NATIONALISM AS A RESPONSE TO LEGITIMACY CRISES

By

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INTRODUCTION

NATIONALISM AND POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

Starting with its very definition, nationalism is a very complex matter. As such, many attempts have been made for the development of solid theoretical frameworks to explain it at length. Accordingly, several influential schools of studies on nationalism have been created and based on them specialists, have written many pages on particular cases coming from all over the world and from very different epochs. These schools can be classified into several streams, depending on the academic field they mainly use for their studies: one stream attempts to explain modern nations and nationalisms by focusing on their ethnic roots; another take language as the central fact for nation developing. One more focus on the connection between religious identities and nationalisms; a fourth stream concentrates on the realm of politics, even if their conclusions differ according to the type of analysis every school and author use: liberalism, Marxism, realism. A further stream focuses mainly on the social transformations produced by modernization processes. Furthermore, some other authors have made their research under the influence of disciplines such as history of ideas, subaltern studies, economics or gender studies.

Probably because of this, if a book on the topic is randomly selected from the shelves of a library, the reader will probably find a mixture of arguments coming from different streams or schools, even if one or two will surely predominate in it. This variety is a proof of both the enormous complexity of nationalism, and its social and political relevance. In spite of the many pages and pieces of research already created, it seems clear that nationalism still needs a lot of both theoretical and field efforts if a comprehensive explanation on its endurance and power in the modern world is to be reached.

This thesis attempt to make a small contribution to this task by studying a particular feature of nationalism: its relation with political legitimacy on modern States. I selected this topic because I have found that this aspect is still not clear enough in much of the literature of nationalism. The invention or recuperation (depending on the author) of national traditions is a theme that has been studied extensively, as is the composition and political behavior of national elites and ideologues. But is still not clear why, from some idealistic and rather vague ideas, such powerful and compelling phenomena as nationalism and national liberation movements can be produced. Even if the research and promotion of a particular language, customs or traditions are essential phases of any given nationalism, they do not explain why such activities became the very foundations of popular support for revolutions. They can certainly explain the genesis of a given nationalist ideology or the grounds of the propaganda activity of some elite, but they cannot really explain a massive, popular and sometimes violent demonstration of the popular support of nationalist agendas.

Hence, my hypothesis is the following: *in order to become a mass movement, nationalism needs a proper social state of affairs on one side, and a legitimacy crisis of the existing political regime on the other*. In these circumstances, the use of a nationalist agenda and discourse permits nationalist elites to attract popular support in their struggle for changing the regime.

One problem I have face during my work was the selection of concrete examples, not because there are few, but because in fact many cases seemed to be applicable: a regime facing a legitimacy crisis while its opponents using nationalism for creating a politically active mass movement, is a situation that can be found many times in history. Such dissimilar cases as the 1848' "Spring of Peoples", the rise of German National Socialism, some decolonization struggles and many of the post-communist developments could be counted as examples. Because of this, perhaps the better option would be to make a comparative analysis

of several historically different cases. Due to the mainly theoretical scope of this text, I will limit my examples mainly to the 1987-1991 Yugoslavian crisis, which lead to the dissolution of a Federal State based on a socialist regime, and created several smaller republics organized according to nationalist standards. However, this is just one example of many potentially suitable.

As I said in my hypothesis, I will focus on two issues: the social conditions for the development of nationalism on one side, and on legitimacy crises of a political regime on the other. Regarding the first point, several authors –in fact, a whole school of studies– have written extensively on the issue for quite a long time. Hence, the first chapter of this thesis will critically examine some of the most important contributions of these authors, making it clear which of their arguments are useful for my thesis, and which points I believe require further elaboration. The second chapter, supported by works of some specialists on the issue, will introduce the analysis of the legitimacy of political regimes and correlate it to the advance of nationalism as a mass movement. For this, some working definitions will be offered, and references to concrete examples will be made when necessary. After that, I will offer my general conclusions.

CHAPTER ONE

NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

Nationalism has been analyzed in so many ways that the attempt of making a comprehensive and coherent typology of its studies, is an attempt evidently out of the scope of this thesis and of my personal capabilities. Also, some authors have already developed some typologies of this kind.[1] Instead, I will analyze some of the most representative authors of a particular stream of studies on nationalism, which I call the "sociological schools". Here we can find a variety of authors, having a common view on nationalism as a product of socioeconomic changes and particularly, of modernization processes, but using different particular approaches. Some of them are more attentive to the broad, general processes of social transformation and its consequences for nationalism, while some others are more attentive to particular aspects of such transformations. I will begin by making a small review and a brief critical examination of the proposals of a selection of authors of the sociological school, which I consider the most relevant for my thesis: that is, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Karl Deutsch and Miroslav Hroch. This will allow me to relate their proposals to my object of study in this thesis, namely, legitimacy crisis.

[1] See, as example, the various types of analysis mentioned in the article by Craig Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology,* 19 (1993): 211-239.

ERNEST GELLNER

Without doubt, Gellner is one of the most influential authors on nationalism. He sees it as an essentially modern development, linked to a series of social transformations produced by industrialization: the emergence of new social classes, the downfall or modification of previous social hierarchies, accelerated urbanization, the increase of social involvement on political and economical systems, the rising alphabetization. The overall outcome of these processes is the need of creating new power structures for a novel social system, called "industrialism".[2]

For developing such ideas, Gellner uses "culture" as a key notion, even if he defines and uses it in a rather imprecise way; it seems to make reference to a system of communication, social norms, customs and behavior principles shared and transmitted in a given community, according to the necessities of the social system.[3] In this way, culture is not only a product, but also a base of a social system, and necessary to explain the development of a notion such as nationalism.

According to Gellner, before the industrial modern state there where two other social systems, or historical phases. The first was the pre-agrarian one, in which men lived in mobile tribal units. Culture, in a Gellnerian sense, was very limited; communication codes were restricted to oral means and generally understandable only to that particular community. In this manner, social units were factually impeded from creating a common language code, let alone a comprehensive cultural pattern or identity. In fact, in pre-agrarian society there was no time or human resources to create an overarching culture, because all members of the group

[2] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 19 passim.
[3] Ibidem, 7, 8-18, 35-38, 50-52.

were devoted to the search for food; hence, labor division did not really exist. Of course, in such societies, power was defined in terms of physical strength and ability.

Latter, Gellner explains how this early system was radically transformed due to sedentarization. The agrarian system permitted some key developments such as labor division, scripture and the creation of centers of power above small communities. The overall social system produced by this was a combination of multiple but separated sub-cultures, bound together by a central source of power. However, if there was a kind of general, broad culture, it certainly did not displace the specific cultures of the number of small agrarian communities that comprised the kingdom or similar political unity; in fact, the system did not intend to do so at all: in the agrarian world the activity of the central power was limited mainly to economics, tax raising and maintenance of the legal and political order above the aggregated distinct communities and cultures.[4] In this sense, it was a very heterogeneous and differentiated system.

This was palpable in at least two realms: social and geographical. First of all, great differences between rural and urban worlds could be easily detected; while poor peasants and craftsman typically inhabited the countryside, the cities had important sectors of social, political and economical elites. This created a society comprised by two large and radically separated social worlds, where individuals belonging to one had limited connections with individuals of the other and, in any case, these contacts were related to impersonal activities such trade or duties. More direct and personal links (friendship, marriage etc.) between the two worlds were very unlikely.

The heterogeneous and differentiated character of an agrarian society could also be easily detected on the second, geographical realm, where a differentiation between spaces was

[4] Ibid., 13-14.

also present and even more complex. Because its own resources and activities, urban elites enjoyed some degree of mobility between cities, and some cultural identification with the elites of other cities as well. In contrast, the rural situation was quite the opposite: even contiguous communities had significant cultural differences. Thus, villages in the same region could have very different dialects or in fact, mutually unintelligible languages; each village will also likely have traditions, institutions and norms greatly differing from those of the neighboring settlements. In this sense, in the agrarian society every rural community is a world on its own, having a particular social arrangement.

The outcome is that agrarian societies are divided in two large blocks. The first, "base" block comprises the majority of the population, and is made by a number of rural communities detached from each other, in both geographical and cultural terms. Individuals belonging to this block are limited to a particular place, generally very small in population and physical extension, and to specific social roles inside it (peasant, craftsmen, smith, etc.) due to the guild system, social traditions and family ties. Hence migration, changes of profession or changes of social group were very difficult due to social, economic and communication difficulties, and the average person of the countryside was born, worked and died in the same geographical place and within the same closed social environment. In particular: any "upward" movement, towards the elite strata, was almost impossible.[5]

The second, "upper" block encompassed the numerically smaller and generally urban elites of military, administrative, ecclesiastical and even commercial nature. In this block, individuals had better chances of social and territorial mobility, as persons belonging to a particular substrate would commonly have professional and personal contacts with individuals

[5] Ibid., 8-13. Probably the sole chances (exceptional anyway) for social advancement by rural inhabitants towards elite strata, were the clergy or the army.

of different groups within the block, including marriages. These persons would also have greater capability for migrating and for changing their professional activities.

In sum, agrarian society comprised two blocks, defined by social, economic and geographical causes: on the one side, a larger "base" block comprising uneducated, isolated and poor inhabitants of a number of small rural communities; on the other side, a smaller "upper" block comprising rich, educated and cosmopolitarian elites. This deep social division precluded any attempt to create a broad, homogeneous culture. In fact, the agrarian society *promoted* differentiation: the elite block lacked any interest in getting closer to the lower; and the latter was precluded from ascension on the social scale. Hence, cultural homogenization was neither possible nor necessary, while nationalism consists precisely on creating a broad, comprehensive culture and identity above any others in a given territory.[6] It is only with the transformation of an agrarian society into an industrial one when nationalism can appear in response to social, productive and conceptual transformations.

In industrial society, instead of two rigidly separated blocks, we find an increasingly homogeneous and mobile social structure. The society is still "horizontally" divided in social classes, but both ascendance and descent are more plausible for individuals and families, at least in theory, but many times also in practice. On the other side, geographical displacement also increasingly becomes an option –and even a necessity– for the common man. This mobilization breaks with the former rigid social divisions of pre-industrial societies, tending

[6] In any case, only the clergy and its religious activities eventually promoted some acculturation in common values for all the society, across wide regions. Ibid., 16.

to a new array of chances open to more and more persons. As a consequence, a kind of egalitarianism of opportunities is created.[7]

The new system has a remarkable configuration: the very strict borders between upper and lower blocks, distinctive of the agrarian society, suddenly become porous. The former restrictions to personal mobility give place to the possibility –and the reality– for more and more individuals for changing their social role, and for migrating to increasing distances. These factors, along with other elements such as the impulse for industrial quality, technologically sophisticated production, and innovation,[8] made it necessary to create and impose a general culture, allowing the control of a larger and increasingly complex society.

Hence, Gellner denominate the state of affairs described above as "industrialism": a culturally homogeneous social system, having a culture that dominates any other regional or sectarian one. In order to achieve and secure this, a general, standardized public instruction appears,[9] being "the necessary shared medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shares atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce." The State becomes the guarantor of this system.[10] In this sense, Gellner ratifies

[7] "The immediate consequence of this new kind of mobility [in the industrial world] is a certain kind of egalitarianism. Modern society is not mobile because it is egalitarian; it is egalitarian because it is mobile" Ibid., 24-25.

[8] Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism today: its Origins and Nature," *Social Sciences* 20 (1989): 185.

[9] Gellner makes the point that the "monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence" (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 34) and that for evaluating its importance on industrial society, we just have to observe that universal and central guaranteed education "is an ideal more honored in the observance than in the breach […] To understand what that role is, we must […] consider not merely the mode of production of modern society, but above all its mode of *reproduction*" Ibid., 28-29. [Emphasis is on the original].

[10] Ibid., 37-38. However, the importance of other developments for nationalism cannot be denied, such as the Reformation and its egalitarian force, which made some formerly sacred social structures crumble and illegitimate; or the demographic changes (a by-product

that nationalism is a pure modern fact. It cannot be any other way, as in the former pre-agrarian and agrarian stages there were no conditions and no real incentives to create and sustain broad identities and to promote a shared knowledge, apart from those based on religion.

After this, Gellner's general historical and sociological analysis is combined with the existence and features of selected social actors, in order to classify the different societies and their nationalist potential, differentiating groups according to their relative power, education level and internal cultural conformation.[11] Eight possible situations came out of this: in four, nationalism will not develop,[12] but it will likely appear in the rest:

1) *Ethnic nationalism*, in which a culturally differentiated, less powerful group fights against a powerful group that masters the predominant culture;
2) *Classic liberal nationalism*, where general education exists, but a culturally differentiated group is hindered in the access to power by other, powerful one;
3) *Diaspora nationalism*, where the most educated group is powerless and culturally differentiated, being victim of the attacks by a powerful group of an inferior culture,

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of industrialization as well) that uproot the closed agrarian communities and pushed them to the industrial cities, where acculturation could be more easily conducted. Ibid., 46-47.

[11] I will relay on this on the study by Brendan O'Leary, "Ernest Gellner's diagnoses of nationalism: a critical overview or, what is living and what is dead in Ernest Gellner's philosophy of nationalism?" in *The State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 46-51. This because the text by Gellner himself results, in this point, particularly obscure and imbricate. Cf. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 88-89.

[12] For Gellner, nationalism will not develop in the following cases: first, in societies where there is not homogeneity nor formal education within society, and one group has power while the other not. Second, where a homogeneous culture exists, but there is a lack of formal education in both in a powerful and in a powerless group. Third, where a modern education is exclusive of the elites, but a homogeneous popular culture does exist. Fourth, where a powerless but educated group exists along with a powerful, uneducated group, inside a culturally homogeneous society. O'Leary, "Ernest Gellner diagnoses…", 48-49.

4) *Satisfied nationalism*, with a homogeneous culture and education access, but where natural disparities of power do exist.[13]

For Gellner, it is the latter that offers more stability, but even in such a case there can be some situations in which a group becomes marginalized of the general culture or economic opportunities, leading to a potentially nationalist situation. So, for Gellner "late industrial society (if mankind is spared long enough to enjoy it) can be expected to be one in which nationalism persists, but in a muted, less virulent form."[14]

Many scholars have extensively analyzed the work of Gellner, on a number of aspects.[15] One criticism made on it is regarding the functionalism of Gellner's argument: for him, nationalism exists just because it is a "necessary culture" for the advancement of an economic regime and for the stability of the modern State. Moreover, nationalism exists just because there is not other option in modern industrial society, as "the economy needs both the new type of central culture and the central state; the culture needs the state; and the state probably needs the homogeneous cultural branding of its flock."[16]

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[13] Ibid., 49. Gellner identifies ethnic nationalism with East European cases; links classic liberal nationalism to the German and Italian "unifying nationalisms", and exemplifies Diaspora nationalism with Jews and other groups in similar situations. It is interesting that Gellner labels "satisfied nationalism" as being *not* nationalist, but a "mature homogeneous industrialism." Cf. Ibid., 82 note 35; idem, *Nations and Nationalism*, 94 and f.

[14] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism,* 122. However, at the beginning of the nineties Gellner foresaw that political aperture, industrialization and fall of political centralism in Eastern Europe could easily lead to ethnic wars. He wrongly believed this was more plausible on the former USSR than in the rest of former communist world. Gellner, "Nationalism and Politics in Eastern Europe", *New Left Review*, 189 (1991): 131–133.

[15] For a comprehensive, wide analysis of Gellner's work by both his followers and critics, see John A. Hall and Ian Jarvie, eds., *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996).

[16] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism,* 140. See also O'Leary, "Ernest Gellner diagnoses…", 82 – 86; and Nicos Mouzelis, "Ernest Gellner's theory of multiculturalism: some definitional and methodological issues" in Hall, *The State of the Nation*, 158-165.

Another weak point of Gellner's work is its very general character. The use of broad historical phases does not facilitate the comprehension and comparison of particular, concrete cases. Also, despite the fact these phases are so generally defined and temporally broad, they are treated as clear-cut stages, following one to another in a fixed way, with specific timelines. However, the development of societies seems to be quite different. Gellner does not take into account those very important transitional periods between each of the phases he mentions, even if such transition periods can in fact last for very long periods of time. In this sense, Gellner's human stages are good as ideal types for describing general human development, but their concrete use for particular cases seems to face many problems.

For my text, the most important criticism of Gellner is the one regarding the role of politics for nationalism. Even if an intimate link between industrialization and nationalism cannot be denied, this link should be analyzed not only as a function of economic and productive systems, but also regarding changes on the political system. Gellner' tendency to see the State just as a component of the machinery of a given social regime leads to an extreme minimization of its importance. In fact, it is not only the State: Gellner tends to give to politics –as a human and group activity– a rather minor meaning for nationalism, despite the fact that nationalism is a notion related precisely to the legitimacy of the social system and the political institutions that control society. This is one of the most surprising facts of Gellner's work: the political activity and the political interests of individuals, elites and States are treated at the best as "circumstantial" for the analysis.[17]

[17] See i.e. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 124-125. This shortcoming on Gellner work has been discused by a number of scholars. Some of them have defended Gellner, arguing that "by directing our attention to the contingent character of Nationalisms, Gellner was actually poingint us towards thinking about nationalism and its manifestations as the outcomes of political processes". Mark Beissinger, "Nationalisms that bark and nationalisms

Maybe this is not accidental. Gellner would not be able to include politics as a central variable in his model, without making it even more general or even plainly inoperative: if nationalism is related to modernization but also to political interest and political control, then is possible for it to appear in a number of different situations, even in backward societies where, according to Gellner, it should not exist or be extremely marginal. This is precisely what reality show: nationalism appears almost everywhere, in the most diverse circumstances.

By taking such a functionalist view –and specially, an *economic* functionalist view– Gellner maybe fails to recognize the close, central link between socio-economic development and modern politics, especially regarding political interest, legitimacy and control. That is, modernization has created a society more apt to being politically mobilized. Hence, modernity is not only about a socioeconomic machine creating a shared culture; is also about political groups striving to control the machine, aiming to create new forms of cultural outcomes, attempting to amend the way the machine works, or trying to redefine who is part of it, and who not. In this way, Gellner's work is certainly an extremely compelling and useful view on nationalism and modernization, but it also fails to offer concrete explanations for the development of nationalism.[18] Even with such criticisms, Gellner's work has been one of the most compelling, intelligent and influential visions on nationalism, up to the present day.

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that bite: Ernest Gellner and the substantiation of nations" in Hall, *The State of the Nation*, 171. We should ask, however, if that was really the purpose of Gellner.

[18] Some scholars have pointed that Gellner, in fact, did not really create a theory of nationalism, but just pointed at an "elective affinity" between industrialization and nationalism, which in turn required many other additions and adaptations in order to explain (at least in a general form) the development of nations and nationalism. See Mouzelis, "Ernest Gellner's theory…", 219.

BENEDICT ANDERSON

The school established by Anderson has been also extremely prolific and influential. By using concepts and analysis coming from sociology, it studies the diffusion of nationalist ideas in societies, and how these societies respond to it. For Anderson, nationalism and nationality are "cultural artefacts of a particular kind" and also products of a "spontaneous distillation of a complex 'crossing' of discrete historical forces".[19]

In his view, a nation is an *imagined community*, and imagined as inherently *limited* and *sovereign*. It is imagined because the members even of the smallest nation of the world will never be able to meet all the other members of it. It is a community –and not only a group– because the nation is always envisaged as having a "deep, horizontal comradeship", even if facts show obvious inequalities. It is limited because any nation sets boundaries –both conceptual and real– between their own nation and the rest of the world, according to some (if not always clear) criteria. It is sovereign because its purpose is to ensure the liberty and distinctiveness of the nation, hence claiming for proper national institutions.[20]

This kind of community could only appear out of a combination of factors, all produced by the fall of at least three conceptions: first, the notion that, in order to comprehend an ontological truth, an oral and written privileged language was required; second, that society was naturally organized –even more: by God's will– under the power of a monarch, essentially distinct from the rest of the individuals and with a supernatural commandment for governing them; third, a conception of time where the history of man and universe was essentially the same.

[19] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, new and rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 4.

[20] Ibid., 5–7.

These conceptual changes are correlated with profound social transformations. For Anderson, one such key transformation occurred when the extension of written language permitted a "vernacularization" of administrative languages. That is, those languages formerly employed in public administration (Latin, German, *Dienstmaleich*) were replaced by the regional and native languages, due to Reformation on the one hand, and to "printed capitalism" on the other.[21] Some such vernacular languages were already widely spoken, but still had not written form up to that moment, so their use as administrative and media languages permitted their formalization, teaching and further spreading inside a given, now "national" community. This was a fundamental step, as "the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation."[22]

This is the reason why language is such a fundamental feature for all nationalisms, but especially for those in their earliest forms. Objectively speaking, language for the individual is a rather external phenomenon; it depends on social and geographical factors, and utterly on the chance of having been born in a given place and not elsewhere. However, for the nationalist the fact that he happened to be born in a particular place and learn a particular language is invested with a transcendent, special meaning, even if biologically and socially it was more a matter of chance.[23]

[21] With "printed capitalism", Anderson means the emergence of publishing companies, but also to the formation of an economic system where certain education becomes indispensable, more or less in the sense of Gellner. Ibid., 44–45, 131–134 passim.

[22] Ibid., 46.

[23] As Anderson puts it: language for the patriot is very similar to the eyes of the beloved for the lover. From an external point of view, it is just an ordinary eye, which a particular man or woman happened to be born with. It is a biological, natural fact. But for the lover, that

Anderson continues by stating that, apart from language and its special meanings for some people, a conjunction of other events and ideas was necessary for the creation and spreading of nationalism. These factors were related to political and administrative regimes, such as the spreading of liberal and enlightened ideas, or the appearance of a class– and national–based consciousness on a sector of local bureaucracy. The latter factor had a first-order weight in Latin American independences.[24]

The process continued until the national community, already imagined by some, became the nations desired by the masses. Anderson does not pay so much attention to the particular processes according to which the nationalist ideas are accepted by masses, or the political reasons of such an acceptance among different social strata. The focus of his work is more on the conditions for the appearance and spreading of nationalism, but not on its development as a political force. In any case: for him, once popular nationalism is developed in whatever particular way, it shows a clear political potential.

Hence, if the early nationalist European movements of 1820-1840 had an essential popular character, after those years nationalism was also taken by the States, in order to fulfill their own political goals –mainly, to maintain and enforce the ruling system and elites. In this way, "official nationalism" appeared, being fundamentally conservative and reactionary, and linked to imperialism.[25] With this, Anderson points at one of the great paradoxes of

particular eye is special. It is unique and full of meaning, different and probably better than any other. Ibid., 154.

[24] Anderson is one of the few scholars rejecting nationalism as having a fundamentally European origin. He argues that the Latin American independence wars preceded even the national-popular revolutions of Europe on the decade of 1840. This is because the Ibero-American officers and elites were in a better position to gain consciousness of their particularity as Americans, *Criollos* and *Mestizos*, given, on the one side, the differentiation they received on behalf of the peninsular Spaniards and on the other side, the physical distance between America and the European metropolis. Ibid., 47 ff.

[25] Ibid., 31 ff.

nationalism: as a particular phenomenon, it has been defined regarding the distinctiveness of a people in specific historical moments, but as a general concept it can be used almost by any State of political group, in any situation. Even its first enemy -the *ancien regime*- used nationalism in order to create an official doctrine, reinforcing its political position and legitimacy.[26] Since then, any version of nationalism (popular or State based) has been among us, appearing with renewed force during, for example, decolonization processes.

Anderson's contribution is important. In effect, nation can be regarded as a modern version of the religious community, which certainly was the first immagined community of the world. Nevertheless, the pretension of universality (proper of a religion) has been discarded in the nation, changing to a conception based on a fundamental and permanent differentiation between the own and the stranger. In any case: nationalism keeps the religious confidence in the trascendence of spirit; as a part of a nation, individuals can be perpetuated for centuries by becoming part of a community with immemmorial origins and splendid future. Again, to be born in some place and so learn a given language means an opportunity to belong to a sacred community; as the author says, the magic of nationalism is to transform chance into destiny. [27]

In this manner, Anderson gives a very attractive and useful exploration of nationalism. However, some observations must be made. He correctly emphasizes the fundamental role that written communication –and its consequent formalization and standarizaton of vernacular languages– had on the appeareance of supralocal identities and nationalisms. He also correctly points to the fact that this common language made it possible for administrative, political and economical elites to start thinking of themselves as sharing some broader identity. But

[26] Ibid., 155–162.
[27] Ibid., 12.

perhaps this linguistic community or loose identity is not enough for the creation or imagination of a wider community with such a political force as the nation. In any case, what was surely necessary, was the existence of a community of interests and political ideas that, in turn, could find political expression through national movements.

As example, we can point to some cases where nationalism appeared even in societies without a unique mother tounge, and with weak and small bureaucracies. At the moment of American independence, English was the major but certainly not the only language spoken at the Thirteen Colonies, and others were still widely used in the 19th century, as Dutch in Long Island, New Jersey and Albany, and German in Pennsylvania, while the central administration was certainly small.[28] On the other hand, as many independences in the 20th Century have already shown, nationalism can take almost any language (even the former rulers' one), or aim to recover a certain "historic" language that has almost dissappeared already –an effort that in many cases has implied the invention of a new one.

It seems true: nations, along with religious communities, are the imagined communities by excellence. However, as important as looking for imagined communities (that probably can be counted by hundreds) is to discover *who* imagines them, and *why*.[29] Maybe the difference between a simple linguistic community and a political community seeking recognition and/or independence from a given political regime, is the perception regarding the legitimacy of that regime. This can be certainly expressed in terms of language recognition, but it also can be found in places where the language is not an issue, or where the national consiousness is weak, or the "printed capitalism" is limited.

[28] Maxine Seller, *To Seek America* (Englewood: Ozer, 1977) 14–39; Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941) 72–76.

[29] Cf. Patrick Hall, "Nationalism and historicity," *Nations and Nationalism* 3 (1997): 3–23.

In this sense, the art of imagining a community is a key component in the creation of nations, but maybe it is more important to determine the prupose and utility of such an exercise of imagination. Anderson correctly states that the idea of nation appeared and spread along with the crisis of a system that was based on the concentration of ontological truth and information –i.e. "special" languages needed for accessing religious texts, or to communicate with and within the ruling elites. Certainly, administrative vernacularization and the spreading of printed capitalism in local languages represent important changes of such a system. But in order to better explain the origins and spread of nationalism, perhaps we must put our analytical emphasis on the deeper causes and consequences of the crisis of such a system.

KARL DEUTSCH

Karl Deutsch is considered one of the founders of modern studies on nationalism. Having published on the topic since the forties, his studies reflect well the political preoccupations during and after the Second World War, as well as the following attempts for regional and global integration, peace maintenance and many other subjects on political science, on international relations and on methodology of social sciences.

In his first writings, Deutsch tried to call public attention to the real chances of an increase on conflict due to national causes, and particularly due to language issues.[30] This was the point of departure for the creation of a school of studies of nationalism, seeking to explain it as a function of the development of the conditions, means, codes and outcomes of communication on societies. Hence, he did not focus on language issues solely; instead, he

[30] Karl Deutsch, "International Affairs: The Trend of European Nationalism –The Language Aspect," *The American Political Science Review* 36 (1942): 533-541.

tried to analyze the impact of social change on social communication, and consequently on the creation and spreading of communities.[31]

According to Deutsch, social and political changes created a different type of communication patterns in modern world, which in turn lead to nationalism. But before this modern era, there was a succession of "feudal age(s)" comprised by "universal states", having as common features the intense contrasts of their societies: on the one hand, there was intense localism, together with scattered human settlements, the dispersion of some public institutions such as military and judicial powers, and the scattering of agriculture, along with sharp class differences between the peasant masses and the powerful groups –the latter being fairly scattered as well. On the other side, in such societies there was some kind of universalism of political and cultural traditions, of memories of a past state, or the knowledge of a main, developed civilization abroad. All these acted as unifying ideas or traditions, and were disseminated by churches, trade activities, pilgrimage or even resettlements. [32]

In sum, for Deutsch this first stage of human development was somehow comparable to a "layer-cake" pattern, where the top elite layers endured high degrees of cultural assimilation and social communication, while the bottom layers had little or no assimilation or participation, being mainly a passive mass.[33] Nevertheless, this situation changed radically with the arrival of modernization.

Modernization, in fact, had its very foundations on the economic and technological development that allowed man to control the environment and as a result, to overcome

[31] Embracing an anthropological view, Deutsch states that "both society and community are developed by social learning" and that " a community consists of people who have learned to communicate with each other and to understand each other well beyond the mere interchange of goods and services." Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966): 91.

[32] Karl Deutsch, "The Growth of Nations," *World Politics* 5 (1953): 171.

[33] Ibidem, 170-171.

isolation by transcending the geographical limits of the regions where they lived. In a parallel but closely interrelated manner, the given society became more and more in contact with other surrounding societies, as well as with modernization forces affecting the daily life of even the formerly very isolated rural unities. This process took place in form of shared experiences, like the expansion of mass media in all of its kinds; "monetization" or the use of coins on markets; the spreading of literacy, a shift to nonagricultural employments, the increasing urbanization and the wage labor, which put different people in touch in cities and factories and, of course, the increasing internal migration. However, modernization also came in the subtle way of a direct, personal "demonstration effect": for example, by the appearance of modern commodities in small villages (i.e. motorcars vs. farm carts, electric bulbs vs. candles) or in the moment when the rural inhabitant had to travel to the city and experiences modern life for the first time, even if in a very restricted way.[34]

Precisely, in the context of wide migrations to the cities, language became essential for people: maybe in a small village the particular dialect or language was understood by everyone, but in the city a person who was not able to understand the prevailing language faced serious disadvantages.[35] Then, in the modern world communication between an increasing number of persons became a matter of opportunities and power, and common language was a central development on it. In fact, nationality for Deutsch (in the sense of belonging to a particular nation) can be defined in terms of a "wide complementarity of social communication" consisting "in the ability to communicate more effectively, and over a wider range of subjects, with members of one large group than with outsiders".[36] […]

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[34] Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969): 22-23

[35] Ibid., 24

[36] Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication,* 97.

Deutsch continues his argument by asserting that, among the many particular cases of nationalism, at least some regularities can be found. Some of them are directly related to economic developments, such as the shift from subsistence agriculture to exchange economies, and the concentration of capital, skill and institutions in some groups and places. Others are connected to the expansion of communications ("communication grids"), linking population centers, regions, important rivers, towns, trade and migration routes, etc. Others can be found in wider social transformations, in a geographical sense (i.e. rural migrations towards towns) but also regarding the increase of social mobility inside the urbanized populations, and even of the diffusion of new political concepts, such as that of self-interest.[37]

Deutsch says self-interest develops in situations where men have to compete against each other for limited opportunities (that is, the modern ages) and so, where necessarily there will be winners and losers. If first being referred to the individual, this concept was later applied to small group' interests, and finally to the whole nation on its relations with other nations –the "national interest". In this sense, nationalism can be seen as the outcome of a combined situation of struggle and social change, of opportunity for social advancement and of loss of individual security, intermingled with political interest:

> Nationalism is one peculiar response to this double challenge of opportunity and insecurity, of loneliness and power. […] To develop thus the economic, intellectual, and military resources of a territory and a population, *and to knit them together in an ever tighter network of communication and complementarity based on the ever grader and more thorough participation of the masses of the populace*—all this is sound

[37] Deutsch, "The Growth of Nations," 173 - 180.

> power politics; and those who carry out such policies tend to be rewarded by the long-run outcome of this contest.[38]

In sum, for Deutsch, the modern-world interplay of social mobilization on the one side, and cultural and political mobilization on the other, is at the core of many of the political transformations leading to nationalism. This is, in fact, the outcome of complex patterns of communication, in the wide sense of the term: language, massive migrations, urbanization, increasing trade, etc. as well as their long-range social, political and economic consequences. Hence, as Deutsch said, nationalism is a power not so much in its own right, but like a whirlpool, it is the visible expression of the meeting of other forces that created it.[39]

Deutsch certainly deserves a lot of attention, even if some of his conclusions can be challenged with the help of the knowledge on nationalism we have gained since they were written. I agree with him on that, in order to create (or "revive") a nation, a pattern of communication must be created among its members –and particularly, between the elites of the nation and the masses. However, it is not always clear that such communication was strong enough prior to national liberation movements; in fact, in some cases in Western Europe (Napoleonic France, Garibaldi's Italy, etc.) but especially in Latin America and the later post-colonial cases, the internal communication patterns (in the wider sense of Deutsch, that is, including language, communication facilities, urbanization, wage labor, etc) were very limited or they did not exist at all. In this sense, communication certainly is important to nationalism, but maybe it is more important for explaining the *pervasiveness* of nationalism, than its rising. In any case, it is true that nationalism (linguistic or not) still marks an essential difference between our community and the strangers; that contemporary communication had

[38] Ibid., 183-184. Emphasis is on the original.
[39] Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication,* 181.

found new channels and as a result, it had created new social outcomes; and that communication now is perhaps even more important for modern societies, politics and nationalisms, than even Deutsch foresaw.

MIROSLAV HROCH

The work of Hroch, first published in Czech and German, became better known in the West after it was published in English in 1985.[40] Instead of Western classic examples of nationalism, he analyzes "the small European nations", meaning those ethnic groups (nationalities) that were subjects of States being controlled by a "titular" nationality. These small nations, even if constituting a recognizable ethnic unit, had no political independence; also, they lacked a cultural production in their language (or it was suppressed) and finally, they had a relationship of dependence or submission to another, dominant national group – that is, they had not "own" political or economic ruling classes.[41]

Hroch aimed to determine the necessary social circumstances for the creation and spreading of nationalism in such groups. In order to do it, he studied the social composition and background of the elites leading the "small nations" movements, making an extensive and very detailed research of cases ranging from Central Europe (such Czechs and Slovaks) to

[40] Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations,* transl. Ben Fowkes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985). The early works of Hroch were published in German in 1968, and in Czech in 1971.

[41] Hroch, *Social Preconditions*, 8-9.

Scandinavia and the Baltic zone, and later expanding his conclusions to examples of Western Europe, including Flemish, Welsh and Catalan peoples.[42]

Even though his research was very extensive, at the end he finally made an extremely brief treatment of the specific cases in his book. However, it is true that the important outcomes of Hroch's research were not the features of the specific cases analyzed (mainly consisting on tables and very short explanations) but the general patterns found among them, and the theoretical framework developed for its explanation.

Hroch also states that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, but makes it clear that it cannot be created out of nothing. Instead, every nationalism is based on some preconditions or "ties", the most important being a "memory" of some common past, which is also considered as part of the common destiny. Also, a "density" of linguistic and cultural common features that facilitate social communication and finally, a conception of equality of all members of the group, organized as a "civil society".[43] However, these "ties" are necessary but not enough for the development of nationalism. An essential factor is still missing, meaning the constitution of political movements challenging the foreign dominance of such nationality. These movements consists of patriots, i.e. "the people who were most easily accessible to national consciousness and ready earlier that other to become national activists".[44] This group, together with their features, roots and social location, is the focus of Hroch's research.

However, perhaps more important than the findings on the patriot's group composition, is the framework developed by Hroch to explain the whole process of national movements. According to him, it comprises three main phases. The first ("Phase A") occurs when a group

[42] Hroch, *Social preconditions*, 31-124; idem, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation," *New Left Review* 198, (March-April 1993): 7-8. Available from http://newleftreview.org/?page=article&view=1702.

[43] Hroch, "From National Movement…" 4-5.

[44] Hroch, *Social Preconditions*, 13.

of patriots, made up mainly by intellectuals with an emotional link with a given national group, start to study the language, culture and history of such a minority. This development – linked to the spreading of the Enlightenment– is the very basis of national movements. However, at phase A the patriotic groups are still very limited in their social influence and sometimes they even avoid political involvement.[45]

Phase B is the most important one for Hroch. In this, the activities of the national elites start to transcend the purely scholar and "folkloric" interest, and the research activities; even if such activities continue, the main objective changes to be essentially political. Hence, the group of patriots engages in political mobilization and struggle. Their goals are, first of all, the spreading of national consciousness among the national group, in order to organize it and win popular support for independence or, at least, political rights for such a national group. For this reason, it is a phase marked by intense patriotic agitation; also, this is the most important moment for the shaping of nationalist ideas, according to political developments.[46]

Finally, phase C indicates the moment when the national movement becomes a truly national movement, having a broad popular participation and a countrywide organizational structure. However, this does not always happen: sometimes, an intense patriotic agitation on behalf of the patriotic elite simply does not lead to a mass movement. Hence, Phase B does not lead to Phase C in all the cases.

After designing such a model of linear development of phases of national movements, Hroch links these phases to the political environment. In this, he makes use of a simple division between two political stages of a given State: one comprising the struggle against absolutism, the bourgeois revolution and the rise of capitalism; and a second, "after the

[45] Ibid., 23.
[46] Ibid., 23-25 *passim*.

victory of capitalism", coincident with the political rising of workers' movements.[47] In this way, Hroch can make a correlation between the three phases of national movements on the one side, and the transition between two kinds of political regimes on the other side. More precisely, he focuses particularly on the period comprised between phase B (elite nationalist agitation) and phase C (mass nationalism) on the one side, and from the early capitalist regime (stage I) to a "constitutional society based on equality on the law" (Stage II).[48] By this, he identify four types of national movements:

Type 1) The national agitation starts during stage I, but mass nationalist movement develops during regime transition. Hence, national agendas are developed under conditions of general political mobilization.

Type 2) National agitation starts also during stage I, but mass movement take place after the transition to a constitutional regime. This "delay" happens because factors like uneven economic development or external pressure.

Type 3) Both national agitation and mass movement develops under the old regime, so they preclude a constitutional revolution and the corresponding political transition.

Type 4) National agitation initiates after the transition between absolutism and constitutionalism is made. The third phase of nationalist mass movement is uncertain: it can come very quickly after phase B, of be delayed for a long period, or even not happen at all.

[47] Ibid., 24-25.
[48] Ibid., 25-30; "From National Movement…" p. 7

In Hroch' scheme, this leads to the following:[49]

TABLE I HROCH'S TYPES OF NATIONALISM								
	Stage I				Transition	Stage II		
Type 1			A	B	C			
Type 2			A	B		C		
Type 3	A	B	C					
Type 4				A		B		?

These types of national movement can be also correlated with the relations between social classes both within and outside the national movement.[50] A national movement of the first type will include different social classes (v. gr. bourgeoisie and proletariat) united under a common political program for regime change. However, the second type will be probably more marked by class antagonisms, because the prevalent political institutions will already have a bourgeois form. The third type will be marked by the prevalence of social relations of a feudal type, as it develops almost entirely under the *ancient regime*. Finally, in the fourth type even the agitation begins well after the transition to a constitutional regime, so the future of the mass movements is uncertain.

In sum, Hroch rejects the perennial character of nations, allocating nationalism in a framework of modern social and political transitions, but at the same time, he clearly states that nationalisms have some bases or "ties" with the past, acting as proto-national elements. Hence, for him nationalism is a modern feature, but shaped by the existing political conditions

[49] Hroch, *Social Preconditions*, 26.

[50] It is important to note that in *Social Preconditions*, Hroch uses some categories more associated with the Marxist tradition (such as bourgeoisie/proletariat dichotomy) and puts more emphasis on social class struggle. In his more modern texts, like "From National Movement…" (1993), a considerably different terminology is employed –i.e. "civil society" vs. "organized labour movement"– and also there is much less emphasis on class. Here I will attempt to make a compromise of both kind of analysis.

and promoted by a very particular social elite, also being developed through fixed phases and during specific stages of the political advance of mankind.

Precisely, a main criticism to Hroch is his vision of nationalism as a linear process, comprising fixed stages, developing between two also fixed types of political regimes. However, is this development of nationalism so linear and unidirectional in fact? Can we make clear distinctions between so broad historical phases?[51] Also, Hroch ends his study by phase C, where nationalism appears to be "fulfilled." But it is not clear what happens after that. Does nationalism become embedded in the regime, does it just disappears, or stays in force until the transition to a new regime?

In these aspects, Hroch reveals the Marxist origins of his theory. It seems necessary to study what happens to nationalism in case the constitutional-democratic-bourgeoisie regime persists for a longer time than planned in Marxist thinking. Hroch became well aware of this; in his later (post-communist) work he became more attentive to the political realm, and the conditions prevailing in both old and new democracies. Such a turn to political conditions allowed hem to adapt his framework to post-communist cases: for example, he rightly pointed out that –generally speaking–the cultural and linguistic issues after communism were not so politically salient as they were in the national conflicts of 19th century in Europe. More important was, in fact, the existence of a "vacuum" in the political, economical and social structures; this offered great incentives for new elites, which could use national arguments in their quest for power. However, he was also aware of the possibility that interests and

[51] Cf. John Breuilly, review of *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe,* by Miroslav Hroch, *The English Historical Review* 101 (April 1986): 448.

tensions inside societies could lead to nationalist movements and confrontations, if they coincide with linguistic of religious differences.[52]

Even if with some critical observations, Hroch' work is extremely important among the modern studies of nationalism. It belongs to the sociological school of studies of nationalism, but compared with other authors of the same school, Hroch has made the clearest attempt to correlate the social transformations suffered by a number of European small nationalities, with broader political developments in the region, like regime change and elite competition. Because of this, Hroch's work is very important for my thesis.

However, I will not focus so much as he did on the composition of the nationalist elite. Instead, I will turn my attention more to the political developments that provoked the emergence and rebellion of such an elite. In other words, I will focus on the political crises permitting the appearance and spreading of the nationalist agitation by the new elites.

CONCLUSION: NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

A clear relationship between nationalism and societies is quite obvious. As the authors reviewed above had shown, there is an intimate, definite link between the change and development of societies, and the emergence of national movements and ideologies on them. In fact, even those authors who maintain that the nations have their roots in former polities or historic ethnic groups (the called "primordialists") do recognize that social change, and

[52] Miroslav Hroch, "What Lessons Can Be Learnt From the Past in Order to Understand the present National Movements in Central and Eastern Europe?" in *The Political and Strategic Implications of the State Crises in Central and Eastern Europe,* ed. Armand Clesse and Andrei Kortunov (Luxembourg: Institute for European and International Studies, 1993): 35-38. Idem, "From National Movement…" 11-12.

particularly modernization processes, are crucial factor for explaining the modern nations, nationalities and nationalisms.

In spite of this, it is also true that the sociological schools of nationalism face some serious problems on their studies, due to their particular way of dealing with nationalism and the very complex subjects of study they use: societies. Hence, those sociological authors aiming to develop convincing theoretical frameworks for nationalism must find regularities among broad social phenomena, comprising processes that sometimes last centuries, and comparing very different populations. Consequently, they often arrive to attractive but extremely general conclusions, sometimes having limited value for analysis of specific cases. Furthermore, even those authors attempting to make a more particular analysis, focusing on some aspects of social change in particular instances, tend to arrive to conclusions applicable to a very limited set of cases, but unsuitable to explain the rest. To some degree this is a logical outcome, due to the number of societies in the world and their very different, sometimes conflicting characteristics.

By saying this, I do not want to underestimate the work of those authors belonging or mainly influenced by sociological schools. Quite the opposite: their analyses are not only extremely valuable, but actually indispensable for the task of finding rational explanations of nationalism in both theory and case studies. What I propose here is that their work must not be seen as giving explanations "on the origin and spread of nationalism", but about particular social facts and developments that, combined with many other inputs and depending the particular circumstances, create some of the basis for nationalisms and national movements. That is, sociological studies can explain how some of the many foundations for nationalism appear, but they cannot explain *why nationalism itself appears*, nor why is accepted by the masses. In this sense, it really seems more appropriate to speak about "social preconditions of nationalism" than of some social machinery crafting "nations and nationalism".

Any answer to the complicated question of what creates nationalism, must necessarily take into account several factors, because nationalism is probably one of the most complex subjects of study in the humanities and social sciences. Therefore, any attempt to explain it according to a single view will probably lead to (very) partial and limited explanations. In this thesis, nationalism is seen as both a political and social phenomenon –of course, it is much more than that– and therefore, for me the best way to explain nationalism is by making a close link between the broad, long-lasting social forces and changes which influenced the apparition and spreading of nationalism, with the particular political circumstances in which that changes happened. Hence, a balance can be made.

I know that even in this case, the conclusions will be necessarily partial. However, they aim to contribute to the debate regarding why national movements appear some times in quite unexpected social circumstances, receiving broad popular support, while in other cases that seemingly have all the conditions for nationalist outbursts, these movements just fail to emerge or are of very limited influence. This will be my task on the following pages; I will try to show that, apart from broad social transformations, nationalism must be explained according to particular political circumstances, such as a legitimacy crisis of the political regimes governing such societies.

CHAPTER TWO

LEGITIMACY AND NATIONALISM

INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTS

Nationalism is a multidimensional phenomenon, so it can be analyzed in several ways. However, it is true that nationalism always have at its core some far-reaching conceptions about the nature, organization and goals of a human community, as well as on the duties and rights of the individuals which belong to it. In this sense, nationalism is always about community organization and power; hence social and political realms cannot be separated on its study without leading to a very partial analysis, and to incomplete conclusions.

The link between nationalism and politics has been extensively studied. Even if I wish to do so, I will not be able here to make a study on the work of the many scholars belonging to the political stream of studies on nationalism. This because my thesis does not attempt to make a study of the debate between schools and streams, but only to take some of the existing contributions that are relevant for my own analysis, as it has been already made in the last chapter concerning the social preconditions of nationalism.

Generally speaking, the ideological, conceptual and analytical differences between the particular schools of the political stream (i.e. Marxists vs. liberals) tend to be even broader than those belonging to the sociological stream. In any case, as in the present chapter I will deal mainly with concepts related to political science, the work by Eric Hobsbawm and John

Breuilly[53] will be utilized as general background, combined with the thoughts of David Beetham on the concept of legitimacy.[54]

Legitimacy and legitimation

In political science and political discourse, the concept of legitimacy is central, as it refers to the very foundations of the use of power. Hence, it provides the core argumentation for the imposition of political structures on societies, for the creation and enforcing of rules, and for the capability of officers and judges to enforce such laws upon the individuals. Even if other organizations apart from states can also have considerable ability for enforcing their will and for reaching their goals (i.e. mafias), the power of such organizations is widely regarded as not legitimate.

During the most part of 20th century, the central referent for the understanding of legitimacy has been the definition developed by Max Weber (which had had a considerably influence on those adopted by posterior scholars) regarding the three types of legitimate domination he identified: rational/legal, traditional and charismatic.[55] However, the Weberian definition also has been subjected to criticism as misleading: according to it, the legitimacy of a political regime is derived mainly from the people's belief in such legitimacy.[56] Because of this, the basis of legitimacy lay on very subjective grounds, creating confusion about when a given regime is legitimate or not. Also, it makes difficult –or too easy– to reach conclusions

[53] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993).

[54] David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1991).

[55] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenter Roth and Claus Wittich. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978): 212-216.

[56] Beetham, 6-8.

on the degree of legitimacy of a given regime.[57] Additionally, Weber's definition and those based on it tends to obscure the many actors and complex forces intervening in the creation of beliefs regarding legitimacy in a given population, also ignoring other elements that are not beliefs at all but are certainly relevant for legitimacy, such as the consent expressed through actions.[58]

Looking at these shortcomings and taking into account the political transformations since the nineties, David Beetham offers a different view. In his reasoning, legitimacy is far a more complex fact than just beliefs on particular bodies, and it cannot be adequately assessed just by opinion polls. Instead, he proposes to view legitimacy as a concept with much deeper significance, linked not to subjective opinions, but on the more objective features of the relation between those social groups having political power, and those being subordinates. Then the fundamental questions regarding a legitimate power are: Where authority comes from? Why these particular rules, and no others, exist in our society? Beetham base the answers on three interrelated dimensions:

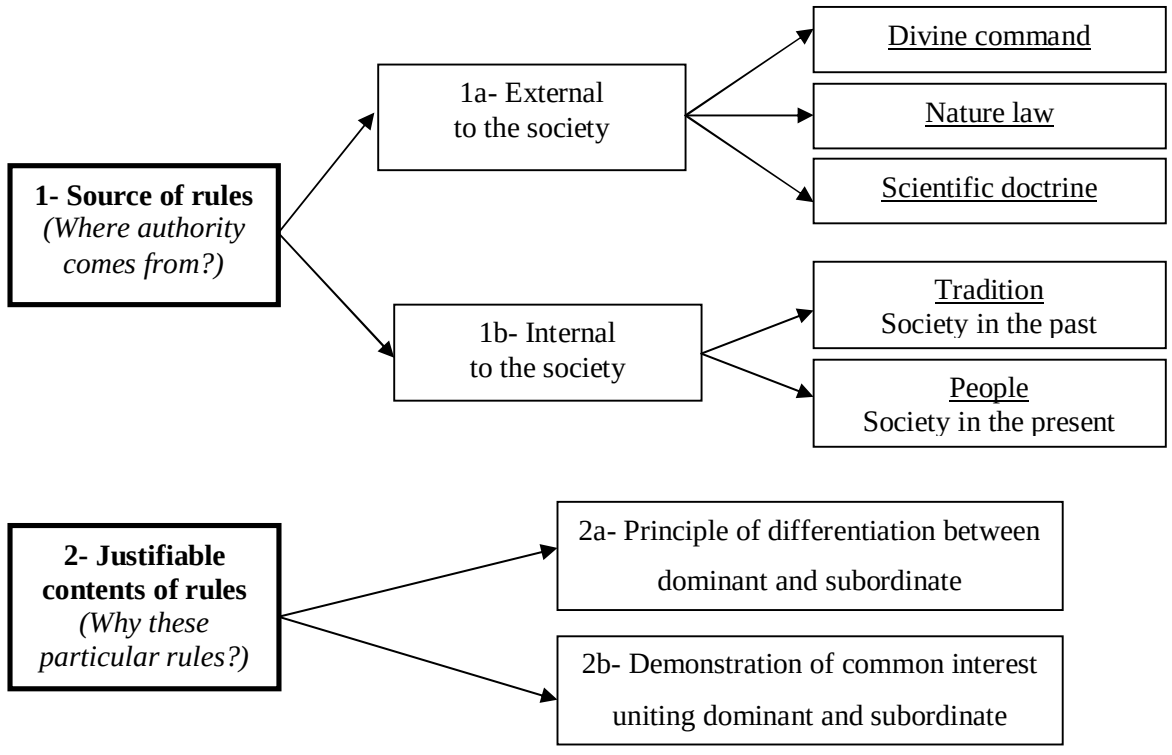
1. The degree of conformity of institutions and political structures with the established rules, especially regarding the acquisition and exercise of power.
2. The way those rules and institutions that govern the society, are justified in terms of beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate social sectors.
3. The demonstrable consent and support on behalf of the subordinate sectors regarding the existing regime and its power structures, institutions and rules.[59]

[57] Ibidem, 8-10.
[58] Ibidem, 11-12.
[59] Ibidem, 15-25, 64-99 passim.

The first point is more or less clear: the power must be acquired, exercised and transferred according to the existing rules. Any attempt by some social group or political force for taking the power in any other way than the previously agreed between the parties, constitute a clear breach of legitimacy.

The second and third dimensions of legitimation are of particular interest. According to Beetham, the sources of the legitimacy of a regime are a series of beliefs common to both rulers and ruled, regarding the ideological conceptions, core values and common aims of the society; consequently, these beliefs are also directly related to the power conferred to the rulers to govern the society and achieve those aims. Therefore, the shared beliefs constitute the basis for legitimacy in two ways: by stipulating an authoritative source of rules, and by producing explanations on the content of the particular existing norms.

Figure 1 - Legitimacy as justifiability rules of power



Source: Beetham, 72.

The first part, regarding the source of rules, attempt to give a coherent and convincing answer to the question: Where authority comes from? Several responses can be articulated. In Beetham's view, the authoritative sources of rules [figure 1, point 1] can be divided in two subtypes, external and internal, according to its relation with the society. In turn, the external sources include three main types as well [figure 1, point 1a]. The first of these (divine command) points at transcendent causes for explaining the legitimacy of power structure and rules. This is a notion that can be easily linked to absolutist monarchical regimes; that is, the ruler is on power by God's will.[60]

The second internal authoritative source of rules (natural law) derives legitimacy from supposedly universal and permanent principles, rooted in nature and human conditions. The *ius gentium*, but specially the enlightened ideas regarding human and citizen rights, can be examples of it.[61] Finally, the third internal source (scientific doctrines) derives regime legitimacy from supposedly verifiable observations and reasoning, then organizing social and political life according to the findings. These are the arguments that, as example, can be found in the *laissez-faire* liberalism regarding human behavior, on social Darwinism concerning human progress and on Marxism about class struggle. Despite their profound differences, all of these ideologies claim to be product of scientifically consistent reasoning.[62] This in turn leads to the empowerment of a group of specialists and technicians, or people who "knows" the correct way to achieve the community goals.

In contrast with these external sources of legitimacy –but quite possibly complementing them– the internal sources of explanations [figure 1, part 1b] look for the basis of legitimate

[60] Ibidem, 71.
[61] Ibidem, 71-73.
[62] Ibidem, 73.

authority on the human group itself.[63] Here are two subtypes of sources. The first is focused on the common past of the group, taking it as the main source of legitimacy. Hence, history and traditions became the main references for assess legitimacy of the existing political and social structures; also, tradition marks the aims that the group should have for its common future. Hence, the empowered groups are those having knowledge of the past (elders) or the guardians of traditions.[64] In contrast, the second internal source of legitimate rules is related to the group in the present times. Hence, it takes the "people", as well as its characteristics and particularly its will, as the key variables for explaining legitimacy. This conception is clearly related to republicanism, and it leads to the empowerment of those leaders who supposedly represent such popular will.[65]

As it already can be seen, internal and external authoritative sources of legitimate rules can lead to very diverse political arrangements, and to the creation of different ruling elites. However, it is difficult to think on any given political regime as a "pure" case of one or another source of legitimation. The combination of different argumentations seems to be more plausible; in fact, we could say that most contemporary regimes show traces of the majority of them.

To assess the sources of the legitimacy is just one part of the legitimation process of a regime. There is also need for coherent explanations about why the existing norms and structures, and no others, are in force. This must be answered by two arguments: first, the creation of a legitimate regime implies a division of labor that in turn, leads to the creation of relations of dominance and subordination [figure 1, point 2a] defined according to the access to –or exclusion from– key material resources, activities or skills, i.e. land, governmental or

[63] Ibidem, 64-74.
[64] Ibidem, 74-76.
[65] Ibidem, 74-76.

religious posts, or arms training. This is necessary to create stability and order in such regime.[66] However, the reasons for the existence of that particular arrangement of dominant and subordinate groups must be coherent with the ideas and values contained in the sources of legitimacy, and of course, those reasons also must be known by the society. As long as the explanations for inequality seem coherent with the core beliefs, the regime will enjoy legitimacy.

Hence, the latter is a principle of legitimacy based on differentiation. But how to explain the bounds uniting both dominant and subordinate groups? Legitimation also implies the existence of common interests by both elites and commons, regarding the contents of the existing rules.[67] This common interest [figure 1, point 2a] is the core reason for maintaining such labor division and inequality and can imply several aspects, such as the trade of goods or contributions in exchange of some services commonly needed, or the agreement for substituting some individual liberties for personal security. So to speak, the common interests fix the "terms of trade" between dominant and subordinate groups, then legitimizing the whole agreement. Hence, legitimacy is related to the shared core beliefs in a society but also to the consequences of the application of such beliefs –including the creation of political inequalities– together with the identification and preservation of the grounds that gives justification to such inequality in front of the society.

It is clear that Beetham's theory is focused on political regimes, especially on the legitimacy of its origins and structure. It is less concerned with their particular behavior and features. Therefore, this concept of legitimacy is related to specific political bodies (governments, parties, public institutions) only in an indirect way. As example, in this case

[66] Ibidem, 76-82
[67] Ibidem, 82-90.

government policies are not so relevant, as long as they do not constitute a breach of the legal system, or make an attack on the core shared beliefs providing legitimacy to the regime, or undermine the conviction of a common interest between dominant and subordinate sectors.

Hence, governmental performance for Beetham must be related in first instance to the stability of a particular administration, not to the legitimacy of the regime as a whole.[68] And this seems to be quite coherent: a government performing badly in economic terms does not automatically invalidates the entire political and economic system, but just points at the failure of one of its components, then calling to the modification of policies and institutions, to substitution of particular members of a cabinet or, in any case, to the change of the entire administration. The contrary is also true: a government being particularly successful on some of its policies does not lead to the conclusion that the whole existing political regime is adequate or legitimate. It only shows that successful policies *can* be implemented in that regime.

However, government performance can turn to be extremely important for the legitimacy of a political regime, if such performance –especially in some fields– is linked to the breach of the common interests linking dominant and subordinate groups.[69] That is, if an important part of the justification of the existing political hierarchies, laws and institutions is regarding the material benefices that such arrangement can bring to both dominant and subordinate, then the effective delivery of such benefices becomes a matter of legitimacy.

Hence, if instead of constituting isolated cases, the good or bad performance shows a consistent pattern for different governments on areas deemed as relevant by the population, (like economic growth, social service provision, environmental situation) in a situation where

[68] Ibidem, 135-136.
[69] Ibidem, 136-150.

"the people" –together with its interests, demands that called "popular will"– is one of the main sources of political legitimacy, then is quite possible that the regime as a whole, and not only the particular governments and officers, will be pointed as the cause of the failures. It will be the regime that will be evaluated as being efficient or not. Hence, the actions taken by governments can certainly have great influence on the good or bad will of the subordinate towards the dominant groups.

In this sense, regime legitimation is a dynamic process. It does not stop once a given agreement has been reached; instead, the legitimacy of the political system must be continuously emphasized; the news of its achievements spread, and the ideas sustaining the regime reinforced, in order to maintain the common convictions sustaining the regime. This can be made by several ways (mass media is just one of them) but there are also other means; as example, public rituals promoted among and followed by the population, remembering them on the common history, on the sources of legitimacy, on the reasons of the existence of the political hierarchies and of the obligations that everybody has as a member of that group.[70] Other example is the everyday use of symbols and messages that, in a very subtle but constant way, remind the population about the nature and features of the political institutions.[71]

Hence, both government performance and public reminds of the regime ideals and advantages are important not only to governments, but to regimes. It can be said that both factors can be still incorporated on Beetham's scheme, as they refer to the existence of a

[70] See as example Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, eds., *Staging the past: the politics of commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2001). Also, for the Soviet case see Christel Lane, "Legitimacy and Power in the Soviet Union through Socialist Ritual," *British Journal of Political Science* 14, no. 2 (1984):207-217; Idem, *The rites of rules: rituals in industrial societies.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 24-44.

[71] For a study of this, focused on national symbols, see Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London: Sage, 1995): 37-59, 93-127.

common interest uniting dominant and subordinate. This is probably true, but I want to stress them as very important and fairly visible aspects of the legitimacy concerns of a given regime. Furthermore, both are features more fit to being analyzed and evaluated in a given regime, than the abstract, deeper beliefs on the origins of its legitimacy.

To sum up what has been said up to this point: the legitimate exercise of power is linked not only with the conformity with the existing rules, and the popular perception of such legitimacy. These are important factors, but do not suffice to explain why some regimes face challenges to their legitimacy, while other regimes that could be deemed as evidently illegitimate according to some values, in fact enjoy the support of their populations. Also, the existing rules on power accession can, in fact, be highly illegitimate in the eyes of the society as a whole or, at least, in those of the subordinate groups. Moreover, the measurement of popular support –besides being complex and always debatable on its outcomes– does not really tell us much about the power relations shaping such support.[72]

A more objective account is the correspondence between the ideas supporting the rules of power on a given regime, and the actions of the regime itself. If such connection between shared principles and reality is clear, then the regime will enjoy legitimacy in front of its population, and particular political problems will probably not seriously affect it. However, in cases of repeated poor performance, the public attention can be turned from the specific governments to the contents of the rules supporting the whole political arrangement, then creating doubts on its legitimacy. Alternatively, such situation of poor governmental

[72] As Beetham says, "To treat any collective as an undifferentiated whole, as a single entity with definable purposes and interests, is to overlook the way these purposes and interests are both constructed by and mediated through its internal relations of power." Beetham, 47.

performance can cast reservations among the population, regarding the real existence of shared interests between dominant and subordinate.

Legitimacy crisis

The analysis above allows us to find the specific ways in which a regime can face challenges to its legitimacy. If we follow Beetham again, there are three: First is the plain *illegitimacy,* implying a breach of the constitutional order, in situations of coup d'état, revolution, conquest or secession; second, a *legitimacy deficit* happening when there is a discrepancy between the actual constitutional order and the beliefs that justify such order, and/or when constitutional rules become unable to create successful government performance; third, *delegitimation* occurring when there is a withdrawal of consent by those which consent is, precisely, necessary to the legitimacy of the regime.[73] This can be evident by, as example, mass demonstrations or civil disobedience.

The three situations can happen together or in rapid succession, such when repeated poor governmental performance leads to a perception by some relevant social actors regarding a legitimacy deficit of the whole regime, being followed then by delegitimation in form of strikes or demonstrations and finally, to a revolution.[74] This scheme is certainly applicable to nationalist struggles, and can be related to a study like Hroch's.

I agree with Beetham classification of the three forms of legitimacy loss, but for simplicity reasons I will use the term *legitimacy crisis* as an embracing concept, meaning *a situation when a political regime faces a challenge to the shared beliefs that sustain its rule,* then also implying a contestation to:

[73] Ibidem, 15-25, 205-210.
[74] Ibidem, 211.

1. The rules, traditions and laws emanated from such regime;
2. The justifications made for the enforcement of such norms;
3. The existence and power of the institutions controlling that regime;
4. The distribution of power between the social and political actors involved.

This situation can happen in several forms. However, it always comprises a particular or group of points of criticism of a regime, and an elite that voices such concerns and organizes the dissent. It is not related to the everyday conflicts and negotiation of politics, implying the confrontation of particular ideas and specific interests; it is more profound and can be related to the ability of the system to accomplish common goals, to accommodate and give satisfactory responses to conflicts within the society, and to offer at least some advantages and compensations to all the members of the society. When such advantages and compensations do not suffice to justify the existing rules and hierarchies sustained by the regime, then its legitimacy is on stake.

At this moment it must already be clear that, by basing my arguments mainly on Beetham's, I'm taking a different view from other modern authors who focused on the legitimacy crisis of capitalist welfare state.[75] I find Beetham's conceptualization of legitimacy much more useful, as it can be applied to any kind of political regime. Also, it focuses on the particular interest but also on the values and base beliefs making a given regime legitimate in the eyes of its own population. Then, a legitimation crisis then can be directly linked to particular populations and their politically relevant sectors, involving the very ideological foundations of the dominance and subordination relations within a given regime.

75 Mainly Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the welfare state,* ed. John Keane (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984); and Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992)

Concepts on the nation

Apart of the related with legitimacy, I will use other concepts resulting from the review of literature on nationalism. The following are just working definitions, made in order to prevent the endless definition debates existing on the study of nationalism.

1. *Proto-national elements:* Set of attributes of a human group, which are regarded as being particular of it. They can include some more or less objective features –a particular language, a given ethnic group, a specific religion, a shared territory– but also some highly subjective and variable conceptions, such as a common history, a given mythology or a shared culture. Alone or in combination, these elements are presented as being the foundations of the nation's distinctiveness and as fundamental part of national identity.
2. *Nation:* Human community which comprises different social classes and is delimitated by political and/or intellectual elites according to some proto-national elements. This delimitation is made both on geographic and inclusion/exclusion terms, hence setting up both borders and membership of the nation, and also creating the basis for claims of political rights for that community.
3. *Nationalism*: Ideology maintaining that a given nation (see above) has common ideals, interests and goals, morally and permanently superior to those of any person or group belonging to such nation, and those of the foreigners happening to be inside the geographical limits of the nation.
4. *National movement*: Political movement with nationalist ideology, being actively supported by the masses or at least a large, politically influential multi-class sector of the given nation.

These are the main definitions I will use for the next pages, which introduces my analysis regarding legitimacy crisis of political regimes in their relation with the spreading of nationalist movements.

LEGITIMACY CRISIS ON THE LATE YUGOSLAVIAN REGIME

After a crisis implying its legitimacy, no regime remains the same. Sometimes, it manages to make reforms and therefore, to respond to the public demands; and by reinforcing and appealing to the core beliefs of the community, it also can manage to recover at least part of its former legitimacy. However, it can also happen that the existing regime is simply not able or not willing to react, or that its legitimacy crisis is so deep, that it leads to an overthrown, a revolution or even the dissolution of the State. This last, extreme case can be illuminating respect to the relation between legitimacy crisis and nationalism, and it will be very briefly addressed on the following pages.

The Yugoslavian crisis of 1980-1990 and its effects

The last years of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFYR) were especially difficult. Even if the political challenges and disagreements can be traced at least to the death of Marshall Tito on 1980, the year 1987 was undoubtedly critical, as it marked the decisive advancement of a particular political elite under the leadership of Slobodan Milošević to the power structures of Serbia, starting with a purge of its political rivals in the Communist Party of Serbia. Also, in that year Milošević led the first massive demonstration with an evident Serbian nationalist character, on Kosova Polje (June 28, 1987). Alongside, a process of challenge was taking place, on behalf of the leaderships of the diverse federal units that

comprised the SFYR,[76] against the power and attributions of the federal government. Then, in just two years (1991 and 1992) SFYR was dismembered into five different states.[77] The SFYR dissolution offers a very interesting case of legitimacy crisis and nationalism response, especially since the former Federation was (in theory) *not* primarily based on national values, but along a socialist ideology and beliefs. Certainly, the constituent republics and administrative regions were organized according national principles, but this was checked by a Federal government aiming at assuring the cooperation between the component parts of the Yugoslavian State. In fact, in view of some scholars the basis of the legitimacy of the Yugoslavian regime and its key institutions –like the Communist Party– was not only the construction of socialism and the economic advancement of its population, but also the preemption of conflicts between the communities by "containing, directing, regulating, or adjudicating the politization of ethnicity".[78] This was certainly a relevant point, taking into account the history of civic unrest and interethnic violence that had preceded the history of Yugoslavia almost since its foundation.[79]

Hence, from the very structure of the SFRY as a socialist, multiethnic, federal regime, we can already detect some of the fundamental beliefs that sustained it. First of all, as a socialist regime it was organized according to Marxist values –even if in Yugoslavia they took a particular form, the denominated self-management socialism. This resulted in a

[76] Up to 1991, the SFRY comprised the Socialist Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, as well as Kosovo and Vodjovina as Socialist Autonomous Provinces within Serbia.

[77] Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia declared their independence on 1991, while Bosnia-Herzegovina did it on 1992 and Montenegro on 2006. Also, even if Kosovo is still nominally a part of Serbia, *de facto* is a UN protectorate since 1999. That implies that Vodjovina is the only federal unit of the former SFRY that has not become in fact a separate political entity.

[78] Joseph Rothschild, "Observations on Political Legitimacy in Contemporary Europe," *Political Science Quarterly* 92, no. 3 (1977): 492.

[79] See, Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson-Indiana University Press, 2006): 35-162.

political regime characterized by an emphasis in industrialization combined with provision of social services for population, but also on a productive model based on worker's empowerment, decentralization, public enterprise autonomy and social ownership of the means of production.

However, that was mainly in theory and political discourse. The reality was certainly other.[80] The system fell in crisis after years of a continued, poor economic and governmental performance, and the eighties were decades of increasing economical and social difficulties in SFRY, which impacted directly on the population. Therefore, in 1980 there were almost a 40% annual inflation and 12% unemployment. In spite of the adoption in 1983 of a plan for economic reform, by the end of 1985 unemployment had grown to 15% while inflation was approaching 100%.[81] It was not until 1990 that a strong economic adjustment program, directed by Prime Minister Ante Marković, managed to reduce inflation from a yearly 2685% in December 1989, to 120% on December 1990.[82]

To fully appreciate was does this figures mean in terms of legitimacy, we must recall that, generally speaking, on communist regimes the political and economic restrictions over population were compensated (at least in some moments) with a higher level of social welfare, like on educational, house and health services, as well as some other rewards such as with commodity price control, career security and mobility and even some economic growth. However, when such regimes started to face difficulties in delivering "their side of the

[80] See Laslo Sekelj, *Yugoslavia: The Process of Disintegration*, trans. Vera Vukelic (Highland Lakes: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1993): 229 – 244.

[81] V. P. Gagnon, Jr. "Yugoslavia: Prospects For Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 19-20

[82] Rocha, Roberto. *Inflation and stabilization in Yugoslavia.* Washington: World Bank, 1991. Available from: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/1991/08/01/000009265_3961001213920/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf

politico-economic contract," their legitimacy became seriously affected.[83] In the case of Yugoslavia, this was aggravated by the political inability between the different federal for reaching a consensus on economic reforms, something that was interpreted as a failure of the entire regime.

Moreover, the impact of such situation was highly unequal across the different regions of the federation, thus deepening the already existing inequalities. For example, the 1987 per capita incomes and illiteracy rate of Kosovo were 601 dinars and 25.7%, versus 4,828 and 1.4% of Slovenia.[84] Also, while in 1955, between Slovenia and Kosovo there was a gap in the per capita social product of five to one; in 1989, it was eight to one.[85] This implies that the regime was not only unable to fulfill the expectations regarding development; it was actually creating inequality, despite the fact that equality can be regarded as one of the foundational beliefs of the communist regimes. Also, due to the particular political and administrative arrangements in SFRY, it was causing regional (hence ethnic) differences as well.

The breakup of the common interest

With the economic, social and political crisis of 1980-1990 and the latter events, the SFRY experimented one of the most extreme cases of legitimacy crisis of a regime. Being more specific and following Beetham's terminology, Yugoslavia first faced during the eighties a poor economic and governmental performance, combined with a political paralysis, which in

[83] Stephen White, "Economic Performance and Communist Legitimacy," *World Politics* 38, no. 3:463.

[84] Sergej Flere, "Explaining Ethnic Antagonism in Yugoslavia," *European Sociological Review* 7, no. 3:189.

[85] Bruno Dallago and Milica Uvilic, "The Distributive Consequences of Nationalism: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 1: 74. The "per capita social product" includes "the value added of the productive sectors of the economy, thus excluding most (non-productive) services such as education, health, defense, banking." Ibidem, 88:n8.

the end caused a legitimacy crisis. This situation had as further effects social movements, protests and claims, leading to a further delegitimation; also, this social unrest took social, but also a regional and ethnic dimensions. Finally, the multiple secessions and the subsequent civil wars created a situation of plain illegitimacy.

Such crisis can only be explained in function of a discredit of the foundational, shared beliefs that once supported the SFRY. From the above date, we can detect that the crisis damaged at least two of such beliefs: first, the socialist belief in progress, and its expression on the social and economical advancement of the workers; second, the doctrine on the equality of the constituent national groups, proper of the SFRY. Both were destroyed in face of the rampant inflation and unemployment that affected to all the inhabitants, but also amplified the acute regional differences in terms of well-being. In this situation, it was matter of time for the population to answer the call made by new elites, proposing the creation of new entities according to national basis, hence comprising societies defined by a sort of attributes, and legitimated by different ideas.

NATIONALISM AND SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Nationalism, as a body of ideas regarding the correct organization, values and goals of societies, can be linked to any of the five sources of legitimacy mentioned on Beetham's theory. That is, nationalism can be linked to metaphysical, enlightened and scientific thoughts, and certainly to references of the historical character of the national community and of the nation as being the expression of the popular will. It seems probable that all cases of nationalist movements will incorporate a little bit of all such conceptions in their discourse. In the next pages, I will review just two of the five sources of legitimacy pointed by Beetham [see above, figure 1], which I considered particularly salient in nationalist movements and ideologues, and specially on the Yugoslavian case: divine commandment and tradition.

The religious influence

In nationalist ideology, the nation is the most important unit of human organization. According to this view, nations are historical, natural, even spiritual communities. Their existence is treated by nationalist ideologues and politicians as an evident truth; their frequent reply to the question on why so many of them became organized as political units only in a very late stage of its history, is that these nations (usually its own) were "dormant" or repressed until that moment. Hence, in order to be awakened or liberated, the knowledge on the nation must be spread, the national identity must be revived and continually enforced in the public discourse, and the rights of the nation must be demanded and enforced by the political mobilization of the masses.

The relation between religion and nationalism is well known. Many nationalist ideologues and movements refer to their nations as having a special relation with the divinity; that is, is God himself who watch and take care of the fate of the nation against the obstacles. In fact, some movements and regimes claim that their nations were heavenly chosen to fulfill special purposes, such as to spread God's commandments, unite their congregations or create moral examples for the world. Also the history of the nation as well as its present situation, its aims and even its interests are expressed in terms of sacred rights and responsibilities.[86]

It is probable that a regime based on nationalist ideas, ruling over a society closely associated with a particular religion, will turn to arguments linked to a divine commandment. Depending on the case, also, the moral values, commandments festivities, etc. characteristic of such religion can be incorporated into the political doctrine and activities of the regime. In

[86] See, as example, Conor Cruise O'Brien, *God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Anthony Smith, *Chosen peoples: sacred sources of national identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); "

this way, the link between the nation and God is reinforced. Religion on such regime will be continuously present on the public life, and the use of religious symbols in politics will be linked to the very foundations of the state in form of civic/religious festivities, or as myths and claims of glorious past, present oppression and future redemption[87] or, in the extreme, leading to regimes where religious concepts, romantic influences and a peculiar version or popular sovereignty mixed into political messianism, which is directly related to radical nationalism.[88]

In sum: nationalism permits to link closely the national community with the divinity, enabling a regime or political movement to offer explanations based on divine commandment in order to command a society towards common goals. Even if in the modern world, regimes justified according divine commandment are fewer than in the 19th century and before, it can be seen that some discourses used to justify the actions taken by political movements, governments and regimes, can be regarded as having a religious influence. This is particularly true for national movements organized against enemies having a different creed.

> Six centuries ago, Serbia heroically defended itself in the field of Kosovo, but it also defended Europe. Serbia was at that time the bastion that defended the European culture, religion, and European society in general. […] In this spirit we now endeavor to build a society, rich and democratic,

[87] Anthony Smith, "The Golden Age and Nationalist Renewal," in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. Schöplflin and Hosking, 36-59. Idem, "Ethnic election and national destiny: some religious origins of nationalist ideals," *Nations and nationalism*, 5 no.3 (1999):333–355; Cruise O'Brien, *God Land.*

[88] In this respect, see Talmon, *Mesianismo politico: la etapa romántica* (Political Messianism: the Romantic Phase) trans. Antonio Gobernado (Mexico City: Aguilar, 1969); idem, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Mercury, 1961).

> and thus to contribute to the prosperity of this beautiful country, this unjustly suffering country […][89]

In Milošević's speech, a 14th century battle between Ottomans and Serbs is linked to a present political situation, namely Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. The religious affiliations are presented as existent, even if today religion is not as socially important as in the past, and despite the fact that the real troubles that the society is facing are related to other realms such as economics. However, by a discourse that creates the image of a "beautiful, unjustly suffering country", whose inhabitants are defenders of Europe (Christian Europe?) and the current opponent is associate in religious terms with the former enemy and occupier, then the grounds for the legitimation of a regime –at least partially– according to divine sources can be made.

Tradition and nation

The very idea of nationalism is based on history and continuity. On the discourse of the nationalist ideologues and politicians, the own nation is regarded as a perennial entity, having an objective existence since immemorial times. In fact, any nation is based on the premises that it is a differentiated community and has a direct link with a remote past. Hence, the legitimacy of a political regime with national basis, depends on demonstrate how it is both unique and antique.

Hence, a clear link must be made between the present people and their antecessors. This is made by the reaffirmation of a cultural (frequently linguistic as well) separateness with

[89] Slobodan Milošević, "600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo," (speech at Gazimestan on 28 June, 1989) Available from:
http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/62/332.html

other nations. For this reason, historical, cultural and anthropological researches are so important for nationalism, but not only on the first stages of the national revival movements; the display of the results of the investigations regarding the common past is as important as the finding themselves. Therefore, construction of museums and the spread of historical narratives through cultural activities constitute key parts of the discourse and actions of those political regimes based on nationalism.[90]

Myths are an integral part of this effort, serving as instruments for transference of identity between generations, keeping in this way the memory of a community. Also, they constitute devices for the communication of ideals, and help people to explain reality and simplify complexity.[91] In this sense, myths and invented traditions are tools for political mobilization and means for regime legitimation.[92]

Being cultural distinctiveness and antiquity so important for nationalism, the cultural and academic elites play an extremely important role on the construction of nationalism, offering the foundations and evidences of the existence of such differentiated, ancient national community. In fact, the voice of the cultural and academic elites can be determinant in the future of a nation and for challenging the legitimacy of an existing, non-national regime:

> A serious crisis has engulfed not only the political and economic arenas, but Yugoslavia's entire system of law and order as well. Idleness and irresponsibility at work, corruption and nepotism, a lack of confidence in and disregard for the law, bureaucratic obstinacy, growing mistrust among

[90] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 178-182.

[91] George Schöpflin, "The functions of Myth and Taxonomy of Myths," in *Myths and Nationhood,* eds. George Schöpflin and Geoffrey Hosking, (London: C. Hurst, 1997): 27-28.

[92] Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914" in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 263-307.

> individuals, and increasingly arrogant individual and group egoism have become daily phenomena. […]
>
> Complete national and cultural integrity of the Serbian people is their historic and democratic right, no matter in which republic or province they might find themselves living. [But] In less than fifty years, over two successive generations, the Serbian nation has been exposed […] to physical extermination, to forced assimilation, to religious conversion, to cultural genocide, to ideological indoctrination, and to the denigration and renunciation of their own traditions beneath an imposed guilt complex […] the Serbian nation must have an opportunity to find itself again and become a historical agent, must re-acquire an awareness of its historical and spiritual being, must look its economic and cultural interests square in the eyes, and must find a modern social and national program that will inspire this generation and generations to come.[93]

Hence, cultural and historical reasons (proven or not) become the ground for contemporary demands, and even for the future political action. The political attractive of nationalism is that is able to sustain any regime, as long it encompasses as a particular, distinctive nation, and its history can traced into the past. Such conceptions are able to create bounds and identities between national elites and the rest of the nation, and they can also produce an uncontestable source of authority for a political regime –namely, the nation itself.

CONCLUSION: NATIONALISM AS A TOOL FOR LEGITIMATION

Political regimes need an authoritative, morally solid source for justify their existence, and to give good reason for the power divisions within them. In this way, they can guarantee their subsistence, ensure population's allegiance, and maintain internal order. Then, the reason for

[93] Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU), *Memorandum 1986.* Available from: http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/reports/memorandumSANU.htm

the obligation for the common individual to obey the system laws and the leaders' commands, seems coherent and adequate according to values shared to all the community: submission to God's commands or, in more modern times, to peoples' will.

However, a regime understood in that way is also a contract. And as every contract, it can be broken. In exchange for allegiance and obedience, the regime is bounded to comply with its obligations: first, to respect its own norms; second, to be congruent with the shared, core beliefs of the community as a whole; third, to guarantee the common interests linking dominant and subordinates. If the regime fails to do it in any way, or the population is not willing anymore to support this situation, then a legitimacy crisis happen. In such case, the population can be tempted to follow those leaders that promote a regime change: that is, a new organization of the community, along new lines, with new values and its own norms.

Is precisely in this situation that nationalism has an immense advantage. It a so broad concept, that it can support different views of the moral foundations of the community. Therefore, different regimes can use it. Nonetheless, it can also be used as an appealing and powerful political tool against the regimes that had lost their legitimacy. The example of Yugoslavia showed precisely that: a regime losing the "faith" of its population (both elites and commons) on the sources of its legitimacy. The contrast between the grand ideas supporting the Yugoslavian regime and the reality, created a legitimacy crisis and opened the door for the development of alternate schemes of social and political organization, like those regimes based on the common belief of a nation, its uniqueness and its consecrated character.

CONCLUSION

NATIONALISM AS A POLITICAL DEVICE ON LEGITIMACY CRISIS

It has been argued that, for the appearance and growth of nationalism, a series of social conditions are required; the arguments of those authors reviewed on the first part of this thesis show this. They made fairly clear that economic modernization, urbanization, literacy and means of communication among others, are very important elements on the creation, shaping and extension of nationalist ideas and of nationalist movements. As example, a key factor is the presence of differentiated populations inside a given society, able and willing to support nationalist struggles. Certainly, these populations are much more easier to be found and be organized on those societies having fair degrees of urbanization, literacy, communication, etc. Also in this sense, there is a relation between nationalism and social change.

However, I have argued on this thesis that these social factors are not sufficient for an explanation of the genesis of nationalism: that is, modernization and social change does not equal nationalism. There is at least one additional variable that must be taken into account, and that is the legitimacy of the existing social and political regime. In fact, this variable appears to be as important as the urbanization or literacy conditions, if not more.

In a situation where a given regime faces a legitimacy crisis, the very foundations of the social and political order came under attack. In such case, the social groups can challenge the existing rules, as well as the reasons for the authority which is exercised by the dominant group, and even the beliefs constituting the core sources of the legitimacy of such regime. Why keep obedience to a regime which, instead of promoting social justice and equality – supposedly its core values– actually deepens the regional and ethnic inequalities, and repeatedly produces economic crisis and stagnation? In this case, a regime based on values of

the own community (identified by a tradition, a language, a religion) and organized according to its specific needs certainly seems to be a better option, especially if there are new elites offering to defend the interests of that community alone against its enemies.

Generally speaking, this is the case of many nationalisms, including those of Yugoslavia. However, that same example shows that the attacks against the legitimacy of the SFRY regime came both from the highly developed, urbanized, literate and well-communicated Slovenia, and from the underdeveloped, partially illiterate, isolated and mainly rural Kosovo. Even with their profound differences, the fact is that in both cases a nationalist discourse and goals were present; both appeared and advanced as national movements in a moment of a deep legitimacy crisis of the same regime. This cannot be explained well by a purely sociological argumentation, and calls our attention to a more complete study of nationalism, one that includes the study of the social and political regime existing at the moment of nationalist upheaval.

But then, what is the role of social circumstances on nationalism? Is there a fixed array of social conditions necessary for the rise of nationalism and of national movements? My answer would be for the negative. Instead, I maintain that the social situation only helps to *shape* nationalisms, by configuring groups, by creating interests and by generating internal tensions on a given society. In this sense, nationalism appears in *complex* societies. It is only in this sense that nationalism has a link with modernization processes, because they certainly modify the traditional way of living, create much more elaborated social structures, and unleash new social forces. This creates specific situations that the current or future national movements will have to face, so they surely show these “social environmental” influences on their membership and organization, as well as on their ideals and demands.

However, I believe that from this point on, it cannot be said which aspect of social modernization is the really determinant in the developing of nationalism. Instead, *I argue that such key factor is a legitimacy crisis of the political regime, impelling societies and elites to a search for alternative regimes based on different sources of legitimacy and/or different relations between the dominant and the subordinate.* In such case, nationalism can be both a compelling ideology and a powerful political device, offering a subordinate group (and its new elites) the possibility of having a regime of its own –whatever its particular form– based on shared convictions, according to common interests and having its own rules.

If this is true, then we can imagine an alternative case: ethnic, linguistic and culturally diverse and modern populations living under a regime and, despite having all the social attributes for developing national movements, in fact are active supporters of that regime. This is a situation I believe is far from being unusual on the modern world. A very plausible explanation is that such population regards its regime as legitimate, because it is based on the beliefs and values they share.

If that is correct, then is probable that the population will also agree with the existing division between dominant and subordinate groups, because on the one hand, it is consistent with the shared beliefs and values and, on the other hand, the social and political arrangement actually protects the common interests. If in addition that regime is capable to control its internal social conflicts before they take an ethnic or similar dimension, then the room for a mass nationalist movement inside such regime seems limited to me.

In sum: Nationalism is certainly a modern phenomenon, and clearly linked to social and modernization processes. But this link is not direct; it only sets the circumstances in which nationalism will appear (or not) and then become a mass movement. What is certainly needed is a crisis of legitimacy of the existing regime, enabling separate groups and their elites within complex societies to identify themselves as nations, according to some objective or subjective

criteria, questioning form a nationalist point of view the sources of the legitimacy of the existing regime, the reasons for complying with the rules of that regime, and the interests that as a nation they could have in the power distribution. It is only in that moment, that nationalism has the real chance to become a mass movement.

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