kinds of distinctions between the "national" population and region on the one side and the existing state and the social groups with which it comes to be identified on the other. The work of cultural elites, the penetration of new market relations or modes of communication, resentment against inequality and discrimination – all these play a part as well. However, my argument would be that in the absence of such a modernising state to oppose, these conditions will not lead to an effective nationalist opposition. What I want to emphasise is that this is a very different approach from that which begins by stressing prior "national" differences. At the same time I would also point out that any particular case needs to consider the social bases and political traditions which will shape the concerns and nature of any nationalist movement. Finally, the distinctions I make between the co-ordinating, mobilising and legitimating functions of nationalism point to the very different forms political nationalism can take and these will in turn condition the kind of nation-state that eventually results from successful nationalist action. All this amounts to saying is that my framework is not a complete formula which can substitute for detailed historical analysis; rather it identifies the more enduring contextual features which accompany the development of political nationalism.

Why nationalism "seems right"

I seek to position myself between one view which sees nationalism as an expression of "objective" group interests in obtaining autonomy within a given territory under modern political conditions (whether we call these "nations" or "classes" or something else) and another view which sees the work of imagining or even inventing which goes on in nationalist cultural activity as constructing the very identity and interest which defines itself as national and which can in turn generate political nationalism.

I try to do this by distinguishing between sentiments, doctrines and politics. I recognise the autonomy of nationalist cultural work engaged in by writers, artists, musicians, folklorists, language reformers, architects and others, people who work with "sentiments" to produce explicit doctrines and creeds of national identity. Clearly such work tends only to be engaged in under certain conditions which, for example, make more plausible the idea of democracy (i.e. the idea that the "people" have the dignity and capacity as well as the right to rule themselves) but we cannot reduce Rousseau or Herder to a simple effect of such conditions.

What matters for nationalism as politics is how such intellectual work can be translated into creeds which serve political functions within significant movements. To mobilise mass support there is also a further set of "popularising" intellectual operations to be considered, such as the representation of nationalist

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Gesellschaftsforschung', 8/1 (1998), (special issue edited by Wilfried Spohn on the theme of `Kulturanalyse und vergleichende Forschung'), pp.16-46.

arguments in vivid and summary symbolic and ceremonial forms.[33] There is a good deal of study of these matters, especially stimulated by the idea of nations as invented or imagined communities.[34]

However, such activity often does not have political consequences. There are more imagined than actual nations. English folklorists did not stimulate English nationalism. Also there are nationalist movements which take political form virtually at the same time as they develop elaborate ideologies rather than such work being an essential precondition of political significance. We must once again pay attention to the modern conditions of nationalism and I would highlight the role of the state.

Nationalist ideology fuses three themes: identity, participation and territory. There is a nation (identity) and this is a whole society. (In some cases the nation is portrayed as peasant or proletarian against aristocrats or capitalists; in other cases a stress on an elite culture tends to work in the opposite direction. But usually the nation is seen as a multi-class society or rapidly comes to develop such imagery in order to appeal beyond specific social groups.[35]) The nation must run its own affairs (participation). To do this it requires political autonomy within the national territory. These features of nationalism "mirror" the political conditions produced by the modern state – the emergence of politics as a specialised activity which involves ever-wider participation and in which the "state" is seen as set over "society" and the sharp territorialisation of politics. Nationalism is, I suggest, a parasitic ideology which seeks to reflect these conditions in a particular and prescriptive way.

Such ideology has an intellectual importance of its own. Ideology is an intellectual map which provides people with bearings as well as destinations and which enables individuals to perceive a collective interest amongst themselves. Nationalism has certain advantages over other modern ideologies. First, it "solves" the problem of the proper relationship between state and society in an apparently easy way. Whereas liberalism stresses the notion of a social contract, conservativism the importance of tradition, radicalism the centrality of an abstract "people", and socialism the ideal of social justice (perhaps identified with a particular class), they all make a distinction between the state and society which is variously represented as individuals, community, people or class. Nationalism simply evades the distinction by simultaneously representing "nation" as cultural and political community. The nation (a cultural community = society) must have its own autonomy (a nation-state = state). While in opposition the evasion is

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[33] I develop these points in chapter 2 of *Nationalism and the State*, 'Sources and forms of nationalist ideology'.

[34] Typical is the exhibition held from March to June 1998 at the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin on the theme of "Mythen der Nationen. Ein Europäisches Panorama". This approach, of course, lends itself very well to visual representation and is therefore attractive to museologists.

[35] I develop these points in chapter 1 of *Nationalism and the State*, `Social bases of nationalist politics'.

never put to the test; once in power the problem that culture and politics, community and state are not identical becomes clear.

At the same time nationalism has a peculiar self-referential quality. Conservatism looks back; liberal, democratic and socialist ideas usually look forward to an ideal future; religious creeds look beyond this world. By contrast nationalists ask people above all to celebrate themselves. These other creeds usually lack one of the three elements of identity, participation and territoriality whereas nationalism fuses all three. The construction of a national history usually depicts a process of decline and nationalists look to recovery in the future. However, the examples of golden ages and national heroes work to induce self-celebration in the present to motivate people to realise a better future. Nationalist ideology also appropriates elements of other ideologies and feeds upon existing sentiments. In all these ways, provided that the appropriate modern conditions exist and the language of nationalism can be made to appear relevant to people, nationalist ideology has peculiar advantages over other political ideologies.

Nationalism and the conditions of modern politics

That can only explain why a nationalist language of politics increasingly appears appropriate. To take understanding further one has to see how that language is deployed in political movements. Here I outline two differentiating strategies which take as their initial assumption that nationalist movements begin as oppositional movements to modernising or modern states.

1. The three kinds of nationalist opposition/state relationships

I have already distinguished between unification, reform and separatist nationalism and suggested why separatist nationalism is the most common and important form. I would also distinguish between nationalist movements in an era when the nation-state has not yet been accepted as the "natural" political unit and an era (our era) where it has. Finally, I would distinguish between nationalism as an opposition movement and nationalism as a movement in control of the state.

In my view the real problem to explain is why a distinctively new form of political movement – nationalism – emerged in opposition to the existing political arrangements and contributed to altering those arrangements in accordance with its own programme. Once the nation-state becomes the political norm and once such states can shape so much of people's lives through power over the economy, education, communications and much more, then nationalism itself tends to become a somewhat vacuous and universally accepted idea.[36]

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[36] A good recent study of the way in which nationalist values are reproduced in everyday life in the world of nation-states is Michael Billig: *Banal Nationalism*, London 1995.

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2. The three functions of nationalist ideology and politics

Within such nationalist movements I distinguish between three functions of nationalist ideology: co-ordination, mobilisation and legitimation. Co-ordination involves bringing together a range of elites into a single political movement by stressing their common national identity and values. Mobilisation involves appealing for popular support. Legitimation involves appealing to powerful outside interests – above all, external states but also external public opinion and, for example in many cases of modern colonial nationalism, the existing imperial state and its public opinion. One of the reasons nationalist movements themselves use conflicting languages is because they are divided by these functions as well as by the different elites, popular classes and external powers to which they appeal. Clearly the most "genuine" nationalist movements are those which co-ordinate a wide range of elites and mobilise mass support. However, as I have already suggested, the most "successful" movements, in the sense of achieving political autonomy, are not necessarily the most "genuine" ones. In Nationalism and the State I deploy these three distinctions in order to analyse each case and also to provide a common framework to compare cases.

Conclusion

I would claim, with this approach, to have provided a framework for a global understanding of nationalism. I would, however, qualify that large claim immediately.

First, this is quite deliberately a "public" and "limited" understanding. I am concerned with nationalism as politics which leaves aside important cultural and intellectual subjects studied under that same heading. I am sceptical of those who attribute too total or dramatic a significance to nationalism (e.g. the "sacrifice unto death" approach); who see nationalism as an irrational but volcanic force in the modern world; who take seriously its claim to connect personality and culture directly to politics. Nationalism is non-rational in the sense that there is no validity to its claim that a certain collective identity (nation) prescribes a certain kind of political organisation (nation-state). It is even irrational because such an argument, if applied literally to all such identity claims, would produce a completely unworkable world (which means, of course, it could not produce such a world). But nationalism does nevertheless make some sense under the modern conditions of functional divisions of labour, participatory politics and sharply defined territorial states. By apparently mirroring these conditions but also imposing values and goals upon those conditions, nationalist ideology and its derived ceremonies and rituals do come to acquire a power in their own right. However, this only becomes politically effective when closely linked to interests - internally both elite and popular (co-ordination and mobilisation), and to external interests (legitimation).

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On the other hand, I am equally sceptical of those who regard nationalism as a manipulative instrument of class or elite or some other interest group. Manipulation is always a secondary issue; the primary issue must be why does it occur to anyone to deploy this particular appeal and why does anyone else take any notice of that appeal? That goes beyond matters of interest to the capacity of political languages and movements to present persuasive images and practices of collective solidarity which cannot be reduced to pre-existing pressure groups, elites or classes.

Nationalism, therefore, is not a political instrument used to manipulate people in the name of a false identity nor is it a prior sense of collective identity that forces its way through to the sphere of politics nor is it just a modern way of performing a-historical functions concerned with identity, social interests or guiding change. Rather it is a politics which appeared to make sense of a modernising world and to offer solutions to agonising problems posed by modernisation. Whether it will continue to make much sense of a post-modern world is another matter.

The Authors

John Breuilly is Professor of modern history at the University of Birmingham. His major publications are *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester & Chicago ²1993; *Labour and liberalism in nineteenth-century Europe: essays in comparative history*, Manchester & New York 1992, paperback ed. 1994; *The Formation of the First German Nation-State*, 1800-1871, London 1996. His current research interests are in applying concepts of modernisation to the history of Germany and writing a comparative cultural history of the bourgeoisie in mid-19th century Hamburg, Lyon and Manchester.

Otto Dann is Professor of modern history at the University of Cologne. His major publications are *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland. 1770-1990*, München ³1996; *Gleichheit und Gleichberechtigung. Die Geschichte des politisch-sozialen Gleichheitspostulats der Neuzeit bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1980; Otto Dann (ed.): *Nationalismus und sozialer Wandel*, Hamburg 1978. He is currently preparing the critical edition of the historical writings of Friedrich Schiller within the 'Weimarer Nationalausgabe' of Schiller's complete works. Together with Miroslav Hroch he is directing the research project on 'Nationsbildung und Patriotismus in der letzten Epoche des Heiligen Römischen Reiches' and he participates at the interdisciplinary research project 'Ethnogenese und Nationsbildung im ariden Afrika' of the University of Cologne.

Johannes U. Müller is researcher at the European University Institute. His research concerns the rise of mass society and its effects in Europe between 19th and 20th century. He is currently concerned with an inquiry into the interdependence of political culture and political system in liberal pre-war Italy.

Bo Stråth is Professor of contemporary history at the European University Institute. His major publications are *The Politics of Deindustrialisation. The Contraction Process of the West European Shipbuilding Industry*, London 1987; *The Organisation of Labour Markets. Governance, Culture and Modernity in Germany, Sweden, Britain and Japan*, London 1996; Sørensen Øystein & Bo Stråth (eds.): *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, Oslo 1997; Bo Stråth and Nina Witoszek (eds.): *The Postmodern Challenge*, Amsterdam 1999. His current research interest is in the transformation of the language and the symbols of labour markets since the 1960s and of interest and identity construction between Europe and the nation. He is co-director of the research project 'The Cultural Construction of Community in Modernisation Processes' (a co-operation between the EUI and Humboldt University in Berlin) and of the European Forum 1999-2000 at the EUI.

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