

The Limits of Nationalism

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1 Nationalist ideologies – a normative typology

Cultural nationalism and statist nationalism

The terms ‘socialism’, ‘liberalism’ and ‘conservatism’ have been said to be ‘like surnames and the theories, principles and parties that share one of these names often do not have much more in common with one another than the members of a widely extended family’.¹ The term ‘nationalism’ is even more complex, for it is the surname not only of one family of ideas, but of two. One family is that of *statist nationalism*. According to this type of nationalism, in order for states to realize political values such as democracy, economic welfare and distributive justice, the citizenries of states must share a homogeneous national culture. It must be noted that the values in question do not derive from specific national cultures. Nor are they aimed at their protection. The second family is that of *cultural nationalism*. According to this nationalism, members of groups sharing a common history and societal culture have a fundamental, morally significant interest in adhering to their culture and in sustaining it across generations. This interest warrants the protection of states. The two families of nationalism share a common name, and there are cases, as we shall see below, in which members of both families were or could have been happily married. Yet, their genealogies, at least their philosophical-normative genealogies, do not share one common origin. Within statist nationalism, the national culture is the means, and the values of the state are the aims. Within cultural nationalism, however, the national culture is the aim, and the state is the means. Moreover, within statist nationalism, as I shall further clarify below, any national culture, not necessarily the national culture of the states’ citizenries or a part of their citizenries, could in principle be the means for realizing the political values of the state. Within cultural nationalism, on the other hand, states are the means or the providers of the means for preserving the specific national cultures of their citizenry or parts thereof.

¹ Jeremy Waldron, ‘Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism’, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 37 (1987), 127–50.

The nationalism I have here called *statist* expresses the normative essence of a nationalism that historians and sociologists call *territorial-civic*, while the type of nationalism I have here termed *cultural* expresses the normative essence of the type of nationalism that historians and sociologists call *ethnocultural*. The historian Hans Kohn, who was the first to make this distinction in the literature after World War II, characterized the territorial-civic nationalism as ‘predominantly a political movement to limit governmental power and to secure civic rights’.² Kohn claimed that ‘its purpose was to create a liberal and rational civil society representing the middle-class . . .’.³ He argued that it developed mainly in the advanced countries of the West, England, the United States and France, during the age of Enlightenment. According to Kohn, ethnocultural nationalism was characteristic of less advanced countries, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe (but also in Spain and Ireland). Because the middle class of these countries was weak, he claimed that nationalism in these countries was less political and more cultural. It was ‘the dream and hope of scholars and poets’,⁴ a dream and hope that was based on past heritage and ancient traditions. Unlike the nationalism of the advanced West, which was inspired by the legal and rational concept of citizenship, the nationalism of Central and Eastern Europe was inspired by imagination and emotions, and by the unconscious development of the *Volk* and its primordial and atavistic spirit. Kohn believed that the ethnocultural nationalism of the Eastern European countries was a reaction of the elites of underdeveloped societies to the territorial-civic nationalism of the advanced societies of the West. A dichotomy similar to that between ethnocultural nationalism and territorial-civic nationalism, that was adopted by many scholars after Kohn,⁵ was also used much earlier, for example, by Marx and Engels in their accounts of the nineteenth-century nationalist movements. In order to express their attitude towards these movements, they used Hegel’s

² Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1955), pp. 29–30.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 29. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵ While criticizing some of its details and developing it. See Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1986); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 80–4; Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 177–80; John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 12–49, 30–6. Hutchinson calls civic nationalism ‘political’. Deutsch suggests an analogous distinction between patriotism and nationalism: ‘Patriotism appeals to all residents of a country, regardless of their ethnic background. Nationalism appeals to all members of an ethnic group, regardless of their country of residence.’ See Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, MA: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1953), p. 232.

distinction between historical nations and non-historical nationalities. The former, the main manifestations of which are England and France, were led by strong middle classes which aspired and were able to bring about the cultural unity which is required for consolidating the conditions for capitalism. The latter, the main examples of which are the national movements of the southern Slavs, lack a strong middle class. Marx and Engels believed that the fact that such nationalities insisted on not assimilating played a reactionary role, because it impeded the transition to capitalism, which they considered a necessary stage in the progress of history.⁶

In making the distinction between territorial-civic nationalism and ethnocultural nationalism, Kohn and other historians and sociologists have mixed geographical, sociological, judgemental and normative parameters. Territorial-civic nationalism is Western and ethnocultural nationalism is Eastern. The former involves a strong middle class whereas the latter involves intellectuals operating in a society whose middle class is weak or which lacks a middle class. The former is progressive and is inspired by the legal and rational concept of citizenship while the latter is regressive and is inspired by the *Volk's* unconscious development. How should the normative essence of this multidisciplinary distinction be interpreted? An attempt to answer this question has recently been undertaken by the editors of a collection of essays called *Rethinking Nationalism*.⁷ They characterize territorial-civic nationalism as a type of nationalism within which 'individuals give themselves a state, and the state is what binds together the nation... That concept of nation is subjective since it emphasizes the will of individuals. And it is individualistic since the nation is nothing over and above willing *individuals*.'⁸ Voluntarism, subjectivism and individualism thus characterize this type of nationalism. Ethnocultural nationalism, which the editors choose to call *ethnic* rather than *ethnocultural*, is based on a conception of the nation as the product of objective facts pertaining to social life. These facts are that members of the nation share a common language, culture and tradition. In this type of nationalism, the nation exists prior to the state. It is also a collective that transcends and is prior to the individuals of which it consists. Objectivism, collectivism and a lack of individual choice characterize this form of nationalism.

⁶ Ephraim Nimni, *Marxism and Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1991), chap. 1.

⁷ Michel Seymour, with the collaboration of Jocelyne Couture and Kai Nielsen, 'Introduction: Questioning the Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy', in Jocelyne Couture, Kai Nielsen and Michel Seymour (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism* (University of Calgary Press, 1998), pp. 1–61.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

If this formulation of the distinction is meant to convey its normative essence, and if it attempts to represent the basic principles of each family of nationalism at a level of abstraction that allows them to include their many different and peculiar descendants, then it seems to fail. The fact that the editors of *Rethinking Nationalism* have chosen to call the nationalism which historians called ethnocultural *ethnic* without the further qualification of *cultural* means that they regard common descent, or the myth of common descent (as opposed to a shared history, language and culture) as the most important component of this nationalism. This is because common descent (or a myth of common descent) is an essential characteristic of ethnic groups but not of national groups which only share a common language, religion, customs, history or ties with a particular territory (none of which is necessary).⁹ Many movements of cultural nationalism did indeed grant the myth of common descent an important practical role in their agendas. This perhaps justifies calling the present nationalism 'ethnic' for purposes of historical classification. However, from the viewpoint of the normative classification, ethnicity certainly need not be the focal point of this type of nationalism. This is the case particularly if one describes the nationalism introduced by Herder, as the editors of *Rethinking Nationalism* do,¹⁰ as ascribing importance to people's belonging to groups that share language, culture and traditions.¹¹ For then it is language, culture and traditions, and not common descent, which are the focal point of this type of nationalism. Similar criticism can be directed at the characterization of cultural nationalism as a nationalism that takes nations to ontologically precede their members. The editors of *Rethinking Nationalism* here attribute to the whole family a trait which characterizes only some of its members. It

⁹ According to Max Weber, ethnic groups are defined by means of a myth of common descent. According to him these groups are 'those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent . . .' (Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, eds. G. Roth and C. Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), p. 389). In this definition, the original meaning of the notion of an ethnic group, which according to Walker Connor is 'a group characterized by common descent' becomes a matter of subjective belief. Connor criticizes authors who used the concept of ethnicity in a broader and less accurate sense (Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 100–3). Anthony D. Smith also acknowledges the loose meaning that ethnicity has acquired in the writings of some recent writers, but says that the myth of common descent is the *sine qua non* of ethnicity (Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 24). It is a necessary feature of ethnic groups that does not necessarily characterize national groups. (Both immigrant nations such as the United States or Canada and non-immigrant nations such as Great Britain exemplify this.) Thus, ethnic nationalism means a nationalism that grants common descent a central role in its agenda.

¹⁰ Seymour, Couture and Nielsen, 'Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy', p. 3.

¹¹ F. M. Barnard (trans. and ed.), *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1969).

is doubtful whether the prophets of cultural nationalism were all aware of the question of whether nations precede their members or vice versa, either morally or ontologically.¹² The editors of the collection themselves mention some contemporary writers whom they take to be advocates of cultural nationalism who hold the opposite view, namely, that at least morally, individuals are prior to their nations.¹³

The way the editors of *Rethinking Nationalism* represent the philosophical essence of territorial-civic nationalism suffers from similar drawbacks. The editors chose Ernest Renan to represent the principles of civic nationalism. Renan emphasizes that nations are a matter of 'daily plebiscite'. Yet, as the editors note, Renan himself thought that nations are also 'legacies of remembrances'.¹⁴ This point is of great importance, because it stresses the central role which culture has in civic nationalism. Some contemporary writers, the most prominent among them being Jürgen Habermas, argue for an entirely non-cultural and purely civic conception of political communities. According to him, all that citizenries of states need to share is loyalty to a set of political and constitutional principles.¹⁵ As long as this is intended to specify one possible conception of the social cohesion of states' citizenries, I would concur.¹⁶ However, some writers identify this conception of social cohesion with civic nationalism.¹⁷ They speak of civic nationalism as if it were exhausted by loyalty to a set of political principles. Habermas himself could be viewed as lending support to this usage by proposing to interpret German identity after the reunification of the Federal Republic with East Germany on the basis of such loyalty. Moreover, he suggests justifying this reunification not on the basis of restoring 'the pre-political unity of a community with a shared historical destiny', but on the basis of restoring 'democracy and a constitutional state in a territory where civil rights had been suspended . . . since 1933'.¹⁸ Bernard Yack comments that the latter justification of the reunification of West and East Germany would have applied with equal force

¹² For example, I doubt whether Ahad Ha'am, the father of 'spiritual Zionism' thought about this matter.

¹³ Specifically, they mentioned Tamir and Kymlicka. Seymour, Couture and Nielsen, 'Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy', sections 5 and 6.

¹⁴ Seymour, Couture and Nielsen, 'Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy', p. 3.

¹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, 'Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe', in Ronald Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing Citizenship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 255–81.

¹⁶ See Chapter 3, pp. 91–6, below.

¹⁷ Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1993), p. 6.

¹⁸ Habermas, 'Citizenship and National Identity', p. 256. See also Seymour, Couture and Nielsen, 'Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy', p. 26; Bernard Yack, 'The Myth of the Civic Nation', in Ronald Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing Nationalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 107–8.

to a possible unification of the Federal Republic with Czechoslovakia or Poland.¹⁹ Without resorting to common culture and history, loyalty to common political principles cannot be considered nationalism, not even civic nationalism. This is demonstrated by the French and British nationalisms which are the historical paradigms of civic nationalism. These states did not merely attempt to inculcate constitutional principles, but have insisted that their citizenries, who already shared a common religion, should also share further complex cultural contours, such as language, tradition and a sense of common history and destiny.²⁰

As we shall see below, the philosophical rationale of civic nationalism also implies the need to instil in citizenries of states a pervasive common culture, and not merely a constitutional culture. However, ideas of the sort expressed by Habermas, according to which the loyalty of the members of political communities to constitutional principles is sufficient for applying to them concepts which are typically associated with nationalism, were expressed as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. When they spoke of patriotism and love of one's country, many thinkers then did not necessarily refer to communities sharing specific cultures and/or territories, but rather to specific sets of political ideals. 'Patriotism is the affection that a people feel for their country understood not as native soil, but as a community of free men living together for the common good', says Maurizio Viroli when discussing the principle of patriotism as understood by Shaftesbury at the beginning of the eighteenth century, following a similar interpretation expressed by Milton in the middle of the seventeenth century.²¹ However, this sort of republican patriotism, which is a form of patriotism without any cultural content, the sources of which can be found in the ancient world²² and to which Habermas

¹⁹ Yack, 'Myth of Civic Nation', p. 108. See also Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 175: 'the very story of unification seems to indicate that to be German meant something else beyond allegiance to political ideals'.

²⁰ On Britain see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). On France see Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1976). Some writers believe that the US nationalism consists in loyalty to certain constitutional principles and nothing else. See: Viroli, *For Love of Country*, pp. 178–82; Paul Gilbert, *The Philosophy of Nationalism* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), p. 8. However, other writers believe otherwise. See: Smith, *National Identity*, pp. 149–50; M. Lind, *The Next American Nation* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

²¹ Viroli, *For Love of Country*, p. 57. Viroli discusses Shaftesbury in pp. 57–60, and Milton in pp. 52–6.

²² Viroli, *For Love of Country*, especially chaps. 1 and 3; Charles Taylor, *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on Canadian Federalism and Nationalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 41–2; Charles Taylor, 'Nationalism and Modernity', in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (eds.), *The Morality of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 40–1.

wishes to return, proved to lack sufficient appeal during the last few centuries. Rousseau believed it was impossible without cultural unity.²³ At the end of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, the belief in the necessity of cultural unity as a condition for the realization of political goals and values became prominent, both among political thinkers and political activists.²⁴ This unity was sometimes achieved by establishing states around groups which already enjoyed such unity. However, it was quite often achieved by assimilating culturally distinct populations. Such assimilation was in many cases brought about by methods which were far from civil and for which politicians could draw support from the writings of political thinkers.²⁵

These far from civil methods with which civic nationalism was implemented brings us to another problematic characteristic which the editors of *Rethinking Nationalism* attribute to territorial-civic nationalism. They characterize this nationalism as based on the free will of the individuals who comprise the state's population. However, it is not true that all the historical instances of civic nationalism, namely, those in which the state preceded the nation, were based on the voluntary acceptance of the national culture by all the individuals living in these states. Furthermore, in many cases, states attempted to force individuals and groups to assimilate into the majority. For example, in France at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, individuals were not asked whether they accepted French culture. The United States and Australia tried to force their respective aboriginal populations that had survived genocide to assimilate into the majority. Turkey has also recently attempted to do this to its Kurd population, as have post-colonial African states with respect to their populations.²⁶ Moreover, the practices under discussion were not only adopted by states that are identified with civic nationalism but were also justified by many thinkers who could be associated with this type of nationalism.²⁷

²³ Michael Walzer holds this view. According to him republican patriotism and political participation 'were the political expression of a homogeneous people' and 'rested and could only rest on social, religious and cultural unity' (Viroli, *For Love of Country*, p. 85).

²⁴ See the Neapolitan thinkers mentioned in Viroli, *For Love of Country*, pp. 108ff.; James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 161–2 about J.S. Mill and Lord Durham; Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, chap. 6; Smith, *National Identity*, pp. 40–1.

²⁵ I already mentioned Mill in the previous note. Some texts by Hobbes and Locke could also be interpreted as implying some support for such methods (Tully, *Strange Multiplicity*, pp. 89–91).

²⁶ See Smith, *National Identity*, p. 41.

²⁷ Viroli, *For Love of Country*, pp. 85, 108ff.; Tully, *Strange Multiplicity*, pp. 161–2; Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, chap. 6; Smith, *National Identity*, pp. 40–1; Will Kymlicka,

In contrast to other ideologies such as socialism and liberalism, one of the main sources of difficulty in characterizing the essence of both kinds of nationalism is the scant philosophical treatment it has received compared to the enormous extent of its political influence. As Benedict Anderson observed, ‘unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers’.²⁸ Isaiah Berlin made similar observations.²⁹ The difficulty of abstracting the tenets of nationalism is aggravated by the multitude of concrete historical manifestations of nationalist movements. An abstraction of the tenets of nationalism should not be completely divorced from these historical manifestations.

A second difficulty in abstracting the essence of both kinds of nationalism is moral. Great evils and atrocities have been committed in the name of liberal and socialist ideals, but their scope and intensity do not equal the evils and crimes that have been committed in the name of nationalist ideals. An abstraction of the tenets of nationalism based only on the texts of nationalist writers risks ignoring this particular fact about nationalism as a historical and social phenomenon. However, despite these difficulties, it seems to me that it is both possible and desirable to abstract tenets of nationalism from texts and from history that could but need not necessarily lead to its monstrous manifestations. In order to interpret the dichotomy between civic and cultural nationalism as a normative dichotomy sufficiently abstract to apply to many specific historical cases of nationalist movements and positions, it ought to be regarded as a distinction between the two positions presented at the beginning of this chapter. According to one position, the citizenries of any given state must share a homogeneous national culture in order for each state to realize political values such as democracy, economic welfare and distributive justice. According to the second position, members of groups sharing a common history and societal culture have a fundamental, morally significant interest in adhering to their culture and in sustaining it across generations.

Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 49–74; Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 206–19. Kymlicka mentions Mill, Durham and Marx as thinkers who believed that people belonging to cultural minorities should be forced to assimilate.

²⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition (London: Verso, 1991), p. 5; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 124; Ronald S. Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing Nationalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 2, 3, 17.

²⁹ Though his complaints refer not so much to the fact that nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers, but rather to the fact that no grand thinker of the nineteenth century predicted its powerful role in twentieth-century history and politics. Isaiah Berlin, ‘Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power’, in Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Viking Press, 1980), p. 337.

The first position, according to which a common national culture is a condition or means for the realization of political values which neither derive from national cultures nor are intended for their protection, should be called *statist* nationalism rather than *civic*. This might help to eliminate the positive connotation of the term *civic nationalism* and would perhaps highlight the fact that the process of the national homogenization of the respective populations of nation-states has not always been justified by liberal values and has often been carried out in ways that are far from civil. With regard to the second position, I would like to suggest that it be called *cultural* nationalism rather than *ethnic*, despite the fact that in most cases, both in its historical manifestations and its philosophical versions, there are elements that pertain to ethnicity.³⁰ The term *cultural* would, first, serve to discard the negative connotation of the term *ethnic nationalism*. However, this form of nationalism should be called *cultural* first and foremost because any serious justifications for it focus primarily on the culture and history of the group in question. Common descent often goes together with a shared culture and history but may not be required. As noted above, however, in many cases in which cultural nationalism was historically realized, common descent turned out to be the main focus of attention. Yet this does not constitute a sufficient reason to make it the central characteristic of the class from the normative point of view.

The social and historical phenomena of civic and cultural nationalisms prompted and influenced one another. Sociologists, anthropologists and historians are divided as to which of the two preceded the other. Some scholars believe that civic nationalism came first, and was the main factor in awakening ethnocultural nationalism. Others claim that the historical process occurred in the reverse order.³¹ If either of these positions is correct, then from the historical and sociological viewpoint both nationalisms share not just a name but also their origin. However, the interpretations I have offered here show why, from the normative point of view, there are in effect two different families of nationalism rather than one. Cultural nationalism, according to which members of national groups have a morally significant interest in adhering to their culture and preserving it for generations, is not concerned with how a national culture can contribute to the realization of the state's values but rather with the support which states should extend to national cultures. Statist nationalism, according to which citizenries of states must share a homogeneous national culture in order for their states to realize political values, is not concerned with the support which states should extend to national cultures.

³⁰ See also pp. 26–9 below and Chapter 2 note 27.

³¹ Seymour, Couture and Nielsen, 'Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy', pp. 10–23.

Rather, it is concerned with the support which national cultures should extend to states. It is important to emphasize that calling the one type of nationalism ‘cultural’, and the other nationalism ‘statist’, does not mean that cultural nationalism is a-political, and that statist nationalism is a-cultural. Cultural nationalism is political, for it seeks political protection for national cultures. Statist nationalism is cultural, for as noted earlier with regard to civic nationalism, it requires that citizenries of states share not merely a set of political principles, but also a common language, tradition and a sense of common history. In other words, the difference between statist and cultural nationalism is not due to the fact that the former is purely political and the latter is purely cultural but rather because of their entirely different normative and practical concerns. The goal of cultural nationalism is for people to adhere to their culture. The state is a means for achieving this purpose. Statist nationalism differs in that the national culture is the means, while the realization of political values that do not have anything to do with particular national cultures is the goal. As noted above, statist nationalism could attempt to instil *a common national culture*, whether it is the culture of the citizens of the state or not. For in accordance with the logic of statist nationalism, if a common national culture is important as a means of enabling everyone’s participation in government, in assuring everyone their fair share and in fostering everyone’s economic welfare, then it is not important *which* national culture ultimately becomes the common culture. Of course, the culture of the majority of the state’s citizens would normally be chosen as the common national culture. However, this is not because the majority has an interest in adhering to its own culture, but rather because, *ceteris paribus*, it is more efficient that the majority’s culture be chosen as the one to serve the ends of the state. (However, if, for example, the minority in the state speaks a language used globally which serves as the language of science and technology and international communications, and the majority happens to speak a local and esoteric language, then it might be best for the state to organize itself around the minority culture).³²

If the map of the world’s states corresponded to that of its peoples, or if such correspondence could easily be achieved, then distinguishing between the two forms of nationalism would be of theoretical importance only and would have no practical urgency. The two types of nationalism

³² This is in line with Mill who argues that assimilation is generally worthwhile for minorities who are members of ‘one of the backward parts of the human race’. J. S. Mill, ‘Representative Government’, in Geraint Williams (ed.), *Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Considerations on Representative Government, Remarks on Bentham’s Philosophy* (London: Dent, 1993), chap. 16. If this is valid with respect to minorities, it must also be valid for majority groups. See David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 86.

would complement one another. The state would satisfy the desire of all its citizens to adhere to their common national culture and would protect this culture. Similarly, the common national culture of all its citizens would benefit the state in its efforts to implement the values of self-rule, distributive justice and solidarity. This is possible, for example, in Iceland. The state of Iceland can serve all its citizens who wish to adhere to their culture and preserve it for generations, for all its citizens share one culture. At the same time, Icelandic culture can serve the state in implementing its values, for it is the only culture in that country. However, Iceland is a rare exception. The two maps, namely, that of the states of the world and that of its peoples, do not correspond in most cases. This adds practical urgency to the distinction between statist and cultural nationalism. Due to the current geodemographic conditions in most parts of the world these two types of nationalism are bound to clash, each impeding the realization of the other. On the one hand, in most places, statist nationalism has been interpreted as requiring the engagement of the state in 'nation-building', whereby many people must relinquish their own culture. In effect, this entails acting against cultural nationalism. On the other hand, acting in the name of cultural nationalism has been interpreted by many states as requiring them to assist the various cultures of their citizens and to relinquish the ideal of cultural homogeneity in the state, which, of course, counters statist nationalism. Regardless of whether it is the first route or the second that should be taken, and of whether some kind of compromise between the two should be found, it must be emphasized that cultural nationalism and statist nationalism are two distinct ideologies with different normative concerns, and that these concerns conflict with each other in most places.³³ I will return to this point, and to the way some prominent contemporary writers treat it, at the end of this chapter.

Liberal and non-liberal nationalisms

The distinction between statist and cultural nationalism and the interpretation proposed here for the main principles of these nationalisms suggest that the term *nationalism* could be regarded as a homonym for two different ideologies that lack a common normative origin and which need not necessarily be compatible in their implementation. This interpretation also allows us to see that each of them might and in fact did

³³ Anthony D. Smith, 'States and Homelands: The Social and Geopolitical Implications of National Territory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10 (1981), 194–5; Walker Connor, 'Ethno-nationalism in the First World', in Milton J. Esman (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 19.

have various descendants that are very different from one another. For example, cultural nationalism had various forms that included liberal and fascist, socialist and conservative, humanist and anti-humanist versions as well as chauvinist and egalitarian, collectivist and individualist, ethnocentric and non-ethnocentric, state-seeking and non-state-seeking forms of nationalism. As shown below, statist nationalism also had a variety of versions, though not as rich as that of cultural nationalism.

John Stuart Mill's famous arguments in chapter 16 of *Representative Government* seem to be liberal-democratic arguments for statist nationalism. Mill argues that a citizenry that shares one common national culture is necessary for representative government. 'Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist.'³⁴ Similarly, it could be argued that a common national culture is instrumental in furthering other aspects of democracy. It increases the probability that a greater number of citizens will be able to comprehend the issues that are on the political agenda and in this way also enhances their own informed self-rule. It is possible to show that cultural homogeneity could contribute to the realization of other state values such as distributive justice and economic welfare. Cultural homogeneity is a prerequisite or at least a facilitator for the development of the state's economy.³⁵ In fostering economic growth, it also bolsters material welfare. A common national culture also contributes to developing a sense of fraternity among citizens of the state, which then allows the machinery of distributive justice to operate more efficiently. On the basis of all or some of these points, liberal thinkers have concluded that states should aspire for their citizenries to have a common culture – a thesis that is the basic thesis of statist nationalism.³⁶

However, it must be noted that non-liberal versions of statist nationalism are also possible and have in fact been advocated by certain thinkers. Like the liberal versions of this type of nationalism, such versions share its basic tenet, namely, that the citizenries of states must have a homogeneous national culture because such a culture contributes to the realization of certain political values. These values are not derived from specific

³⁴ Mill, 'Representative Government', chap. 16.

³⁵ At least it was of help during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under the technological conditions of the time.

³⁶ D. Miller, *On Nationality*, chap. 4. All these arguments may be supplemented by social and historical explanations for the emergence of the nation-state. These explanations focus on the instrumentality of national cultures to the industrial revolutions of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*).

national cultures and do not serve to protect them. Non-liberal statist nationalisms would obviously select values that are not liberal as those values to be promoted by the common national culture. Non-liberal versions of statist nationalism seem to be possible to the left of liberalism. If a common national culture is conducive to the realization of the liberal conceptions of participation in government, solidarity and distributive justice, it might also be conducive for the realization of the socialist conceptions of these values, especially the value of distributive justice.³⁷ Such versions of nationalism have in fact existed. The most prominent example is that of Marx and Engels mentioned earlier. Of course, these thinkers could hardly be classified as either nationalists or as supporters of the state. Their ultimate ideal is the withering of both nations and states. However, in order to facilitate the process which would lead to the withering of states and nations, Marx and Engels supported statist nationalism and repudiated cultural nationalism. They supported the cultural homogenization of states and the nationalist movements that could advance such homogenization – mainly the nationalist movements of Western Europe. They believed that these movements would pave the way to social progress by consolidating the conditions for capitalism. They repudiated the nationalist movements of small nationalities that hindered the achievement of the national homogenization of large states. In the case of such small nationalities, and for the reasons just mentioned, they held a view similar to that of John Stuart Mill, namely, that such communities should assimilate into the large national communities in whose vicinity they lived. In other words, Marx and Engels ignored or even denied the thesis according to which people have interests in adhering to their culture and preserving it for generations. For their socialist reasons, they supported the idea that the state should have one homogeneous culture.³⁸

Is statist nationalism also possible to the right of liberalism? It seems clear that right-wing individualist ideologies cannot support such nationalism. Their individualism is hardly compatible with the existence of the state. They would therefore not support claims concerning the means that would enable states to achieve their goals. It would also be difficult to attribute statist nationalism to many collectivist right-wing ideologies. As repeatedly emphasized above, statist nationalism presupposes that there are political values that are not derived from the nation and are not aimed at the preservation of the nation. Many right-wing collectivist ideologies reject this presupposition. They define the state and the cultural nation

³⁷ Kymlicka attributes this position to D. Miller within a socialist framework (Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 72–3).

³⁸ Nimni, *Marxism and Nationalism*, pp. 17–43.

in terms of each other.³⁹ They believe that there are no political values apart from those derived from the nation and aimed at its preservation. Therefore, it seems that the proponents of such ideologies are not likely to think of a common national culture as conducive to the implementation of political values that are *independent of the ethnocultural nation*. I am trying to be cautious here, because conservatism, for example, could in some sense espouse a statist nationalism, since one of its central values is stability. The validity of this value does not necessarily derive from the values of particular nations or the need to preserve them. Conservatives could in principle view the cultural homogeneity of the state as a means to preserve its stability and therefore justify statist nationalism. However, despite the centrality of the value of stability within conservative world-views, and despite the possibility that this value might be valid without being derived from the nation, it is still the case that conservatives define the state in terms of the nation. The nation precedes the state, and the latter is just an organ of the former and does not exist independently of the nation.⁴⁰ Conservative nationalism is therefore mainly cultural rather than statist. Fascism is problematic from the viewpoint of the present discussion for different reasons. As it is not a very systematic and coherent ideology and because demagoguery often obscures its ideological essence, it is difficult to determine if the state is conceived by fascism as a tool in the service of the nation or if the reverse is the case. However, it does not seem entirely groundless to associate fascism with a position close to that of statist nationalism.⁴¹

Cultural nationalism is widely believed, or has been until recently, to be possible only within collectivist right-wing ideologies. Cultural nationalism is sometimes considered a synonym for such ideologies, or at least to always coincide with them. Moreover, it was also widely believed that liberal nationalism is necessarily civic (just as it was commonly believed that civic nationalism is necessarily liberal). The association of cultural nationalism with collectivist right-wing ideologies and that of civic nationalism with liberalism is demonstrated in the introduction to *Rethinking Nationalism*, for the authors characterize civic nationalism as individualistic and as depending on people's choice, while characterizing ethnocultural nationalism as collectivist and independent of individual

³⁹ For example, Karl Schmitt defines the state as 'a specific entity of the people'. See Karl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 19.

⁴⁰ On the precedence of the nation to the state according to conservatism, see Roger Scruton, *The Philosopher on Dover Beach* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990), chap. 28.

⁴¹ Benito Mussolini, 'Fascism', in Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (eds.), *The Nationalism Reader* (New York: Humanities Press, 1995), pp. 224–5.

choice. The characterization of nationalism by an influential intellectual such as Isaiah Berlin constitutes another example of the view that cultural nationalism is necessarily a right-wing collectivist ideology.⁴² According to Berlin, nationalism is a doctrine according to which, first, ‘men belong to a particular human group . . . that the characters of the individuals who compose the group are shaped by, and cannot be understood apart from, those of the group defined in terms of common history, customs, laws, memories, beliefs, language . . . ways of life . . .’ of the group.⁴³ Secondly, according to nationalism, ‘the essential human unit in which man’s nature is fully realized is not the individual, or a voluntary association which can be dissolved or altered or abandoned at will, but a nation . . .’⁴⁴ Berlin further presents nationalism as including the view that nations are like biological organisms the needs of which constitute their common goals, which in turn are supreme goals. Berlin also maintains that according to nationalism, the most compelling reason ‘for holding a particular belief, pursuing a particular policy . . . living a particular life, is that these beliefs, policies . . . lives, are *ours*’, namely, they are the beliefs, policies and lifestyles of the nation to which we belong.⁴⁵

Another example of an interpretation of cultural nationalism according to which it is necessarily anti-liberal has been provided recently in Brian Barry’s *Culture and Equality*.⁴⁶ Barry characterizes cultural nationalism mainly by ascribing to it the view according to which people belonging to different nations are like animals belonging to different species. According to this view, what is common to human beings belonging to different nations is of secondary importance. The differences among them, on the other hand, are of utmost importance. This has anti-liberal implications such as that universal norms for humanity as such are either almost impossible or of negligible value, that every national group needs a different system of laws, or that national cultures must preserve their own purity because accepting influence from other cultures would not suit their members, just as the behaviour patterns that characterize one species are not necessarily appropriate for members of other species.

Berlin and Barry’s characterizations are undoubtedly consistent with various ideas expressed by major proponents of cultural nationalism,

⁴² Berlin, ‘Nationalism’, in Berlin, *Against the Current*, pp. 341–3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 341. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 342. It must, however, be noted that Berlin distinguishes between what he calls ‘nationalism’ and which he describes by means of the four characteristics listed above, and what he calls ‘national sentiment’, ‘the pride of ancestry’ (*ibid.*, p. 341), ‘the need to belong’ (*ibid.*, p. 338). The latter, according to him, could be perfectly compatible with liberalism.

⁴⁶ Brian Barry, *Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

mainly proponents of the romantic versions of cultural nationalism. Examples are inherent in Joseph de Maistre's famous saying that he had seen Frenchmen, Italians and Russians, but that 'as for *man*, I declare that I have never in my life met him',⁴⁷ and Herder's comment that 'the Arab of the desert belongs to it, as much as his noble horse and his patient indefatigable camel'.⁴⁸ There is also no doubt that if we accept these narrow characterizations of nationalism, a liberal cultural nationalism would hardly be possible. However, these characterizations should not be accepted as exclusive characterizations of cultural nationalism. Many liberals throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth believed that people have interests in their national culture and that states must protect these interests. They did so without holding views such as that people's national affiliation explains their character, and that their national affiliation is a source for the validity of views, policies or lifestyles.⁴⁹ Furthermore, in the last few years many authors have attempted to show that certain liberal values such as freedom and autonomy can serve as bases for nationalism. Other scholars have tried to show that liberalism can be reconciled with certain theses predominantly associated with nationalism. For example, they believe that the thesis that nationality may be considered an important part of personal identity does not necessarily contradict liberalism. The same holds for the thesis that national communities are those whose members are committed to each other more extensively than to other human beings as such, or that 'people who form a national community in a particular territory have a good claim to political self-determination'.⁵⁰ The authors who defend these propositions do so without assuming the normative priority of the national group over its individual members, and without assuming the normative priority of one national group over others. On the contrary, these writers presuppose individualistic assumptions concerning the relationship between national groups and their members, and egalitarian assumptions concerning the relationship among different national groups. The broad characterization of cultural nationalism proposed here, that is, its characterization as a nationalism attributing value to groups sharing a common culture and history, to their existence across generations, and to the protection states owe to such groups, makes it possible for these attempts to be included within cultural nationalism.

⁴⁷ Joseph De Maistre, *Considerations on France*, trans. and ed. R. A. Lebrun (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 53.

⁴⁸ J. G. Herder, quoted in R. R. Ergang, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 91.

⁴⁹ For specific examples see Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, pp. 206–19; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 49–74.

⁵⁰ D. Miller, *On Nationality*, pp. 10–11.

Nationalisms and the state

One of the most salient characteristics of contemporary liberal writing on cultural nationalism is the complex position it takes with regard to the way in which states should protect the interests people have in their culture and in its existence across generations. Contemporary writers believe that this protection must be realized mainly by means of two types of rights: rights to self-government, and polyethnic rights. The former enable members of a national group to live their lives, at least major parts of their economic and political lives, within their national culture. Multi-cultural or polyethnic rights enable groups of common national origin to express their original culture while integrating with another culture and living at least their political and economic lives within that other culture. Furthermore, many contemporary liberal proponents of cultural nationalism believe that from the perspective of the interests people have in their nationality, independent statehood is the best way to realize self-government rights. However, they also believe that from a wider perspective this is not the case. These writers believe that self-government rights must at least sometimes take a sub-statist form, which is not easily reconciled with one very widely accepted characterization of nationalism. This characterization is expressed in Ernest Gellner's definition of nationalism. 'Nationalism', he says, 'is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.'⁵¹ If we take this definition seriously, then the liberal versions of cultural nationalism that I have just mentioned are not really versions of nationalism. However, Gellner seems to ignore the fact that 'nationalism' is a surname, as it were. His definition clearly applies to statist nationalism. This follows from the basic tenet of this kind of nationalism, which focuses on how cultural homogeneity is instrumental in the implementation of state values. According to statist nationalism, there is no doubt that 'the political and the national unit should be congruent'. As a matter of historical fact, it is also true that the aspiration to achieve congruence between nations and states has also characterized many movements of cultural nationalism.⁵² Ultimately, however, Gellner's definition is

⁵¹ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 1. See also Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 112; John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd edition (Chicago University Press, 1992), p. 2; Eli Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4th, expanded edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 1.

⁵² 'There were national movements which developed the goal of independence very early – for example, the Norwegian, Greek or Serb. But there were many more that came to it rather late, and in the exceptional circumstances of the First World War – among them the Czech, Finnish, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian movements . . .' See Miroslav Hroch, 'From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building

misconceived, for it is a fact that not all national movements and not all versions of cultural nationalism aspired to bring about the convergence of national and political units.⁵³ Otto Bauer's theory of nationalism, and Ahad Ha'am's 'spiritual Zionism', are prominent examples.⁵⁴ Moreover, if my abstraction of the normative tenets of cultural nationalism correctly represents its normative concerns, then state-seeking need not be an essential component of this nationalism. This is so because institutional arrangements can hardly be regarded as defining features of political moralities. Such arrangements depend on the basic values of these moralities on the one hand, and on the moral and empirical constraints imposed by the circumstances within which these values have to be implemented, on the other hand. Since such circumstances are fluid and could change over time, the institutional arrangements following from a given political morality could also change. If this is correct, the principle of the congruence between states and national groups cannot be a defining feature of nationalism as a political morality.⁵⁵ At most, it could follow from the values of nationalism under certain empirical conditions. The contemporary authors who defend principles that are associated with cultural nationalism, and who do not insist on the convergence between state and nation, can thus be said to concur with earlier exceptions to the general aspiration that national movements did have to bring about the convergence between state and nation. We thus need to give up the claim that cultural nationalism necessarily seeks this convergence. Within cultural nationalism one must distinguish between state-seeking versions, according to which nations must aspire to have a state of their own, and

Process in Europe', in Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 76.

⁵³ Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, pp. 206–19; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 49–74. For doubts similar to those expressed here in relation to the centrality ascribed by Gellner to the state in his definition of modern nationalism, see also Taylor, 'Nationalism and Modernity', p. 35.

⁵⁴ On Bauer see Nimni, *Marxism and Nationalism*, chaps. 5–7. On Ahad Ha'am see Steven J. Zipperstein, *Evasive Prophet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ See Brubaker, 'Myths and Misconceptions', pp. 235–41 for arguments demonstrating that nationalism, not just as a political morality, but also as a social-historical movement, is not in principle state-seeking. Let me also continue the quote from Hroch, 'From National Movement to Nation', p. 76, the beginning of which appears above: 'the Slovene or Byelorussian – did not formulate [the goal of independence] even [in the exceptional circumstances of the First World War]. The Catalan case provides a vivid example of the way in which even a powerful national movement need not make the demand of an independent state.' See also Smith, *National Identity*, p. 74; Jeff McMahan, 'The Limits of National Partiality', in McKim and McMahan (eds.), *The Morality of Nationalism*, pp. 108–9; Stephen Nathanson, 'Nationalism and the Limits of Global Humanism', in McKim and McMahan (eds.), *The Morality of Nationalism*, pp. 177–8; Judith Lichtenberg, 'Nationalism, For and (Mainly) Against', in McKim and McMahan (eds.), *The Morality of Nationalism*, p. 165.

non-state-seeking versions, which at most regard states as desirable, but not as necessary.

Incidentally, I would like to note that certain writers call the state-seeking nationalism in this latter distinction *political nationalism* while referring to the second nationalism as *cultural*.⁵⁶ From the viewpoint of the distinction I have suggested here between statist and cultural nationalism, both the state-seeking and the non-state-seeking versions of nationalism are cultural rather than statist versions of nationalism, for they are concerned with people's interests in adhering to their culture and preserving it for generations. The difference between them lies in the nature of the political measures they require for the protection of these interests. As noted earlier, the distinction between what I have called *statist nationalism*, and *cultural nationalism*, is a more fundamental one. It is a distinction not between two descendants of one family, but rather between two families whose normative genealogies cannot be traced to one source. Cultural nationalism is concerned with the services that states can and ought to provide for nations, while statist nationalism is concerned with the services which a common national culture could provide for states.⁵⁷

What has been said so far could and perhaps should also be clarified in terms of the ideal of the nation-state. Both families of nationalism have produced this ideal. Yet it is important to stress that the notion of the nation-state has an entirely different meaning within each of them. According to statist nationalism, the ideal of nation-states is that sovereign political units should strive not only for legal but also for cultural unity. According to cultural nationalism, the ideal of nation-states means that

⁵⁶ On Alfred Zimmern, see Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, p. 207. See also Avishai Margalit, 'The Moral Psychology of Nationalism', in McKim and McMahan (eds.), *The Morality of Nationalism*, pp. 74–87, and my remarks on Tamir on pp. 32–4 below. Within the Zionist movement there was some debate between what was called Political Zionism and Ahad Ha'am Spiritual Zionism. Most adherents of the former aspired to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The latter was content with much less, and is an example of what Margalit calls cultural nationalism. However, within the framework of the distinction between statist nationalism and cultural nationalism elaborated in this chapter, most brands of Zionism belong to cultural nationalism rather than statist nationalism. Most of them were motivated by the interests that Jews had in adhering to their culture and in preserving it for generations. However, it should be noted that in some sense Zionism had some characteristics of statist nationalism. For example, with respect to the various cultural groups of Jews that immigrated to Israel, the state of Israel has acted in accordance with statist nationalism, trying to mould them into one culture.

⁵⁷ The confusion is even further amplified by the fact that some writers use the terms political nationalism or cultural nationalism not to designate the distinction between *state-seeking* and *non-state seeking* nationalism, but rather the distinction between civic nationalism and cultural one (Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*).

cultural groups should have states of their own.⁵⁸ One could hold the latter position because it is a means for realizing the former position. In other words, it is desirable that sovereign political units should also be cultural units. However, this is not the only way to realize the latter ideal. ‘Nation-building’ and ‘melting pots’ are also means to turn sovereign political units into cultural units. In any case, those who subscribe to the thesis of cultural nationalism merely because it is a means for implementing the ideal of statist nationalism, obviously subscribe to statist nationalism rather than to cultural nationalism. Only those who adhere to the ideal of the nation-state for the reason that this is the proper way to protect people’s interests in their own national culture, subscribe to it as a position of cultural nationalism. As noted, not all the manifestations of cultural nationalism subscribe to this ideal. At least in some cases, some of them support the ideal of multicultural states.

Nationalisms and ethnicity

I have so far sub-divided cultural and statist nationalisms, first, according to the political ideologies with which they were or could be associated, that is, liberal ideologies and those ideologies to the left and to the right of liberalism, and secondly, according to their stance towards the state. It might also be useful to comment on the different classifications of the various nationalisms according to their position on ethnicity. Again, it is important first to distinguish between historical and sociological questions concerning the actual motivation of any particular national movement, and philosophical questions concerning what is implied by or is compatible with the basic normative positions of statist nationalism on the one hand, and cultural nationalism on the other. In considering the historical and sociological issues regarding the relationship between nationalism and ethnicity, three questions must be discerned. The first issue is motivation: Was a given national movement or a particular nationalist thinker actually motivated by the goal of preserving the culture of a given ethnic group? Or were they perhaps motivated by the goal of preserving a given ethnic group in the sense of keeping its blood ‘pure’? The second question concerns the composition of a given population led by a

⁵⁸ The ideal of the nation-state has perhaps a third meaning according to which the world should be organized so that its sovereign units are not the size of entire empires or continents. This position could result from attempts to implement one or both the other positions. This is because most national groups are not the size of entire continents or empires, and because nation-building is a project which has a better chance of succeeding if it does not cover territories of such size. However, the present position can also be held for reasons which have nothing to do with the other two positions.