

## Introduction

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Cultural nationalism is a nationalism according to which members of groups sharing a common history and societal culture have a fundamental, morally significant interest in adhering to their culture and in sustaining it for generations. In the name of the thesis that members of national groups have such interests, nationalist movements often voice specific practical demands in both the public and private spheres. Their main demand is for national self-determination. However, national groups also make claims with regard to territories with which they are historically linked. They demand that their members be granted priority in immigrating to their homelands. They further make claims concerning the special responsibilities that exist among their members, and assert the superiority of particularistic national ways of life compared to other lifestyles such as cosmopolitanism. The purpose of this book is to examine these theses and claims. I shall first examine the possibility of providing a liberal justification for the abstract tenet of cultural nationalism, namely, that members of national groups have an interest in adhering to their culture and preserving it for generations. After discussing this theoretical thesis, I shall move on to examine the more practical demands of cultural nationalism, namely, those relating to national self-determination, historical rights, priority in immigration and the like. It is a well-known fact that cultural nationalism has enjoyed a revival in many parts of the world in the last fifteen years. The present book joins a steady stream of philosophical writing on nationalism, both liberal and from other orientations, which has accompanied this revival.

In Chapter 1 I shall further elucidate the nature of cultural nationalism and attempt to situate its liberal version within nationalism in general. I shall argue that the liberal version of cultural nationalism must be distinguished from non-liberal cultural nationalism on the one hand, and on the other hand, from a liberal nationalism that is not cultural but rather statist. Unlike cultural nationalism, which focuses on the interests people have in their own culture, statist nationalism focuses on the interests states have in the cultural homogeneity of their citizenries. Unlike cultural

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nationalism, statist nationalism does not focus on the protection that states can provide for national cultures and those of their members who are interested in adhering to them. Rather, it focuses on the contribution that national cultures can make towards the realization of political values that are neither derived from nor directed at the protection of particular national cultures. I shall argue that this distinction between cultural nationalism and statist nationalism forms the normative essence of the well-known distinction suggested by historians and sociologists between ethnocultural nationalism and territorial-civic nationalism. It is common among students of nationalism to associate its liberal versions with civic nationalism and its non-liberal versions with cultural nationalism. Several writers have criticized this linkage.<sup>1</sup> I concur with them, especially with regard to the normative distinction that I propose between cultural and statist nationalism. I will claim that distinctions between liberal and non-liberal versions of nationalism could be made both within the cultural and the statist types. In addition, I shall discuss the possible logical and empirical relationships between the various types of nationalism and the state and how these types of nationalism relate to ethnicity. Some contemporary writers do not seem to be fully aware of the normative significance of the distinction between cultural and statist nationalism. In my opinion this has caused some confusion in their discussions of nationalism. I shall try to demonstrate this with regard to several of these writers.

The distinctions between the various types of nationalism to be presented in Chapter 1 will enable me to isolate and delimit the specific topic of this book which is a *liberal* (as opposed to non-liberal) version of *cultural* (as opposed to statist) *nationalism*. If the way in which I have formulated above the normative essence of this nationalism is correct, then it seems to comprise three main theses. The first thesis is the *adherence* thesis which concerns the basic interest people have in adhering to their culture. The second thesis is the *historical* thesis and it concerns the basic interest people have in recognizing and protecting the multigenerational dimension of their culture. The third thesis, a *political* one, holds that the interests people have in living their lives within their culture, and in sustaining this culture for generations, should be protected politically. In Chapter 2 I will discuss possible justifications for these theses. Contemporary writers who support what seem to be liberal versions of cultural nationalism do so mainly by arguing that people have an interest

<sup>1</sup> See for example Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (Oxford University Press, 2001), chap. 12 and Rogers Brubaker, 'Myths and misconceptions in the study of nationalism', in M. Moore (ed.), *National Self-Determination and Secession* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 257–60.

in culture because it is a prerequisite for their freedom and because it is a component of their identity. I will try to show that these arguments could provide an adequate basis at most for the adherence thesis, but not for the historical thesis. I shall then offer a third argument based on the interest people have in their endeavour which could serve to support the historical thesis. According to this argument, people undertake projects, express their personalities and live their lives on the assumption that their lives have meaning and some impact on the world outside them, which exists independently of their own existence. I will argue that the interest people have in the existence of the world where their endeavours leave their mark could provide support for the historical thesis of cultural nationalism. I will also argue that this argument provides part of the justification for the distinction between the two types of rights advocated by contemporary writers for the protection of people's interests in their culture: rights to self-government on the one hand, and polyethnic or multicultural rights on the other.

Many people living today are interested in adhering to their national culture, in living their lives within it, and in its continuation in history. Whether or not the attempts to provide liberal justifications to these interests succeed, the question remains whether the more concrete and practical demands that are made in the name of cultural nationalism are reconcilable with liberalism. Usually these demands have a rather ambitious character. National groups and those who speak in their name when demanding self-determination want it to have the form of independent statehood. When they claim historical rights to territories, they mean rights to territorial sovereignty. When they require priority in immigration for their members, they want it to have the form of individual rights granted to each and every member of their group, that is, rights that entail the state's corresponding duty to admit these individuals. When they argue for the existence of particularistic obligations that members of national groups owe one another, they sometimes deny the derivative nature of such obligations and their subordination to moral universalism. When they argue that it is good for people to be immersed in their own nation's culture, they sometimes deny the legitimacy of non-nationalist, cosmopolitan lifestyles. In the chapters dealing with these demands, I shall show that if they are at all acceptable, then this would only be in much more modest form. Specifically, the demand for national self-determination, if it is indeed acceptable, should be realized universally in sub-statist rather than statist forms. Claims to historical rights, if acceptable, cannot serve as a basis for territorial sovereignty. At most, they can serve as a basis for determining the location of national self-determination under its sub-statist conception, which does not

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include the right of national groups to territorial sovereignty. I shall further claim that nationality-based priorities in immigration should not have the form of individual rights granted to each and every member of a given national group. Rather, they should have the form of nationality-based quotas within general immigration quotas that are also based on a variety of other considerations. I shall argue that some sorts of particularistic obligations among members of national groups should be acknowledged, but only to a limited extent and under the auspices of moral universalism. I shall also argue that accepting particularistic national lifestyles does not imply rejecting the possibility of a cosmopolitan lifestyle. These lifestyles can coexist side by side.

The right to self-determination, which is the main practical demand made by cultural nationalism regarding the public sphere, will be discussed in Chapter 3. It is usually interpreted as the right of national groups to secede from existing states and to form new ones. However, I shall discuss it mainly as a question concerning the proper institutional framework for protecting the interests of national groups in their self-preservation and collective self-rule; in particular, whether these interests should be protected by means of independent statehood or by less drastic means. I shall present several arguments against a statist interpretation of self-determination and for a sub- and sometimes inter-statist interpretation. According to the sub- and inter-statist conception, the right of national groups to self-determination should be conceived of as a package of privileges to which each national group is entitled in its main geographic location, normally within the state that coincides with its homeland. This package should include self-government rights, special representation rights and rights to cultural preservation. This sub-statist conception of self-determination differs from the statist conception in mainly two matters: first, it represents the right to self-determination as a right within the state, never as a right to independent statehood. Secondly, according to this sub-statist conception, self-determination is not a right of majority nations within states *vis-à-vis* national minorities, but rather a right to which each national group in the world is entitled. This right must be realized at least in one place, usually the historic homeland of the national group enjoying it. Accordingly, it is a right of homeland groups *vis-à-vis* non-homeland groups.

National groups quite often make demands to territorial sovereignty in the name of what they call 'historical rights'. I shall discuss these demands in Chapter 4. The framework for my discussion will be provided by a distinction between two conceptions of historical rights. One conception focuses on the primacy of the national group in the history of the territory over which it demands sovereignty (the first occupancy conception), while

the other conception focuses on the primacy of that territory in the history of the national group demanding the sovereignty (the formative territories conception). I shall argue that despite the fact that historical rights cannot serve as a basis for territorial sovereignty in either conception, they are not entirely void of normative significance. Especially under their formative territories conception, they are connected with the notion of *homeland*, and in this sense they might have some normative importance. Historical rights could be a source for considerations on the basis of which the location of self-determination under its sub-statist conception should be determined.

Chapter 5 discusses the question of whether nationality-based priorities in immigration could be justified. *Prima facie*, such priorities seem to contradict the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that prohibits racial discrimination and states that this term applies, among other things, to ‘any . . . preference based on . . . national or ethnic origin . . .’. After arguing that nationality-based priorities in immigration are not necessarily racist, I shall propose three principles for regulating such priorities which follow from or could be justified by the sub- and inter-statist conception of self-determination. The immigration rights asserted by these principles will be an embodiment of the inter-statist dimension of this conception. In addition, they will also constitute the most detailed example provided in this study for another component of this conception, namely, cultural preservation rights which are meant to enable members of national groups to continue living major parts of their lives within their own culture. Other major examples of such rights are the collective language rights that were granted to the Francophone majority in Quebec, the collective land rights of the native Fijians and the restrictions imposed on non-aboriginal people in the reservations of Canada. When such rights are being granted, it is easy for them to slide beyond their appropriate limits. For example, the current form of Israel’s Law of Return, which grants every individual Jew a personal right to immigrate to Israel, does indeed seem to exceed such limits. It does so at least if we read it (as many Zionists in fact do) as granting advantages which should be realized by most of their potential beneficiaries and not just as a historical declaration, part of the value of which is mainly symbolic and not practical. The principles for regulating nationality-based priorities in immigration that I shall propose in Chapter 5 are intended to demonstrate the desirable limits of such priorities.

Chapters 3–5 discuss the demands which cultural nationalism makes in the public domain. The purpose of Chapter 6 is mainly to consider some demands that cultural nationalism makes in the private domain.

Cambridge University Press  
0521808642 - The Limits of Nationalism  
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I will first discuss the position according to which people are permitted or even required to demonstrate a measure of partiality and special concern for their national group and its members. I will argue that this partiality can be accommodated within the framework of ethical universalism, and reject the thesis according to which it is only ethical particularism that can account for it. I shall then discuss the relationship between cultural particularism and cultural cosmopolitanism. The former is the view that it is good for people to be immersed in one particular culture while the latter is the view that it is good for them to shape their lives by means of ideas, texts, customs etc. that they have collected from different cultures. I will argue for at least one sense in which these doctrines could be compatible. In the concluding chapter of this book, I will make some remarks regarding how this book relates to other recent writings on nationalism and address some objections that could be raised regarding some of its theses.

## 1 Nationalist ideologies – a normative typology

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### Cultural nationalism and statist nationalism

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

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

8 The Limits of Nationalism

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

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

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.      <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

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



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

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

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

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

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

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

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

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

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