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Chapter 3

Nationalism and Typological Thinking

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Beyond nationalism? The question raised by the editors is not easy to answer, among other things because it entails a series of interconnected questions: What do we mean when we speak of 'a postnationalist scenario'? Would that be possible, anyway? And if possible, would it be desirable? The main difficulty of these questions lies at the uncontrollable polisemy of the term 'nationalism,' to which it seems almost impossible to assign a precise meaning. Besides, it seems unreasonable, if not discouraging, to speculate about the future of a phenomenon so changing and diverse before establishing its meaning.

Thus, my argument will focus on a thesis concerning the social ontology of nationalism. Albert tacitly, it performs an important role in the nationalist rhetoric. With the help of a conceptual distinction of evolutionary biology we can shed light on the nationalist tendency to represent the social reality of nations and the membership of individuals in the national community. This way of approaching nations and national identities usually distorts both the theoretical understanding and the normative characterization of the social scientist. However, it helps us differentiate a more scientifically balanced approach and gives us some clues to go beyond nationalism.

Nationalisms and Nationalist Demands: A Necessary Remark

Undoubtedly, any prediction on the future of nationalism seems highly risky, if not senseless. For instance, at the beginning of the 1980s, who could have anticipated the demise of communism, the frantic course of events after 1989, and the reconfiguration of Europe's political map? Prudence is even more needed when we try to assess ethnocultural tensions and conflicts. They constitute "the most striking example of a general failure among the experts to anticipate social developments," as Jalali and Lipset have pointed out regarding the Cold War conviction, held by Marxist and non-Marxist social scientists alike, that many ethnocultural loyalties and identities would cede to modernization and transform or dissolve themselves into wider social entities.¹

Furthermore, any exercise of futures anticipation entails of its own a remarkable dose of desiderata, as is happening currently in Spain on the debate on nationalism and the European political integration. On the one hand, Catalan or Basque nationalist demands, and particularly Basque secessionist demands, miss their point once we enter the space of the European Union—would it not be anachronistic to draw new frontiers at the time that current ones are disappearing? However, on the other hand, the nationalist vision of a "Europe of the peoples" underlines the growing loss of sovereignty by the states—and the emergence of new opportunities for small nations. The same happens with globalization, whose effects on nations and states can be instrumentalized in one sense or the other.

But the notorious difficulty of the debate lies in what Clifford Geertz called "the stultifying aura of conceptual ambiguity that surrounds the terms 'nation,' 'nationality,' and 'nationalism,'" which the astonishing increase in the specialized literature for the past decades has not driven away. Nationalism has very different meanings, from the defense of cultural identity by a minority group to the aggressive expansionist politics by a state. Thus, it is common to distinguish the nationalism of ethnocultural minorities inside a wider state from the nationalism of the state's dominant group. But in each case we may find further differentiations, according to the typology drafted by Kupchan.³ So, in the first case, the demands range from the recognition of the minority group's differentiated character to secession; while in the second, we find distinct levels of *state-claiming* or *state-building*, in which the identification with the state competes with alternative loyalties, or even turns into the main focus of mobilization and, lastly, of *state-expanding*, in which the state's nationalism fosters territorial demands or hegemonic aspirations in its international relations.

Yet can we find a common bond among the numerous politics we call nationalist? Traditionally nationalism has been taken as a political principle of legitimacy, built upon the relation of nation and state. That principle refers to the

assumption that the political unit and the national unit *must* be the same. Otherwise, they become failures.⁴ Indeed, properly considered, nationalism cannot be understood without the condition that it makes the nation the political community par excellence, the fundamental axis for the configuration of the political space and the organization of power.

But if we exclusively pay attention to this aspect, we get a partial, or even distorted, view of nationalist politics and demands. Then, for example, we would disregard the search for cultural roots and the promotion of national identity (language, folklore, history, etc.), or give them an instrumental use subordinated to political aims. These cultural motives are taken as proofs demonstrating the existence of a differentiated community. However, we should acknowledge the important role they play in educating the nationalist conscience.

In his research on the old nationalisms of Central and Eastern Europe, Miroslav Hroch has distinguished three stages in the formation of national movements.⁵ First, the initial period, when small cells of activists, mainly intellectuals, consecrate themselves to researching and spreading a nation's distinctive features: language, history, customs, arts, popular traditions, etc. Yet this exploratory task does not imply the institution of a political project. That is precisely the endeavor of a second evolutionary stage, aimed to reduce the deficits of nation-building. Then new generations of activists launch patriotic upheavals to awaken the group's national conscience and receive a growing endorsement of their national political project. The process leads to a final stage, that not all the movements reach, when national identification has been widely spread throughout the different social classes and nurtures a mass movement, internally differentiated. This sequence reveals the fundamental role in the emergence of nationalist movements played by all sorts of literary activities, philological and historiographical research, interest in folklore or popular traditions, which, albeit politically meaningless at the beginning, provide the stuff upon which to build the group's national character and constitute the starting point of nation-building.

In his model of the evolution of national movements, Hroch combines three general groups of demands whose relative priority and timing vary in each case. Namely, the full deployment of a national culture, where a leading role is given to the local language through its use in public administration, the education, or the economy. Second, the rights and political institutions to support national self-government either of an independent state or within a state. And third, the creation of a full social structure in the nation. Of these three groups of demands, which correspond to the stages of the model, only the second addresses properly the issue of national self-government. Hence, if we were to focus mainly on it, we would miss the entire scenario of projects of the nationalist movements.

In particular, we may get a distorted vision of nationalist politics if, according to this principle of legitimacy, we take self-government, or the creation of a state, as the highest nationalist target. Accordingly, we might think that once this target

is accomplished, for example, if a nationalist movement reaches independence and gets to create its own state, then it would no longer make sense to be nationalist. We might arrive at a postnationalist stage through the success of nationalism and the fulfillment of its aims. But history teaches us otherwise ever since the formation of new European states at the end of the First World War to the recent state reconfiguration in the Balkans. Thus we cannot expect the extinction of nationalism after nation-building and the division of the political space along national lines. On the contrary, it is reasonable to expect its continuation, or even its increase, through the boost of nationalizing policies by the new independent state. We may detect here a lack of vision rather frequent in studies on nationalism, as many tend to interpret it as the cause for the creation of new states and the drawing of new frontiers. Actually what happens is that nationalism comes afterward and is a consequence of such changes.

Rogers Brubaker has demonstrated that nationalism is not only the cause, among other factors, of the dissolution of old multinational state, but also the outcome of this process that, under novel forms, keeps going ideologically and politically in the new states.⁶ It does not seem an irrelevant lesson that twice in the twentieth century the political map of Central and Eastern Europe has been massively redrawn along nationalist demands, without implying either the disappearance of nationalism or the solution to the national question in the zone.

If the studies of Brubaker represent a notorious advance toward the understanding of nationalism it is partly because of his analysis of the reconfiguration of national tensions after the nationalization of the political scene. Far from solving the national question, we are witnessing the emergence of the complex interaction of three antagonistic nationalisms: the *nationalizing* nationalism of the new independent states, a national minority that is left within the new state, and the nationalism across frontiers of what Brubaker calls "external national homeland"—a neighboring state politically interested in the fate of that ethnically kindred minority. Conflicts in the Balkans or tensions in the states successors to the Soviet Union can be best studied through this triadic model.

If we accept Brubaker's persuasive analysis and combine it with the three groups of nationalist demands distinguished by Hroch, it is easy to see that national self-government, or the creation of a state, is not the final point of nationalism. Nationalism always comes under the form of a politics destined to remedy the deficits of national life and remove the obstacles impeding its realization. The nationalist discourse, therefore, can be interpreted as a series of variations around the fundamental theme of the expression of grievance against oppression and a call to defend the nation's interests.⁷

National self-government is accordingly understood as the way to amend such shortcomings of national life deemed to be caused by past injustices and to protect the nation against the supposed threats hanging over it. These motives are argued by nationalism in search of a state, but after a state comes into existence

they still make sense. After independence it may be necessary to protect the national economy and foster the nation's own culture and language, thus achieving its hegemony in the different spheres of social life—or to complete the nation's social structure, thus avoiding the possibility that the relevant posts and positions are occupied by non-nationalists. Possible threats to national life may come from the existence of national minorities, immigration, foreign cultural influences, a weak record of local language, the investment of international capital, or the fact that a part of the territory or of the national population remains under the jurisdiction of another state—something that is viewed as constituting an amputation of the national body.

All these cases are deemed to represent a situation of weakness, injustice, or risk to the nation that should be amended or prevented. Accordingly, if all these variations of the nationalist theme share a common assumption, it is the belief in the value of a national life fully developed. This, in turn, explains the moral significance of the nation. Therefore, we should not focus the normative discussion of nationalism exclusively upon national self-government as a condition for political legitimacy, important as this may be. Nationalism, instead, should be regarded in more general terms as a response to the question, "What is the preferred setting, the most supportive environment, for the good life?"⁸ If there is an assumption, more or less explicit, in the nationalist discourse, it is the idea that the national community constitutes the needed framework within which its members can lead a good life—and as a consequence, any threat to the community's integrity turns out to be harmful to its members. This assumption, that closely binds the identity to the well-being of the members, performs a crucial role in the nationalist rhetoric, whose persuasive resources greatly depend on its viability.

Thus, a proper study of nationalism must give account of these cultural and moral aspects of membership and identity both in theoretical analyses and in normative discussions. Michael Ignatieff does this in his *Blood and Belonging*, where nationalism is defined as a political ideal, according to which the peoples of the world are divided into nations and each nation has either a legitimate claim to self-government or a right to self-determination. But nationalism is regarded as a cultural ideal that likewise holds the claim that the nation provides the most fundamental membership and identification groundwork for men and women.⁹ Also the justification for nationality by David Miller deals with it as the legitimate foundation for claims to self-government, but Miller adds two further conditions. The first is that national belonging is meaningful and relevant to the identity of individuals. And the second, that national communities draw frontiers that are morally significant, that is, they generate solidarity ties and normative expectations among their members.¹⁰

Therefore this moral or cultural dimension of nationalism, whose intellectual origins, according to Isaiah Berlin, can be traced back to Herder and the counter-

Enlightenment movement, are of great interest to our analysis. Berlin calls it "populism."¹¹ It stresses the idea of belonging, namely, what it entails to be a member of a national community and the way in which this condition confers meaning to the life of individuals, so that among the possible answers to the question of who we are, national identification stands out: I am French, Spanish, Irish, Flemish, Quebecois, or Catalan. In other words, the thesis gives special relevance to national identity among our ties and identifications and so takes the nation as the fundamental context for the life of people, their most achieved and significant social environment.

Its weight acknowledged, yet this thesis turns out quite vague regarding its meaning and normative consequences. Hence, it is possible to reconstruct this assumption of the nationalist discourse at least in two different ways—we'll call them the strong and the weak versions. To characterize the former, I will adapt the distinction between "typological thinking" and "population thinking" by the biologist Ernst Mayr, deemed to illustrate certain discussions around the evolution of the species that can be used productively in social philosophy. The weak version can be understood in terms of collective action and public goods, which offers a line of argumentation upon the protection of communitarian domains ("a context of choice," according to Kymlicka's rightful expression)¹² or shared cultural goods. For reasons of directedness, I will address below the former interpretation, toward which nationalist discourses tend generally to converge.

First, I would like to make a brief remark on the difficulties in identifying the reasons for nationalism. What is certain is that the reconstruction of certain assumptions in nationalist discourses entails a good dose of abstraction and simplification, which in turn move us away from the political contexts where such discourses take place. The problem is in that every nationalist discourse seems to argue its own reasons, depending on its particular historical situation as well as on specific social, political, and cultural circumstances. Given the variety of nationalist experiences, their local nature and the presumed singularity of their claims and circumstances, or their extraordinary eclectic nature that allow for the incorporation of arguments from the left and the right as well, we can legitimately doubt the existence of nationalist reasons in general. It is problematic to find an invariant core of nationalist discourses, that is, a set of arguments exclusively shared by all nationalists. One has the impression that a vague family resemblance barely exists, to use Wittgenstein's image, among them, and certainly nothing similar to a coherent doctrine.

In our case, we have difficulties with both interpretations. On the one hand, if we stick to the strong version, it hardly makes acceptable a rapprochement to liberalism. On the other hand, a weak version might be accepted even by non-nationalists. Herder himself, as quoted by Berlin, constitutes an eloquent example of this difficulty, as he is considered to be the intellectual parent both of nationalism and of cultural pluralism—a combination hard to sustain. Certainly he

conceived of humanity as divided into cultural communities and took them as the vital contexts of individuals. But if we take into account the political ideal of congruence between nation and state, then at least in this sense Herder cannot be considered a nationalist. Anyway, our aim is to catch the meaning of the nationalist thesis that assigns individuals to national groups, each one of them having a unique identity. Now, if we may agree upon a general definition of nationalism, this refers to the affirmation and custody of the nation and of national identity.

The Strong Interpretation: Typological Thinking versus Population Thinking

What is the meaning of "typological thinking" and what usage may it have to clarify the "populist" or nationalist thesis we have been dealing with? The contrast between typological and population thinking was introduced by the famous evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr to explain one of the greatest merits of Darwin's work. For Mayr, Darwin provided not only a huge set of empirical proofs in favor of evolution or an accurate mechanism to measure evolutionary change (natural selection), but he also decisively changed the view and the way of thinking of naturalists. Before Darwin, the traditional mode of interpreting the world had been to recognize, under the exuberant variability of nature, a limited number of types or fixed and immutable essentials.

Two aspects are especially worth pointing out, according to Mayr: first, that the typological thinking stresses the reality of types to the expense of the appearances of variability; and second, that there is no continuity among those types, for they are perfectly defined and neatly separated, so that there is no chance of gradual evolution among the species, as Darwin held.¹³

The genius conveyed by the author of the *Origin of Species* was to replace this traditional interpretation with what Mayr called "population thinking," which emphasizes the unique nature of every living organism. So, each one has singular features, which can be inherited by its successors, affecting its chances for survival and adjustment. Two innovative contributions can be pointed out here. First and foremost, the population thinking takes individual variations to be the main focus of attention. As a consequence, populations integrated by individual organisms can only be described collectively in statistical terms. But, furthermore, those populations are subject to continuous changes and variations, as their constituent members are, so that gradually they can generate new species. It is, thus, a complete reversal of the essentialist view: while it takes types or essentials to be real, and individuals only to the extent that they embody their groups' typical features, for the population view only the individuals are real, being the types' statistical averages, abstractions taken from populations in permanent change.

Mayr himself has pointed out the great advantages of this radical change of view, especially as it invalidated essentialism. The new methodology, insisting on the unique character of each individual belonging to a particular population, gave anthropologists a measurable tool of research that led very easily to empirical results.¹⁴

Now let us resume our argument. If we speak of nations instead of species, the contrast between typological and population thinking becomes apparent. Having in mind some formulations of the nationalist creed, we can recognize a close affinity to typological thinking. Thus, Kedourie condensed the core of the nationalist doctrine as stating that: 1) humankind is naturally divided into nations; 2) nations differ from each other as to certain features objectively verifiable; and 3) national self-government is the condition for political legitimacy.¹⁵

As we have said above, we are not interested in this last normative principle, but in the first two principles, which would come to reflect the social ontology of nationalism. Indeed, a number of objections can be put forward, as argued by authors who depict the modernity of nationalism: there is nothing natural in nations; the differences appealed to by nationalists turn out to be meaningful only in specific social contexts, when they are not deliberately distorted or invented; and the account of those differential features is open to an endless casuistry, inevitably partial, selective, and debatable.

But it is undeniable that nationalists firmly believe in the existence of nations and that men are grouped in national communities, which are deemed to have a special status among the various forms of human association. As argued above, the nationalist sees the nation as providing the social context best fitted to facilitate the members of that nation's life options, the framework including other forms of association. But now, the point is to remark how this social ontology of nationalism, as formulated by Kedourie, comprises a typological view, as it comes to represent the human world structured into separated, distinct nations (internally compact, self-contained within absolute borders.) Hence, each individual has a single nationality according to the features that define their membership in nations.

As Mayr explains, whoever thinks in typological terms as per race, assumes that each representative of a given race exhibits its characteristic features and differentiates herself or himself from individuals of other races according to their different conformity to their own types. Yet isn't this view too rough and unreal? Isn't it too unlikely, because of its extreme nature, in order for nationalists to recognize themselves in it? The fact that we have used terms of evolutionary biology, in referring to species, does not imply that we are focusing our analysis of ethnic nationalism in the strictest and most devalued sense. On the contrary, the most relevant issue raised by the distinction typological-population concerns the very ideas of nation and nationality.

For typological thinking appears basically in the substantialist or holistic

conception of the nation, that confers entity and existence of its own to this kind of social aggregate. In general, nationalist discourses speak of the nation as something that transcends individuals, a real collective entity lasting over generations and time that eventually becomes the active subject of history, endowed with personality and interests of its own. For instance, it is enough to listen to how Basque nationalists speak of *Euskal Herria* (the Basque Fatherland) or the Basque People (with capital letters) as constituting something substantially different from the Basque citizens to corroborate that this conception of the nation is profoundly rooted and is something more than a question of words. This should not be surprising, given the continuous influence of nationalist historiography since the nineteenth century focused on the history of nations, or if we take into account, for example, that Durkheim, the distinguished sociologist, never had trouble arguing that France's identity and personality were one and the same from the Middle Ages to his own time.¹⁶

The problem is that this reified or typological conception of nationalism influences far beyond nationalist circles many studies on nationalism, that take for granted the existence of nations. Brubaker has vigorously pointed out this tacit assumption of nationalist social ontology in the debates on nationalism and the national question: "Most discussions of nationhood are discussions of *nations*. Nations are understood as real entities, as communities, as substantial, enduring collectivities. *That* they exist is taken for granted, although *how* they exist—and how they came to exist—is much disputed."¹⁷

Certainly, many of those debates have addressed the modernity of nationalism or its premodern roots, simply assuming the real existence of nations. So, when presuming that the world is divided into nations, a strong ontological compromise is taken that inevitably vitiates the whole discussion. As Brubaker suggests, special attention should be paid not to inadvertently introduce nationalist beliefs in the theories on nationalism, thus giving them theoretical endorsement. For "group realism," in Brubaker's terms, stains the discourse on the nation and so causes a confusion between "categories of practice" and "categories of analysis." The 'nation' is the category around which the discourse and the political action of nationalists is organized and, accordingly, it is necessary to analyze its usage by nationalists, without inferring acritically its existence.¹⁸

The population thinking, instead, reorients our understanding of the national question in terms of methodological individualism. It draws our attention toward the languages through which individuals interpret the social world, its interactive structures and institutions, but restrains us from giving a substantive existence to certain social aggregates or from taking them as the terms of our explanation. Furthermore, they present another advantage. To explain it, I would like to use the famous and revealing image by which Gellner described the transition from the agrarian to the modern world that produced the cultural homogenization of the political spaces: while the former looks like a picture by Kokoschka, multicolored

and chaotic, the latter looks like a Modigliani, a surface distributed in different color stains internally homogeneous in neatly delimited figures.¹⁹

Putting aside Gellner's functionalist interpretation, I suspect that the vision à la Modigliani of compact sets and divisory lines unequivocally drawn, like the old maps, has an irresistible attraction for nationalists, precisely because of their leaning toward viewing the world from a typological standpoint. However, it is an optical illusion, as we hardly find that homogeneous color and division in real human societies. Again, from the population thinking point of view, reality looks more like a pointillist picture. When we see it close up, we discover thousands of small points of varying chromatic tones, instead of big stains or discontinuous leaps from one color to another.

Obviously, if the substitution of population thinking for typological thinking puts into doubt the way of representing national communities, it also changes the terms defining national membership and identity. Its advantage has to do with the skepticism toward the attempts to classify individuals along typological categories or to define them according to typical features. That way, if there is no archetype individuals must copy to become what they are, as their features are simply the result of statistical averages, then membership criteria tend to loosen. In other words, if we pay attention to the real identities of individuals, complex and varied as they are, we should then abandon any pretention of imposing on them a categorical identity along with their membership.

The concept of "categorical identity," introduced by Craig Calhoun, is interesting to this respect because it allows us to catch the ambiguities of the modern representation of nationality and ethnicity, as well as their dependence on typological thinking. Calhoun establishes a strong contrast between the way of representing membership in premodern and modern societies: in the latter, social groups are understood as sets of equal persons, instead of complex interweavings of social positions or relations networks. That entails many important things: a sense of direct and symmetrical membership, in place of indirect and hierarchical-mediated belonging. We associate it to the ideas of nation and nationality, where now participation does not come from the integration of local units into bigger ones, but from the individuals themselves.

At the same time, it has the effect of assigning a categorical identity, and not a relational one, to the individuals of the group, meaning a series of ethnocultural features shared by its members. This has been corroborated by anthropologists like Clifford Geertz when he explains the formation among African and Asian societies of "generalized ethnic blocs" nationwide: "A simple, coherent, broadly defined ethnic structure, such as is found in most industrial societies, is not an undissolved residue of traditionalism but an earmark of modernity."²⁰ An ethnic or national group then appears as a limited set of individuals, whose ties are defined more in terms of resemblance or common features than by certain types of relations. As Calhoun remarks, this opens the door to every kind of pressure

toward the conformity and normalization of individuals, so that they become fixed in the national type.²¹ In other words, the categorical character of national identity implies necessarily the idea that there exists a correct way of being a member of the nation. I do not think it is necessary to emphasize the risky consequences we all know may come from nurturing such expectations of correct identities.

Nationalism and Beyond

I cannot ensure that typological thinking acts as a necessary condition of every nationalism, although it is easy to see how the nationalist rhetoric shows a worrying proclivity to do so. The tendency may be more or less accentuated in each case, but it is present in nationalist discourses of all sorts, which assume the existence of the nation and assign a categorical identity to individuals according to their membership of the nation. Albeit I have tried to keep some distance, my experience as an informal observer for the past fifteen years of the political discussions on the national question in Spain leads me to think that a close affinity exists between typological thinking and the social ontology that constitutes the background to nationalist discourses and politics. This becomes apparent in many ways, but here I will focus on three aspects to illustrate the affinity.

To begin with, there is no doubt that behind the nationalist discourse, formerly the Spanish, now mainly the Catalan and the Basque, lies a substantialist conception of the nation, deemed as a collective entity lasting over time. The debates usually adopt a bias clearly ontological, as if the fundamental issue were which nations are state-nations: whether there is a Spanish nation, coexistent to the state, or different nations living inside the same state—a condition entailing their legitimate aspiration to national self-government or to independence. If in the past the Spanish nationalism denied the national reality of Catalonia or the Basque Country, today it is the nationalists of these communities who deny that Spain is a nation. So, given that their national projects are antagonistic, all share similar ontological assumptions concerning the existence of nations as historical entities. It seems as if, once the reality of a nation is established (which the nationalist takes as an irrefutable fact), the task that remains consists of deducing the political consequences of that fact. Because of the importance given by nationalists to the ontological affirmation of the nation, it can be fairly said that their discourse on national self-determination hides another on national pre-determination.

This becomes apparent in the declarations by nationalist parties that foster the recognition of the state's national plurality, as launched for example by the Barcelona Declaration of 1999. But they interpret this multinational nature as a picture by Modigliani, to resume Gellner's image, defined by the existence within a territorial state of two or more communities internally compact and well delimited. The contrast between the typological and the population views reminds

us, rather, that there exists another way of describing diversity—one underlining the differences among individuals, instead of national communities. So we have citizens, and not nations, with varying sentiments of membership and identification. The difference lies in that the nationalist view recognizes and encourages pluralism within the framework of the state, but minimizes or suppresses it in the national community; whereas the second view makes no such distinctions and fosters the recognition of pluralism not only in Spain but also in Catalonia or the Basque Country, where the identifications of the citizens are plural, complex, nuanced, and changing.

This difference leads us to the other dimension of typological thinking, which closely binds the social ontology of nationalism to the assignment of a categorical identity to the members of the nation. This tendency is perceived with great clarity in the debates about languages: the fact that more than 75 percent of the Basques have Spanish as their mother tongue and speak it usually does not refrain Basque nationalists from declaring *euskera* as the genuine language of the country and impose the obligation to know it. It constitutes something akin to the Irish nationalists' attempts (as described by Joyce in his stories)²² to revive Gaelic, designated to be the true language of Ireland, although the immense majority of the island's inhabitants, the nationalists included, speak English. As Conor Cruise O'Brien has pointed out, it is surprising, except for a nationalist, that the Irish Constitution of 1937 defines Irish as the first official language of the country, whereas English constitutes the language most used by the Irish in their everyday life.²³ These are examples of the categorical imposition of a fictitious identity that generates unreal expectations about what it means to be a good Basque or a good Irish, or about such essentialist claims that justify policies of linguistic or cultural normalization.

The third sign of the support and influence of typological thinking has to do with the claim that the sentiments of membership and identification of real people fit unambiguously within distinct categories. In the case of Basque nationalism, it is well known that one of its foundational dogmas, as formulated by Sabino Arana at the end of the nineteenth century, refers to the radical antagonism between being Basque and being Spanish. Despite the fact that, according to the polls, only a minority of the real Basques opt exclusively for one option or the other, while the great majority combine both identities in varying degrees, Basque nationalists hold the essentialist assumption of a fixed and excluding Basque identity. Also a Catalan nationalist leader some years ago expressed his grief for the "patriotic bigamy" of many of his fellow citizens, precisely because one can only belong to a nation and this requires an exclusive identification.²⁴ There is no better proof, coming from a moderate and democratic nationalism as the Catalan is, of the nationalist resistance to recognizing the real identities of the individuals, with their nuances and ambiguities, and of its claim to interpret them in terms of fixed, excluding categorical identities—a typological claim that mutilates the

identities, plural and complex as they are.

We can now resume the initial question: Beyond nationalism? A condition to think of a postnationalist scenario consists of getting out of the typological view of the social world, so cherished by nationalists. That means changing our way of thinking about nationalism, nations, and national identities; and, particularly, about the relations we establish between nationalism and nationality. Gellner's suggestion of reversing the usual view in discussions of nationalism becomes especially relevant: so instead of adopting the view in terms of the nation or the national identity, we should adopt the reverse view. As nationalism declares itself to be at the service of the nation (a political action aimed to amend the shortcomings of national life), this reversal opens a quite different perspective.

It seems highly recommendable to abandon the imagined conception of the nation and its correlate, namely, the essentialist definition of national identity—an inescapable condition for a postnationalist scenario. But this suggestion should be applied to the theoretical understanding of nationalism and to the normative discussions on the national question. Briefly, the study of nationalism does not need to assume a nationalist social ontology. To use Brubaker's words, we should discuss nationalism in leaving for nationalists the belief in the nation and in categorical national identities. That would redound to the benefit of a more sophisticated analysis of nationalism: "We should think about nations," argues Brubaker, "not as substance but as institutionalized form, not as collectivity but as practical category, not as entity but as contingent event."²⁵

Notes

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8. M. Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," in *Theorizing Citizenship*, ed. R. Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 154.
9. M. Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 3.
10. D. Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 10-11.

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12. W. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
13. E. Mayr, "Typological versus Population Thinking" (1959), in *Conceptual Issues in Evolutionary Biology*, ed. E. Sober (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1984), 14-17; *Una larga controversia: Darwin y el darwinismo* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1992). My attention to this distinction was drawn by the paper by J. A. Rivera "Contingencia y narratividad. 2. Mecanismos de autorrefuerzo," *Claves de Razón Práctica* 84 (1998): 37-45.
14. E. Mayr, *Así es la biología* (Madrid: Debate, 1998), 248.
15. E. Kedourie, *Nationalism* (New York: Praeger, 1960), 9.
16. E. Durkheim *L'éducation morale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), 53: "Entre la France d'aujourd'hui et la France d'autrefois, il y a des différences, sans doute, mais ce sont, pour ainsi dire, des différences d'âge . . . Et, pourtant, entre la France actuelle et celle du Moyen Age, il y a une identité personnelle que nul ne peut songer à méconnaître."
17. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 13.
18. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 5.
19. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 139-40.
20. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 308.
21. C. Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology* 19 (1993): 230-31.
22. J. Joyce, "The Dead," in *Dubliners* (London: Penguin, 1992).
23. C. C. O'Brien, *Ancestral Voices: Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 85-87.
24. J. Triadó i Vila-Abadal, "Catalunya, nació plural," *El País*, 26 October 1996.
25. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 18.

Chapter 4

Nations within Nations—Nationalism and Identity Politics

Tuija Pulkkinen

From present political disputes it is readily concluded that discourse on nation is not merely confined to the context of nation-states. Much of the political action that today falls under the name of identity politics, that is politics in terms of gender, sexual orientation, or race in the name of minorities (or underprivileged majorities as in the case of women as identity) is literally phrased in term of "nations."¹ In this chapter I will argue that as a pattern of political thought identity-politics also bears a close relationship to what is historically understood as nationalism, and therefore can be judged as to its positive and negative effects with similar concerns that hold for the earlier political thought in terms of "nations."

However, I would like to underscore that in making this statement, close attention must be paid to varieties of nationalism in the past. The "nation" as a form of thought in connection with identity-politics has, I will argue, only a weak connection to the polity concept of nation that is most prevalent in the history of the western part of Europe and the United States, but rather is much more closely connected to the concept of nation that was defined in cultural terms and then developed into a political idea in which the ethnic and political ideas merged in Eastern Central Europe in the nineteenth century. In opposition to those who in the contemporary discussion seek to form a new polished concept of nationalism transcending the divergence of ethnic and civic thought,² I find the profound