

1. Defining Nationalism

1.1 Introduction

The study of nationalism is essential to the understanding of world politics. Its significance is partly due to two political realities of our time: a) the rigid political geography of the Earth, i.e. the territoriality of the countries that constitute the “world”; b) the constant civil unrest caused by social groups in the name of a separate nation from that of the dominant national group (or the state), and the right to self-determination even if by means of violence, segregation, protest or other methods necessary to secure the interests of their community. In this context, nationalism is a political phenomenon not only subject to current issues between states but to quarrels from many years ago.

Explaining nationalism is not a simple task, since its application differs from state to state and most importantly, it depends on the terms by which a community defines itself, and by what they perceive as “national.” Nationalism, then, requires a detailing of concepts such as state, nation, ethnicity, and national identity before getting to comprehend it. Nationalism is a concept as elusive as that of culture or democracy, and despite many interpretations there is not a normative use of it. For this reason, the intention of this section is to formulate a working definition of nationalism and clarify the meanings of those concepts that relate to it.

1.2 The State

Today it is commonplace to find a misuse of nation and state as interchangeable concepts. Although nation-states, a product of territorial sovereignty¹, are considered the most consolidated political entities of the international relations, yet we find that the world includes numerous national groups without a defined state and numerous states without a defined national identity or composed of several national groups (multinational states), each with a strong political clout. One of the ways to illustrate the irregularities of nationalism is to ask in specific circumstances the difference between nation and state. In the United States, for example, nation usually refers to the whole country² instead to a specific national group. Another case is that of United Nations which represents the “nations of the world” when it is actually representing the states of the world.³ Even International Relations, the discipline, faces this confusion since it is intended to study the political relations between states, and their governments, and not precisely the relations between national groups within the states.

The contrast between state, nation and nationalism then offers many combinations, and we can not eschew the relevance of those “national” groups that have been fighting for many years in the name of a particular nation despite the existence of a governing state. This is the case of Northern Ireland where two different national groups claim to have a different national identity and allegiance to a distinct nation.

Nation and state, if analyzed separately, display distinct political conditions with ample qualitative, and quantitative attributes. “According to the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of the States (1933) a state must possess the following qualifications in order to exist: a

¹ Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (New York, NY: Penguin Books Ltd., 1998), 572.

² Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1977), 1.

³ James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1998), 3.

permanent population, a defined territory and a government capable of maintaining effective control over its territory and of conducting international relations with other states”⁴. In this case, the state is defined according to international law. For the purposes of this work, we intend to concentrate on the political role of the state towards its population. Consequently, a state will be considered a “political and legal entity with the power to require obedience and loyalty from its citizens.”⁵ This interpretation views the state as a source of legitimacy capable of creating or representing a national identity.

1.3 The Nation

Even before the Peace of Westphalia there was an increasing redefinition of political boundaries as well as a great wave of “nationalist movements” in almost all the continents of the world. As a result of these worldwide phenomena, nationalism tends to be a much-used term directly associated with conflict, national pride, national interest; including separatist movements, ethnic violence, struggles for self-determination, military interventions, rebellions and more recently (nationalist) terrorism.

In a preliminary definition nationalism can be considered either a “devotion to one’s nation or a policy of national independence.”⁶ Here, nationalism is preceded by the very existence of a “nation” but also by a sentiment or belief that produces “devotion” to the nation. Therefore, the nation is the gravity center where a sort of national identity is founded. This means that nation and national identity are strongly correlated. Generally, nation is applied to the population of a state; but how that people perceive the idea of nation is subject to a process of

⁴ Evans and Newnhan, *Penguin Dictionary*, 512.

⁵ Seton-Watson, *Nations and States*, 1.

⁶ J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, GB: Clarendon Press, 1991), 234.

identification and a constant need of differentiation. History has shown that both processes are moved by a sense of protection, social cohesion, survival, superiority and in ultimate cases autonomy and self-determination.

In a broader definition, nation is described as “an extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language or history, as to form a distinct race or people, usually organized as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory.”⁷ Here, appreciating the qualities of a nation are essential to regard it as such. Common descent, language, history, a homeland are just a few of the common characteristics that distinguishes a nation not to mention religion or cultural worldviews.

If we employ Benedict Anderson’s ideas, a nation at the same time can be an “imagined political community,”⁸ –that is a subjective state of mind, a keystone of our political consciousness, abstract but politically objective. Thus, if a nation can be imagined, the elements for its existence can be provided and even created by myth-making. No matter if the community does not share a common language, race, religion or ethnic markers, what makes a nation, though, is a “strong sense of common identity”⁹ expressed many times in terms of national identity. Anderson captures this idea in his definition. For him the nation is imagined “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members but in the minds of each lives *the image of their communion*.”¹⁰

From a more anthropological perspective, Max Weber, speaking of ethnic groups, i.e. those formed on the belief of common descent, explains that a sense of affinity to a particular

⁷ Ibid., 231.

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York, NY: Verso, 1990), 15.

⁹ Graham and Newnham, *Penguin Dictionary*, 343.

¹⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 15. emphasis mine.

nation relies on the “qualitative degrees of the belief in common nationality.”¹¹ This is to say, there are various elements and attributes of the human nature such as religion, race, customs and so forth that constitute nationality. Common language, for example, was considered the normal basis of nationality in the early twentieth century. In this sense we could at one time have considered the Gaelic language to be the only marker of Irish nationality. However, he adds, that a “sense of community [can] came into being also by virtue of common political, and indirectly, social experiences which are highly valued by the masses as symbols...”¹²

In another appreciation, Walker Connor agrees that the essence of the nation is a psychological bond that unites the people, but recognizes that the nature or sources of such bond remain obscure; rather emotional than rational.¹³ Nevertheless, he supports the idea that a nation it is not only a sharing of common things among larger or smaller communities. An ethnic group such as the members of an African tribe, or a regional community like the Dubliners or Berliners could fit in the definition of nation where the members share common history, language and a sense of common identity. To reach the status of nation a group must also perceive distinctiveness, be self-differentiated.

“A nation can be described in terms of its particular amalgam of tangible characteristics. [However]...A prerequisite of nationhood is a popularly held awareness or belief that one’s own group is unique in a most vital sense. In the absence of such a popularly held conviction, there is only an ethnic group [...] It is [...] the self-view of one’s group rather than the tangible characteristics, that is of essence in determining the existence or nonexistence of a nation.”¹⁴

Nationality, that is to say, the “unique” national quality of the people, and the sense of belonging dwells on something more than just sharing symbols of cultural and national

¹¹ Max Weber, “What is an ethnic group,” in *The Ethnicity Reader*, ed. Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2003), 24.

¹² *Ibid.*, 25.

¹³ Walker Connor, *Etnonacionalismo*, (Madrid: Trama Editorial, 1998), 88-89.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

representation. For all the members that adhere to a particular grouping in a particular territory with common attributes, whether external or internal, the existence of a political group-consciousness is necessary to conceive, join and defend the idea of nation. In the same vein, Karl Deutsch stresses that consciousness, indeed, is a political fact¹⁵ that in certain circumstances establishes the conditions of social cohesion often building cultural boundaries.

Then, thinking of a nation consists of a process of nation-building at an ideological level. By nation-building we mean “the process of creating viable degrees of unity, adaptation, achievement, and a sense of national identity among the people.”¹⁶ Such process commonly occurs in two configurations:

- 1) The state precedes the nation (state-nation); “a state has already been created (by way of power politics) and that the nation, or community of solidarity, is to be built within it” seeking homogeneity.
- 2) The nation precedes the state (nation-state); “a community of people have come to perceive themselves as nation and then, perhaps, demand a state.”¹⁷

William Bloom’s identification theory is helpful to reinforce the idea that the nation can only exist if there exist a psychological link between the individuals that makes them think of a political distinctiveness. In this sense group identification can be triggered only if the dynamics of a political “situation are such that it is positively, psychologically beneficial for the individual so to do.”¹⁸ It follows that symbols or attributes of a nation cannot “evoke identification simply because they are presented -logically, attractively or otherwise- to an individual.”¹⁹ Bloom’s

¹⁵ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An inquiry into the foundations of Nationality*, 2nd ed. (Massachusetts: The M.I.T Press, 1966), 165.

¹⁶ William Bloom, *Personal identity, national identity and international relations* (Cambridge, GB: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 55.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 51.

¹⁹ Ibid.

theory suggests that there is a cost-benefit connotation in identifying which is usually moved by the innermost biological human need of survival. As a consequence, the origin and meanings of a nation are to be frequently contextualized to understand the very reasons of deciding to integrate a nation or become a (nation-) state.

So far, we have been analyzing the implications of using a definition of nation by describing only its characteristics. In fact we do not intend to criticize the authors or ideas that have been used in our detailing our idea of nation. Instead we have chosen complementary views of the nation. The nation is a political entity with particular attributes that are shared by a number of people but whose nature is also dependent on Connor's "group's self-differentiation" and on Bloom's reward of "group's well being." In other words, we also seek to respond on what basis do people become a nation? The socio-political context and the act of thinking of a nation, as a result, are very important to define nation. Therefore, a nation will be understood as "a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness,"²⁰ whose conception is subject to a process of identification; unconsciously perceived by the masses, and derived from a political experience –often an external threat or a sense of grievance– that brings together the need of survival, protection and well-being.²¹

1.3.1. The Ethnic Factor

The role of the ethnic factor in the idea of nation is essential to understand the foundations of many nationalist movements that rely on their ancient-ethnic traditional identity to legitimate their distinctiveness and political goals in a given political situation. At this point it

²⁰ Seton-Watson, *Nations and States*, 1.

²¹ Bloom, *Personal identity*, 50-53.

is pertinent to point out that an ethnic group differs from the nation since it tends to be smaller, and physical characteristics are more homogenous among the members and may not always develop the political need to self-differentiate and determine themselves to become a nation-state.

In the Weberian sense, an ethnic group “entertains a subjective belief in their common descent because of the similarities of physical type or of costumes or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration...”²² Moreover, “membership in an ethnic community is normally an ascriptive phenomenon, a relationship into which the individual is born.”²³ A common ancestry is, accordingly, equally used to define whatever is ethnic. By sharing common ancestry the new members of the group not only inherit the group’s genotypes but all their past and with it their collective political memory.

However the biological structure of an ethnic group is not sufficient to suggest the existence of a nation. It is the *cultural ties*²⁴ of the community that stand out as a potent-dynamic source of reference to generate identity. Being part of an ethnic group produces a different type of identification based on the group’s commonalities called *ethnicity*. Ethnicity is a form of “collective identity based on shared cultural beliefs and practices, such as language, history, descent, and religion.”²⁵

Still, as was mentioned above, it is Connors group’s self-awareness, the uniqueness of the community, and its political distinctiveness that ultimately produces the idea of nation. To paraphrase Connor, an ethnic group will be a nation only if it is self-differentiated –culturally, socially, and politically–.

²² Weber, “Ethnic Groups,” 18.

²³ Milton J. Easman, *Ethnic Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 26-27.

²⁴ Jyoti Puri, *Encountering Nationalism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004), 174.

²⁵ Ibid.

Conversely, the persistence of cultural traditions, plus the singularity of some physical and social traits, suggests that the nation is not something new. Anthony D. Smith stresses that nations have their origins in pre-modern forms of “socio-cultural organization,” *ethnies* (the French word to refer to ethnic groups). According to Smith, *ethnies* are “named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity.”²⁶ When a given reactionary group rises in arms, claims historical rights over a determined territory, defends a cause that is part of a millenary tradition even though it is not rational anymore, it will usually refer to some elements of its ethnicity; ancient traditions, mythical heroes will do to provide reasons for political/violent action. It is well known that history is being constantly manipulated. When we apply this fact to nationalist conflicts, nationalist factions may use different versions of the history of its ethnic group recalling his foes and mythology which is a very effective resource for subversion, lobbying and of course, mass manipulation.

In this context, the ethnic origins of a nation can constantly change for political purposes but without losing their essence. This means that a group’s identity can be reinvented, and contextualized in the present according to the precepts the former ethnic community used to have. In this context, Smith sees ethnicity a paradoxical term. “The paradox of ethnicity is its mutability in persistence, and its persistence through change.”²⁷ The persistence of the ethnic legacy invites the political leaders to make use of it, and give continuity to the collective history of the nation every time they are bound to do so.

Thus, every state shares an “ethnic profile” whether this is defined by one ethnic group as in uninational states; two well-defined ethnic groups as in binational states, or by more than one

²⁶ Anthony D. Smith, “Structure and Persistence of Ethnie,” in *The Ethnicity Reader*, ed. Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2003), 27.

²⁷ Ibid.

ethnic group (each considered a nation) which is the case of multinational states.²⁸ An ethnic group is free to become a nation when along with other ethnic groups of the same territory it decides to share the same history, collective memory and costumes but as part of a whole self-differentiated unit. Thus, they tend to form multiethnic nations, e.g. the United States, where the national sentiments of the ethnic groups merge “in common citizenship, commitment to a common way of life, or allegiance to a set of civic values or institutions”²⁹ usually leaving behind ethnic prejudices.

On the other hand, a single ethnic group, after undergoing a process of group awareness, can claim rights for self-determination in their territory and demand a separate nation-state. Such has been the case of Quebec in Canada, and Basque Country and Catalonia in Spain to name a few. In this situation, many authors identify the existence of an *ethnic* nationalism based on the precedent of an *ethnic* nation. Milton J. Esman defines ethnic nation “a politicized ethnic community whose spokesmen demand control over what they define as their territorial homeland, either in the form of substantial autonomy or complete independence.”³⁰ From this statement, it can be implied that the existence of an ethnic nation, in some way, constitutes a previous step to form a self-sufficient nation which will subsequently demand a separate state to reach the status of a nation-state.

Most of larger states are multinational with more than one nation within their borders and whose identity is based on different ethnic backgrounds. The United Kingdom, for instance, is formed by England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. At the same time every entity of the U.K. is formed by one or more groups that are nationally differentiated and with exclusive ethnic backgrounds. For instance, Scotland is not only composed of Scots but at one time of Picts,

²⁸ Monica Duffy Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 26- 27.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

Britons, Angles, Norse, Normans³¹ which in the strict sense represent also were or are ethnic groups.

Northern Ireland, which is our case study, historically has been inhabited by two relatively different national groups with different ethnicity to a certain extent:

- the Northern Irish, either Catholics or Protestants, who are identified with the Irish nation and therefore with the Celtic-Irish ethnic origins;
- and the Northern Irish, either Protestants or Catholics, who are identified with the British nation but not exactly with a British ethnic group since it did not exist at all.

In the case of Northern Ireland identification with the British nation is basically done by means of citizenship and ideologically by a sense of affinity with the British institutions rather than by common descent or by belonging to an ethnic community.

“Its attachment [is] primarily institutional -to Church, to Parliament, and, above all, to the Crown... ‘For King and country’ was the watchword of this type of national belonging –nationalism of state rather than of the people.”³²

In this respect we confront a big problem that has troubled many scholars and won't be the focus of this thesis, that is, whether there is a British or English nation, since when and in what form? David Macrone briefly summarizes what is to be considered Britain in a modern context:

What is ‘Britain’? It is a state-nation masquerading as a nation-state. That is, it was constructed initially in 1707 as a political convenience between England, the senior partner, and Scotland, the junior one. Wales and Ireland were to all intents and purposes under the jurisdiction of England by this time, although the latter was not formally incorporated into the British state until 1801, thus creating the ‘United Kingdom’ (of Great Britain and Ireland)...Britain can be considered a state-nation because its political

³¹ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 32.

³² Krishan Kumar, “Englishness and English National Identity,” in *British Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kevin Robins (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 45.

superstructure was grafted onto the civil societies or nations which to a greater or lesser extent remained self-governing in their domestic or low politics.³³

This argument shows that the political structure of Britain poses a national problem, not only to the Northern Irish Protestants but to all the members of former colonies; do they identify in the same way with the United Kingdom as they do with their current states or nations? If they decided so to do, in which terms? Certainly, we cannot deny the importance of the ethnic factor and its impact upon the identity of the groups within the U.K. However, the supranational character of Britain relegates the identities of some local national groups that, from time to time, have undermined the local government stability.

With few exceptions, the politics of identity have played an important role in the political agenda of the UK; especially in Northern Ireland, including the members of the Commonwealth. For this reason, the issue of legitimacy is frequently under scrutiny and Britishness is usually reduced to citizenship to Britain. Consequently, what we understand as ethnic, thought, also depends on the structure of the state, and on its historical moment.

Until now what we mean as ethnic nation is an ethnic group self-differentiated as stated by Connor. However, this distinction is not often made and what is more, it faces several definitions on “ethnic groups” that may include one or more of the attributes that also share the nation. In this respect we find that Northern Ireland has been typified many times as an example of ethnic conflict but the use of the word ethnic is restricted and barely applied in the whole sense.

Normally the term ethnic is applied to the Irish-Catholic nationalists who are descendents of the ancient Gaelic Celt tribes. Politically this ethnic group demanded a kind of federal

³³ David McCrone, “Scotland and the Union: Changing Identities in the British State,” in *British Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kevin Robins (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 97.

autonomy by requesting home rule from the English Parliament and who latter achieved independence from Britain. Today those Irish nationalists that live in Northern Ireland are still considered members of an ethnic nationalist movement that wishes the union with the Republic of Ireland and full Irish sovereignty over the whole island.

Applied to Northern Irish Protestants, the term ethnic will not be expressed suggesting direct common descent or a group that seeks statehood. Instead, the ethnic identity of the Protestants stems from a British cultural legacy derived from the Colonial occupation by Scots and English, and the inception of the British way of life through its institutions. By Protestant ethnicity thus we mean the cultural history, mythology, values, symbols, and memories of the Northern Irish people that see themselves as a Protestant nation with a defined territory called Ulster, and whose primary allegiance is to the British institutions –the Protestant faith, the Crown, the Royal Family, Royal Commemorations, and the British Constitution.

Nevertheless, if we put aside the British nation and traced the real ethnic background of some Northern Irish Protestants we would find that they are descendants of the early Scots and English settlers that stayed in the North of Ireland during Colonial times. In a given case of ethnic identity revival they would have to decide which of the two ethnic groups they identify with, the Scottish or the English? Or put otherwise, do Northern Irish Protestants identify with England or with Scotland or with both? The most probable answer would be that both of them could be their ancestors if we decide to choose ethnic common descent as their source of national identity.

The truth is that Northern Ireland is not nationally defined as it is Scotland, England or Wales. Still, we cannot speak of a “Northern Irish nation” as a common source of identification for those Catholics with an Irish background and for those Protestants with a British cultural

background. For the Irish Northern Ireland is part of the Irish homeland, i.e. the isle of Ireland. On the contrary, for some Northern Irish Protestants (the most reactionary) Northern Ireland is identified as *Ulster* and they tend to speak of it as the homeland of the Protestant Ulster nation reserved only to the Northern Irish Protestants loyal to Britain, and its institutions.³⁴

From these arguments we can conclude that whenever the term ethnic nation or nation is applied in multinational states, it will not necessarily suggest the creation of another state, but rather the right of the national group to determine its “own form of government, one’s own national identity and culture (including language, education, religion)”³⁵ within a larger political entity.

Finally, in this work we will limit the use of the word ethnic to avoid confusion with national issues. Moreover, it is important to point out that in the UK, which is the geographical zone we are dealing with, “ethnic politics means the politics of recent non-white immigrants, while nationalism is applied to English, Scots, Welsh and Irish.”³⁶ We will recognize the existence of ethnic groups and the ethnic background of the nations. Since we are focusing our study on the idea of a Protestant nation in Northern Ireland, we have decided to consider this nation, to a certain extent, an ethnic nation in the sense it has an ethnic cultural background. Therefore we will treat Northern Ireland a bi-national region where two groups with distinct national identities are in conflict, and which make constant allusion to their ethnic cultural background to achieve political goals.

³⁴ Ronnie Moore and Andrew Sanders, “Loyalism in Northern Ireland,” *Anthropology Today* 18, no.6 (December 2002):10

³⁵ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 7-8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

1.3.2 National Identity

Political group awareness is something that makes nations possible and might not always be harmonious if there are groups that not share the same values or represent a competition to their interests. On a daily basis, the foundations of a nation can be re-interpreted, “mutate but persist” and underpin, in Smith words, the “cultural continuity” of nations. According to Smith, national identity, “a concept separate from that of nationalism,” is an unfinished process within the formation of nations.

“[National identity] may be defined as the maintenance and continuous reproduction of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the identifications of individuals with that particular heritage and those values, symbols, memories, myth and traditions.”³⁷

Although there may always exist a variety of non-hostile national groups, the process of defining the group’s national identity involves delimitating the nation with respect to others.³⁸ This is partly due to the existence of “external forces...that help to crystallize the ... identity and ensure the persistence over longer periods.”³⁹ Specially, in a situation of conflict the “out-group defines the boundaries of the in-group.”⁴⁰ When this imperative is taken to the extreme, the fear of loosing strength in the unity reinforces the need to solidify the identity from within.

“...(nationalist) groups are concerned with the group’s continuance. If they witness the breaking away of one with whom they have shared cares and responsibilities of group life, they are likely to react in a more violent way against such “disloyalty” than less involved members. (In a situation of identity defense) the reaction must be stronger...because the “enemy” from within, the renegade or heretic, not only puts into question the values and interests of the group, but also threatens its very unity.”⁴¹

³⁷ Anthony D. Smith, “Interpretations of National Identity,” in *Modern Roots*, ed. Alain Dieckhoff and Natividad Gutiérrez (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2001), 30.

³⁸ Puri, *Encountering Nationalism*, 176.

³⁹ Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism* (New York, NY: St. Martin Press, 2000), 176.

⁴⁰ Lewis A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1969), 69.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

The argument that the group is to be differentiated with respect to “others” shows that many groups in conflict live the *us versus them* scenario. In this context, the “nations are considered bounded communities of exclusion and opposition.”⁴² Those who do not fulfill the cultural and ethnic profile of the main national group are simply excluded.

When studying Northern Ireland or other deeply divided societies, we may find that much attention has been paid to the significance of national symbols as well as other representations of the nation. This peculiar point of view is sometimes misleading inasmuch it can be manipulated and neglect roots of the conflict. If we consider that some Catholics and some Protestants of Northern Ireland are fighting for different ideals among other things loyalty to different nations - the Irish and the British respectively- we can conclude that there is something more than religious differences. Religion by itself might be a symbol of the nations but not the direct cause of the conflict. On the contrary, when religion relates to national identity the scope of its significance augments. That is to say that the symbols that the group holds may be “coterminous” with the nation they identify with.

For example, territory is another national symbol closely linked to national identity. The territory is the place where one nation belongs. It is a place full of symbolism and history. In words of Kaplan, territory is part of the *spatial identity* of a national group and “it may consist of many parts: the actual space inhabited by the members of a group, the particular terrain that helps define the group, the locational context *vis a vis* other powers, the historic legacy of a specific area, or specific natural features with economic or military-strategic importance.”⁴³ In the case of nations within larger states, the actual territory where the group dwells receives a

⁴² Guntram H. Herb, “National Identity and Territory,” in *Nested Identities*, ed. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan (New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.,1999), 15.

⁴³ David Kaplan and Guntram H. Herb, “Introduction: A Question of Identity,” in *Nested Identities*, ed. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan (New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.,1999), 3.

great deal of meaning and priority. Québécois, for instance, see the Province of Quebec as their motherland; Palestinian nationalism would not be the same without its territorial demands over part of Israel. In our case, Protestant nationalism would not be in part territorial if the Province of Ulster were not inhabited by Protestants that dislike the Irish Catholics.

The intertwining of symbol and national identity reproduces a sense of allegiance only if these elements pertain to all the members,⁴⁴ are equally accepted and as consequence produces unity. The political upheavals throughout the brief but bloody history of Northern Ireland have demonstrated that symbols are essential to mark cultural boundaries. After the course of the years, a solid sense of loyalty remains from both sides which is constantly contextualized, whereas the traditional meaning of the symbols appears unchanged, but not the use, and sinisterly ready to give logic as well as shape to the national interests.

When speaking of nation and nationalism, national identity appears to be a bridge between them. Although the identification process is something passive and at the psychological level, it is linked to the nation and can be activated when something needs to be done regarding the nation; whether recognize it or defend it.

A nation and its people is bind by a common culture and those ideas, artifacts, memories that symbolize it. "A common culture favors the creation of solidarity bonds among the members of a given community and allows them to imagine the community they belong to as separate and distinct from others."⁴⁵ Yet, empowering the people with a political or cultural distinctiveness might not be sufficient to fully identify. Bearing a national emblem or acquiring specific national customs may not be sufficient credentials, say, to identify with or even kill in the name of a nation.

⁴⁴ Anthony D. Smith, "National Identity," 31.

⁴⁵ Montserrat Guibernau, "National Identity and Modernity," in *Modern Roots*, ed. Alain Dieckhoff and Natividad Gutiérrez (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2001), 79.

Bloom, has emphasized this social problem stressing that:

“...political and ideas of nationalism cannot of themselves evoke identification. Political ideologies do not work in a psychological vacuum. They must provide appropriate modes of behavior, appropriate attitudes, appropriate ideologies, appropriate identity-securing interpretative systems, for dealing with real, experienced situations. Popular support -i.e. identification with such an ideology- comes only if it interprets and provides an appropriate attitude for an experienced reality. This experience may, of course, be politically manipulated- but a symbol or an ideology without a relevant experience is meaningless and impotent in terms of evoking identification.”⁴⁶

From this statement we can bring up the idea that a cultural cleavage is important only if it has political impact over the group's interests. According to Bloom a group must undergo “real-experienced situations” of mayor distress that eventually will confirm, among other things, why they should be united. There follows that, some cultural symbols may be more useful than others to associate the idea of nation, and concretize the subjectivity of national consciousness in visible symbols.

It is important to point out, that *culture* and *religion* are the main symbols of identity in Northern Ireland. By using culture, we suggest that both communities have their own history, customs, beliefs, its own mythology and values. (Religion is by all means part of their culture but it plays a separate role in nationalist politics).⁴⁷ Nevertheless, both markers have become highly politicized, and are so contentious that every issue relating to them needs to be explained according to circumstances to prevent biases.

Therefore, the context is relevant to determine the intensity levels of identity. As it was mentioned above, the existence of a conflict with an out-group is one of the foremost detonators

⁴⁶ Bloom, *Personal Identity*, 52.

⁴⁷ This matter will be discussed in the following chapter.

of strong national ties. The escalating of grievances through guerrilla war or terrorist warfare only enhances the re-conceptualization of the “other” and intensifies the group’s awareness.

To sum up, in a conflict between two national groups a symbol represents a banner that might be worth defending. The cultural markers that derive from a specific ethnicity are points of reference to mark borders against other groups. Hence, in conflicts equating symbols to national identity is very effective to establish cultural boundaries/controls against outsiders. The features that become national symbols are highly extolled for the purposes of uniqueness and group-awareness. In his approach Bloom, like Connor,⁴⁸ reminds us that even though a group can be identified/classified by outsiders it is the duty of the people of a nation to perceive it as such and codify the other groups that are part of their co-existence.

“National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols –have internalized the symbols of the nation –so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of, these symbols of nationalist identity.”⁴⁹

1.4 What is Nationalism?

Nationalism is a political phenomenon that can exist in many forms; it is subject to several interpretations and is carried on by distinct agents. According to Kellas, in international relations nationalism has come up

- as a cause of conflict,
- as a source of opposition to the existing state system,
- as opposition to international or supranational institutions and cooperation;
- and as a determinant of a state’s power in international affairs.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Connor, *Etnonacionalismo*, 100.

⁴⁹ Bloom, *Personal identity*, 52.

⁵⁰ Kellas, *Politicis of Nationalism*, 43.

However, on a more specific approach, nationalism has been used in forms that suggest the creation and preservation of a nation. In this respect Smith has distinguished five ways in which nationalism is used:

- the whole process of forming and maintaining nations;
- a consciousness of belonging to the nation;
- a language or symbolism of the nation;
- an ideology (including the cultural doctrine of nations);
- a social and political movement to achieve goals of the nation and realize the national will.⁵¹

Nonetheless, nationalism can usually be either an ideology or a form of behavior or both.⁵² As an ideology nationalism represents a system of ideas usually demanding rights of self-determination. Here, nationalism “proclaims the distinctiveness of a particular people and their right to self-rule in their homeland.”⁵³ This classic definition assumes that nationalism is founded on the idea of nation and its right to self-determination in a given territory. But most of its application is limited to the search of statehood where one nation wishes to represent a state which has decided to be recognized as politically distinct. This ideology is the cause of independence movements and secessions.

On another front, Connor argues that nationalism is a question of loyalty.⁵⁴ The ideology or movement in this case has to do with the devotion to the nation and the maintenance of its multidimensional attributes (language, religion, values, history, etc.). Connor defends the idea that nationalism is a manifestation of loyalty to the nation apart from the loyalty that is reserved to the state that represents them. Nationalism, therefore, does not suppose the idea that the people must be always loyal to the state-nation. Larger or minor groups can abide the state’s laws but

⁵¹ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), 72 quoted in Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism* (New York, NY: St. Martin Press, 2000), 181.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵³ Easman, *Ethnic Politics*, 28.

⁵⁴ Connor, *Etnonacionalismo*, 42.

remain loyal to what they consider their first source of identity, i.e. its cultural or national identity. In countries where the state is multinational, this distinction is salient, since the state and the nation are not the same unless for the majority or to, what Smith calls, the “ethnic core”⁵⁵ of the state.

In Japan and Germany, for instance, where the population is almost ethnically homogenous, the nation is seen as something unique; a solidly integrated unit in all aspects. Hence, the difference between nation and state is practically inexistent.⁵⁶ In the political discourse the nation and the state merge in a single idea alluding unity. Connor’s approach is very useful to distinguish those intractable groups whose nationalism is something elusive to the power of the state and not secessionist. It can be entailed that any nationalism can escape the state’s dominant national identity even if this is not racially or ethnically defined. At the level of consciousness, nationalism may develop a parallel set of values which can engender a source of cultural, economic, political or territorial disputes with other local communities or even with other nation-states.

National groups that live under a multinational state will defend jealously its national identity, or better said the survival of their nation. By making constant allusions to the symbols, history and culture of the nation the group tries to occupy a space in the public sphere. If a group perceives itself as different, the differences are to be confirmed on visible markers such as language, religion or costumes. But most importantly, if a group seeks recognition the difference is to be legitimized and it can challenge the sovereignty of the state it belongs. Paradoxically, the singularity of a group may lack not only recognition but sometimes their sources of national identity are not quite strong to make them exceptional, recognizable or respectable. In some

⁵⁵ Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism*, 177.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

cases, minorities or smaller nations get involved in pressure group politics,⁵⁷ civil rights movements but seldom in separatist activities.

Whereas Connor stresses that nationalism is loyalty to the nation, in a similar fashion, Easman states that nationalism is loyalty to the community. Thus nationalism can be an expression or a sentiment of “ethnic solidarity.” “Nationalism tends to glorify a people’s history, accomplishments, and aspirations; to preach the obligation of loyalty to the community, its institutions, and symbols; and to warn against external threats.”⁵⁸ In this thesis both approaches will be considered.

The way nationalism is defined is constantly vulnerable to change. The coding of values and symbols of one’s group react to possible threats that could diminish or extinguish their identity. Usually in nations of “exclusion” where the “others”, i.e. the enemy, are excluded from the group, the ideology and sentiments of nationalism are expressed in the same terms. As a consequence they tend to develop “exclusive nationalisms”⁵⁹ where national attitudes towards the other are intolerant and try to set apart the other communities or groups, which on one basis or other, are not considered nationals. According to Kellas Northern Ireland is a case of this type of nationalism where both Catholics and Protestants segregate from each other. This problem, usually a defensive reaction, reflects the *ethnocentric* aspect of much nationalist movements. Although a group might feel that it is unique, it might also feel that they are superior or “chosen” to be the leading actors in the political and social affairs with respect to others. Ethnocentrism then is the “tendency to see one’s own group, culture or nation in positive terms and, conversely, other groups in negative terms.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 4.

⁵⁸ Easman, *Ethnic Politics*, 28.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁶⁰ Evans and Newnham, *Penguin Dictionary*, 154.

Strong nationalist sentiments and ethnocentric attitudes constitute an important part of nationalism. However, being a self-identified member of a nation is not an isolated fact, and does not necessarily yields nationalist attitudes. Nationalist behavior and the way it is conceived are reinforced via “mechanisms of socialization.”⁶¹ Within the group the communication of national ideals and national attitudes constitute a vital element in producing nationalist feelings among the members especially for the masses. Accepted values, beliefs and social norms start to be transmitted informally in the familial ethos from generation to generation; they can infiltrate the education system, the work place, and operate through the communication media producing a standardized public opinion on national matters.⁶²

For Deutsch, socialization is expressed in the communication of culture (preferences, priorities, behavior as well as ... thoughts and feelings⁶³) among the members of a group. This is to say that a community could hardly exist without the transmission of one’s group activities to all its members. Communication creates social cohesion and produces differentiation from the other groups. Therefore, the idea that the identity is to be reinforced by a counterpart or antagonist is pervasive in the conceptualization of any kind of nationalist idea or behavior. Consequently, the diffusion of national sentiments is based on the communication of values and beliefs that produce social cohesion. In Deutsch words “in so far as a common culture facilitates communication, it forms a community.”⁶⁴ Hence, if nationalism is communicated, in whatever its forms, it will be also part of the cultural life of the group or community.

“Corresponding to these terms, we found *culture* based on the community of communication, consisting of socially stereotyped patterns of behavior, including habits of language and thought, and carried on through various

⁶¹ Ibid., 347.

⁶² Ibid., 155.

⁶³ Deutsch, *Social Communication*, 88.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 88.

forms of social learning, particularly through methods of child rearing standardized in this culture.”⁶⁵

According to this idea, if a nationalist ideology is communicated to a certain group, for example to the Protestant community in Northern Ireland, as part of their upbringing, they will perceive that such nationalist teachings are something more than a history class. To be informed about what does nationalism means to the community is to be acquainted of something inherent to the identity of such community. Hence nationalism won't be only nationalism of the peoples but an appropriated form of nationalism; that is a Protestant nationalism, Irish nationalism, Chechen nationalism, German nationalism, Mexican nationalism, and so forth.

When treated as behavior, nationalism, can be a rational response to particular circumstances,⁶⁶ and develop into a nationalist reaction or movement. This response is moved by the group's fears to counteract the interests and possible menaces of the other nations. Thus this reaction is based on the feeling of “belonging to a community which is the nation,”⁶⁷ and the need to defend it and preserve it. Being a nationalist, therefore, is to become a loyal member of the nation either in a passive or active way.

Nationalism can be a silent movement as well; something of national pride and something on what to support the people's past; national history and acts of remembrance. In pursue of certain goals nationalist movements can become involved in political matters of social interest. Party politics, economy and trade, foreign policy, the preservation of the national culture in the arts, and the group's *modus vivendi* are the most common issues were nationalist behavior is reflected.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁶ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 31.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.

1.4.1 A Brief Typology of Nationalism

So far, we have been analyzing the terms and conditions in which nationalism is presented. However, much of its use is done to describe specific forms of nationalism. Although we admit that studies on nationalism are still far from developing a normative use or preferred typology, there are three general approaches that define nationalism: *ethnic nationalism*, *civic or social nationalism*, and *state or official nationalism*.⁶⁸

Ethnic nationalism stands for the movement and ideology of ethnic groups whose one of its main goals is to form a “nation-state” based on the group’ common history, language, territory, race, or other cultural markers that create a sense of belonging to what they might perceive as nation. In another aspect, ethnic nationalism can be focused in keeping the “ethnic solidarity” of the group and seek the continuity of its traditions (in particular linguistic rights) through cultural, political and territorial autonomy within a given state.⁶⁹ Here, the struggles for the preservation of ethnic identity are seen as expression of an ethnic nationalism. Such identity, as mentioned before, is usually defined in exclusive terms, mainly on the basis of common descent.⁷⁰ Theoretically, ethnic nationalist movements are linked to what Clifford Geertz has termed as *primordial attachments*. “Ethnic revivals”, for instance, that develop strong effects and emotions towards the group’s identity usually regard treat cultural markers as *givens* of their cultural history.

However, most of these “givens” are not biological markers of the people. Whereas the members of the community assume that their cultural identity and beliefs are something inherent to their existence, the majority tend to neglect the fact that identity is rather a “socio-historical”

⁶⁸ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 66.

⁶⁹ European Center for Minorities Issues, “Conflict Theory: Classic Approaches,” http://www.ecmi.de/cps/about_approaches.html

⁷⁰ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 66.

construction. Among the primordial attachments cited by Geertz are: assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion and custom.⁷¹ In this respect Geertz emphasizes that a primordial attachment is that which the people assume as “givens” of their identity:

By primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the ‘givens’...of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one’s kinsman, one’s neighbor, one’s fellow believer, ipso facto; as the result no merely of personal affection...but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.⁷²

Civic or Social nationalism, is the second form in which nationalism is employed. This is the “nationalism of a nation that defines itself by social ties and culture rather than by common descent.”⁷³ Unlike ethnic nationalism this form has to do, in Ferdinand Tönnies terms, with a *Gesellschaft* (associational or “secondary community”) rather than with a *Gemeinschaft* (or “primary” community).⁷⁴ In this kind of nationalism outsiders can join the group by assimilating its culture and adapting to its society. This is the kind of nationalism acquired by immigrants and diasporas. After getting the citizenship, the national or ethnic communities are expected to fully integrate the new nation and comply with their living standards.

Finally, official nationalism “is the nationalism of the state, encompassing all those legally entitled to be citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity, national identity and culture.”⁷⁵ This kind of nationalism is expressed by the people in terms of *patriotism*. Carlton J. H. Hayes see

⁷¹ Clifford Geertz, “Primordial Ties,” in *Ethnicity* ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 43-44.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁷³ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 66.

⁷⁴ Richard H. Thompson, *Theories of Ethnicity* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989), 49.

⁷⁵ Kellas, *Politics of Nationalism*, 67.

patriotism as “the loyalty to nationality and the national state.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, official nationalism differs from ethnic and civic nationalism in that it is rehearsed at a state level by government agencies and through foreign policy. In this case, nationalism is expressed in terms of “national interest.” According to Bloom: “National interest is that which can be perceived as being a part of national identity and thus is capable of triggering national mass mobilization to defend or enhance it.”⁷⁷ Hence the idea of state nationalism is founded in the nation’s patriotism and the will of its people to associate the nation with the state’s political position. The state, then, becomes a political entity that represents every citizen’s will, which also gathers the people’s national loyalty. This means that loyalty towards the state is highly instrumental and prone to be manipulated for foreign policy purposes:

Provided that state foreign policy initiatives can be perceived to be defending or enhancing national identity then the state can take an initiative in foreign policy in the confidence that there will be an initial and automatic response from its citizens. Government can take international action with the expectation of a period of domestic political grace before its actions are subject to scrutiny and criticism. [However,] Loyalty will precede criticism – no matter how well founded– may be interpreted as unpatriotic and treacherous.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Nationalism* (New York, NY: MacMillan Co., 1960), 10.

⁷⁷ Bloom, *Personal Identity*, 83.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.