

# NATIONALISM AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF NATION-BUILDING

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## 1. Constructed versus essentialist nationalism

In recent years the proliferation of studies on nationalism has multiplied the number of disagreements between researchers on the correct methods, perspectives, explanatory factors, etc. Conferences such as the ones in Santiago de Compostela, Warwick or Barcelona have made this amply manifest (Beramendi, Máiz and Núñez, 1994; Smith, 1996; Sánchez et al., 1997). However, a certain overlapping consensus has also emerged from these debates, coalescing on at least three fundamental points:

1. Nationalism is considered to be a strictly modern phenomenon, inseparable from the state. Nationalism's genesis occurs within a specific institutional and political arena, whatever the historical roots of its ethnic component. This is the case both for nation-state induced nationalism, and

for nationalism that challenges a nation-state or a multinational/colonial empire, demanding its own state.

2. The nation does not constitute a crystallized primordial fact. Instead it is the contingent outcome of a construction process that takes place in certain social and political contexts or institutions.

3. The concept of nation thus becomes a practical category more than an objective or substantive one. It is used with the intention of manifesting the political perspective present in the minds of a specific national collective identity. Hence it is necessarily a mass phenomenon, not an elite one.

However, this new and growing consensus raises questions about fundamental aspects of the logic and morphology of the traditional explanations given in studies on nationalism. We are not concerned with the various types of *primordial* positions, which conceive the nation as a reified community built over time around a series of objective diacritical features - race, language, culture, tradition, myths and symbols. Its purportedly remote origins provide the explanation for its present political manifestation. One of the most outstanding framers of this model recently admitted that the notion of national identity as a primordial phenomenon has generally been laid to rest by researchers (Armstrong, 1995). Another scholar that has been included - erroneously - as one of this model's supporters due to his focus on the ethnic origins of contemporary nationalism is Smith. At present he proposes an approach that would appropriately balance past ethnic influence with the present impact of nationalist activity (Smith, 1995).

In order to reach a more plausible and complete explanation of nationalism, we may ask however if it is sufficient to generally abandon any perennialism about the nature of nations, and to instead emphasize their "imaginary community" side. The rather problematic logic of the traditional studies still persists in a far too active form within the present consensus on nations' modernity, political construction and state-centeredness. Reformulating Bowles' and Gintis' enlightening conceptualization, this explanatory model might be labeled *expressive nationalism* and *exogenous ethnicity*. The logical sequence of the argument, which is often implicit in explanations of subnationalism, may be summarized as follows:

1. A previous objectively differentiated *ethnicity*, based on certain features (language, “race”, culture, tradition, territory, etc.),
2. Generates a pre-political matrix of common *national interests*. The community, through the effort of its elites and intellectuals, becomes increasingly conscious of it, to the point of
3. Fashioning a *collective identity* that is adopted by a certain segment of the population. The political expression of this national interest sooner or later originates
4. A *nationalist movement* that, by discovering and extending the national difference to broader and broader segments of society, finally demands
5. The right to self-determination and its own *state*, enabling it to obtain self-government and channeling the defense of the community’s interests.

This sequence also basically applies to a nation-state’s nationalism, although the order of the last factor needs to be changed so that it becomes 1-2-5-3-4. In this manner the state, as the institutionalized representation of a certain ethnicity and its pre-political interests, reinforces the cultural, economic and administrative territoriality of the nation. The state is supported by nationalism, and in turn supports it as a discourse to be used by the political parties that see themselves as expressing the national interest.

Although seldom taken to its final implications, the new consensus would indicate a need to abandon this underlying model of mere expressive, and in the last instance essentialist nationalism in order to replace it with the notion of *constructed* nationalism. So nationalism should no longer be considered a manifestation or externalization of the nation taken as a given. Rather, the nation itself is the dynamic and unfinished outcome of a complex process of political and social construction that takes place in certain cultural, economic and political contexts due to the pressures of nationalism.

Going beyond mere ethnocultural differences, the final construction of a nation requires meeting a series of demanding conditions in the areas of structure and action. These prerequisites can be summarized as:

1. Certain distinguishing *ethnic preconditions*, taken not as objective facts, but as the outcome of a selection, filtering and invention process that nationalists carry out using ethnic “raw material” of richer or poorer quality, which in turn results from prior handling by elites and intellectuals.

2. Certain *social preconditions* that favor the existence of a nation. One of these might be common economic interests among the population, which give rise to a potential conflict with another group or groups. Another might be an economic crisis resulting from modernization which causes people to feel uprooted due to loss of traditional links, resulting in the need for certain segments of society to identify themselves with a concrete identity. A third example would be the arrival at a minimum threshold of social mobilization or supra-local communication that would contribute to the perception of a common social space.

3. An appropriate *political opportunity structure*. This may be *formal*, such as political decentralization (a consociational or federal state, etc.) or opportunities for political access (a certain level of real democracy) which encourage the politicization of national differences. Or it may be *informal*, such as governmental policies and strategies that facilitate nationalism, electoral dealignments, intra-elite conflicts, opportunities for new alliances, etc.

4. An efficient *political mobilization*, which through organizational and discursive effort is able to establish the existence of the nation as an undeniable political fact among a broad social group, building on shared national interests and specific objectives for self-government.

In sum, there are no ethnic founding moments or national interests prior to the political process. Instead, each political mobilization produces - that is selects, prioritizes and popularizes - distinctive ethnic markers, along with concrete and contingent national interests. Even the specific social and political milieu may in turn be altered by the movement itself and by other internal or external factors. Thus a perspective that takes into account the constructed and dynamic, open-ended nature of the process reintroduces politics as the fundamental and truly *foundational* element, rather than as a mere expression of a given nation.

Tracing the most recent contributions in the fields of nationalism and social movement theory, the following pages summarize some of the central factors in nation-building as a process, suggesting a multidimensional analysis of nationalism as a rather specific political mobilization.

## **2. Ethnicity seen as a cultural and political outcome, not as a fixed social given**

The eclipse of the primordial and organic positions, along with the increasing agreement on the malleable, historical and non-natural aspects of the diacritical features that shape the ethnicity of nations, give rise to two very different sets of questions. First of all, we find that differentiated ethnicity is a necessary but not sufficient cause for the genesis of a nation. A group that manifests its own particular language, culture, traditions, customs or economy may exist without developing a nationality (Stavenhagen, 1996; Gurr, 1993). Moreover, it is necessary for the ethnic difference to be socially activated through shared oppression, inequality or exploitation, and for political entrepreneurs/intellectuals to forge a social block around certain ethnonational characteristics.

But secondly, the relative *nation-building* potential of ethnicity and even its internal nature are problematic when seen from the new constructivist approach. Specifically, ethnicity does not constitute a pristine difference - a static set of objectively given factors. Rather, it is the dynamic result of a political and intellectual production process, occurring within the same cultural and political mobilization that sets the objectives as well as the criteria for community ascription - the specific features for belonging to a group. If ethnicity constitutes a series of identity markers that are socially and politically constructed and selected, but never entirely crystallized, then one of the first goals when analyzing nationalism should be to explain the mechanisms used in setting the specific ethnic ascription criteria in each concrete nation-building process. We should explain not only the fluctuation and malleability of the ascription criteria, but also the sociopolitical process for shaping it through collective nationalist action.

In this sense we find certain - albeit limited - usefulness in a classic, preliminary conceptual distinction between *ethnicity*, *ethnic solidarity* and *national mobilization* (Olzak, 1983; Hechter, 1987; Chai, 1996). The concept of *ethnicity* includes various socially and politically established non-primordial factors (language, culture, history, tradition, territory, economy, myths and symbols). These attributes are used both within the group and toward the outside in order to set the insider/outsider border (Barth, 1969; Van den Berghe, 1981; Smith, 1986; Connor, 1994; Hedetoft, 1995). Each specific ethnic group emphasizes, selects and even “invents” certain differential criteria for community ascription (language, “race”, territory or tradition). Other criteria are rejected or minimized, especially those that may imply internal differences within the community (Hobsbawm, 1992; Anderson, 1983).

*Ethnic solidarity* goes beyond this. It implies that individuals consciously identify with a group or community, requiring not only a vague sense of distinctiveness as a people but also solid support from interaction and communication networks or from formal/informal institutions that socialize new members and reinforce social links between communities (Tilly, 1978; Olzak, 1983). Ethnic solidarity is generated by various social practices such as endogamy or economic specialization in the labor market. It may also arise due to political practices such as cultural repression, experiences of war, ethnic cleansing, genocide, etc. (Hechter, 1978; Bonacich and Modell, 1980; Stavenhagen, 1996).

Finally, the concept of *ethnic mobilization* refers to a collective action of selecting certain ethnic characteristics as criteria for belonging to a community and then linking them to specific political objectives for self-government. The level of mobilization has traditionally been measured using indicators such as the percentage of votes for nationalist parties (Hechter, 1975; Ragin, 1977; Nielsen, 1980; Olzak, 1982) or the level of ethnic conflict (Smith, 1981; Gurr and Harff, 1994; Stavenhagen, 1996).

However, this useful distinction creates a potential problem. In an undercover way it may reintroduce the linear nature in expressive nationalism - a continual progression from a differentiated ethnicity to a growing conscience of the difference and finally political mobilization demanding nationhood. As mentioned before, it is not sufficient to admit

the malleability of ethnic ascription criteria. It is also necessary to explain how and why a certain version of ethnicity crystallizes. In other words, we need to know why certain exclusion/inclusion limits are established around specific diacritical elements, which are supposedly objective and in some way *naturalized* as social and political evidence. In order to explain these matters we must inevitably see ethnicity, not as the starting point but as one of the contingent and undetermined outcomes of mobilization itself.

The social scientist's challenge in explaining nation-building thus involves maintaining that ethnicity is of non-primordial character - produced and thus imagined or invented - while at the same time accounting for the important role played by the national "evidence" in the construction and production of the nationalist social/political realms. So an examination of the changing ethnic sources of a nation is necessary to avoid diluting its substantive nature. Otherwise we are led to explanations based solely on the structural socioeconomic factors that activate a nation, or to simply resolving problems of collective action logic as posed by a specific group. *Ethnicity* is truly a construct; but it retains its own political effectiveness, which must be explained with the highest possible degree of precision. When elaborating the definition of a differentiated collective identity, nationalist elites/intellectuals select and build upon certain elements: language, culture, territory, traditions, myths, symbols... In this way they determine the nature of the insider/outsider opposition, along with the democratic, violent or xenophobic character of the borders and habits of inclusion/exclusion.

The problem with certain classical theories of ethnic conflict such as the "cultural division of labor", the "split labor market" or the "ethnic competition" theory is that they tend to dilute the ethnic factors in the structural economic factors that activate them. Thus ethnic factors lose their independent causal and explanatory force, becoming in the end minor if not superfluous variables in the analysis. The most patent example of this analytical elision of ethnicity is found in Bonacich, Banton et al.'s theory of "split labor markets". In fact, Bonacich grants causal relevance only to the structural socioeconomic factors, such as differences in salaries and inequalities between groups within the labor market (Bonacich 1972, 1979). Ethnicity is thus understood as a constant, devoid of significant variation. Banton in turn focuses on ethnic competition generated by a

certain group's monopolization of the economic resources. Once again ethnicity is, in fact, irrelevant, this time due to the explanatory weight of other social factors (Banton, 1977).

This weakening of ethnicity in favor of structural and mobilizing factors can be encountered - although to a lesser degree - in researchers such as Olzak, whose concept of "ethnic resources" is extremely significant in this respect. According to her argument, ethnic resources principally refer to organizational factors such as networks, information circuits or institutions that maintain stable interactions over time. They do not refer to the ethnic materials used by political leaders and organizations. In this fashion ethnicity becomes something self-evident, purely accessory to mobilization, a sort of "black box" that one does not attempt to analyze at any time (Olzak, 1983, 1985). Hechter himself, in spite of recognizing the central importance of cultural differences based on religion and language along with the problematic issue of interpreting meaning through ethnic limits, hypothesizes its dependence on unequal development as the explanatory cause (the *internal colonialism* hypothesis). So unequal development becomes the decisive factor that banishes the study of ethnicity to a marginal status, left aside as virtually transparent and self-evident. This critique can generally be extended to the entire internal colonialism and unequal development schools. Time and again ethnicity is redirected to the structural factors that catalyze it, so that they become the center of analysis, allowing little opportunity for systematic study of the ethnic origins of nations (Gellner, 1964; Nairn, 1977; Ragin, 1979).

The analysis of ethnic preconditions to nationalism has had no better luck at the hands of rational choice studies, due to the emphasis that the collective action logic places on incentives for action and on the need to overcome mobilization problems. By limiting the analysis to these types of questions they in turn avoid any substantive treatment of the formation and internal articulation of the ethnic preconditions for nationalism. An example of this is seen in Rogowsky's concept of *stigmata*. These group characteristics that provide easy identification and are difficult for group members to alter, can only be considered as the basis for the existence of negative selective incentives that hamper *free rider* behavior due to the visibility of the individual's choice (Rogowsky, 1974). The same can be said of two of the most recent analyses of nationalism from a rational choice

perspective: Hardin and Chai. Hardin hypothesizes that the rational nature of nationalism - even in its most violent forms - explains the process of generating power and the benefits accrued to individuals as a result of it. But he does not examine the weight of the traditions and myths that have been adopted and transmitted within the community, nor the community's capacity to generate the nation as a quasi-natural undeniable fact with a decisive political leaning in the conflict (Hardin, 1995). Chai provides an extremely interesting effort at rethinking the formation of ethnic frontiers when the groups occupy similar positions in the labor market, when structural changes such as migration and modernization occur, and when the appearance of altruistic preferences generates cooperative behavior. In a work which for the first time explicitly examines the formation of ethnic borders, surprisingly there is still no substantive reference to the factors that shape ethnicity in each specific case and result in diverse political/social consequences (Chai, 1996).

Given that ethnicity and its component elements are not objective and natural but derived from a process of elaboration and thus susceptible to a number of changes and re-formulations by nationalist elites/intellectuals, there is an immediate need to examine the process of shaping and producing ethnicity. In fact, this should be the central factor analyzed within nationalist mobilization, in order to explain the content, that is, the specific version that becomes predominant among the several available possibilities of language, culture, history, myths and symbols. It is also necessary to explain which specific values are linked to which "national interests" and the process by which each of these reaches the status of a self-evident truth shared by many citizens as self-conscious members of the nation (Pérez-Agote, 1993, 1994; Gurrutxaga, 1991, 1996).

The first step should clearly be to establish the fundamental reason for ascription to a certain community, by determining the boundaries and appropriate weighting, configuration and internal structure of the ethnic factors: culture, language, history, traditions, customs, territory, economy, race, religion, etc. A decisive aspect that is common to all these genetic national elements is their "organic" nature as factors to be utilized in the development of a nationalist discourse. From their mere presence nationalists derive the unequivocal conclusion that a nation exists as a natural fact, regardless of whether or not the majority has arrived at this

position. Hence the nation is presented as a reified being that has existed from time immemorial, which is to say, as a non-political reality separate from any individual's will and consciousness, as "nature imposing itself" upon the nationals in a self-evident fashion. The effectiveness of this organic definition of the nation runs in parallel with the problems involved in establishing a democratic discourse. By definition the political dimension, in both its structural and actor's perspectives, becomes marginal and purely expressive, excluded from the ethnic and essential nucleus that defines the nation in its building process.

In the classic words of Kohn, none of the elements that confer national charisma (language, territory, traditions, religion, customs, etc.) are indispensable for the formation of the nationalist community, which can in fact be founded upon very different combinations or variations of them (Kohn, 1949). This is an additional reason to analyze how and why certain diacritical elements become politically significant for a group, which in turn depicts them as natural and self-evident. This key dimension must unavoidably be examined without diluting it in the social preconditions that activate it or the collective action problems that the group in question must resolve.

In effect, the specialists insist time and again that nationalism is characterized by a dual identity - a peculiar and explosive combination of interests and affective relationships (Rothschild, 1981). Ethnic identity is composed of a unique mix of emotive and expressive relations, of feelings and loyalties alongside of instrumental and calculated political interests, so that the latter are fully explained and significant only through the former (Nagata, 1981).

Not surprisingly, both the ethnic perspective (Smith) and the instrumental one (Brass) have highlighted that traditions, stories, myths and symbols are powerful signs that generate feelings of affinity or exclusion, of closeness or hatred among groups and successive generations. They are manipulated and reproduced over time by the nationalist elites to build the insider/outsider - or even friend/enemy - dichotomy.

In the final analysis this is the indisputable pertinence of *mythic-symbolic analysis* of the ethnic formation of nations (Armstrong, 1982;

Smith, 1986). It is vitally important to explain the cultural materials inherited by the nationalists and available at each juncture, since these veritable *ethnicity repertoires* may not predetermine or condition but certainly do guide the subsequent formulations and restrict the future possibilities of producing the concept of nation in a given context. As we have argued, these ethnic materials - culture, religion, language, myths, symbols, etc - contain their own *political* history. They are the result of filtering, selection and invention by previous generations of nationalist elites and intellectuals.

Going beyond the mobilizing power of ethnicity and the process of extending it as indisputable evidence of a national community, it is important to consider both its *structure* and *genealogy*, performing minutely detailed diachronic and synchronic analysis of the foundational story of the community. For example it is no small matter that in *hindutva* nationalism the founding myth is built around a war god such as Rama, or that the myths of the Golden Age and universal nobility of the first Basque nationalism are ground in traditional and intolerant Catholicism (Elorza, 1995). This is why the embryo of diacritical elements upon which the “core” of ethnicity is built becomes so decisive. Thus very different political consequences are derived from biologizing the idea of nation, beginning with the concept of “race”, or acculturating it with concepts such as “popular culture”, “national character” or even *Volksgeist* (Máiz, 1997). This affects not only the *external* linkage of nationalism with the principles of other ideologies such as racism, fascism or liberalism; it also affects the *internal* articulation of the diacritical elements selected to shape the nation. In sum, the specific ethnic repertoire that is inherited will significantly affect the subsequent development of nationalism. It constitutes the *nationalist ideological capital* that is partially transmitted and reformulated from generation to generation. Developed in conjunction with a variety of ideologies, it maintains over an extended period of time its potential to be inclusive or exclusive, to set objectives, to delimit that which is indigenous/alien.

Ethnonationalism's starting point is to build a community of origin upon objective ascriptive criteria, independently of how the nationals perceive these criteria. Even in the most cultural versions this leaves the political nature of the concept of nation at the margins, obscuring its aleatory and

dynamic construction process. This tends to de-emphasize democratic participation and mobilization - which lead to the general will - as well as the latent plurality of the competing projects involved in building this community, and the individual rights and guarantees required in any democratic process.

Each generation forms, so to speak, its cognitive map of the nation. But it does this in the midst of inherited elements constituted around a series of specific mythic-symbolic sets. Using these raw materials, nationalists proceed to “rediscover” and reinterpret (Smith, 1986, 1996) the national ideological capital according to the diverse requirements and urgencies of each moment. Thus nations inevitably become “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983), carriers of partially invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1992) that arise during the process of political mobilization. For this reason the analysis of ethnic preconditions should not center so much on scientific, historical or archeological evidence demonstrating objective characteristics. Instead one must first look within the mobilization process to the specific nationalist narrative that gives birth to a nationality by imbuing it with particular meaning. Ultimately it should be analyzed as a *frame* for interpreting action.

### **3. Economic and social preconditions that activate ethnonational conflicts**

Research on nationalism has so far provided one of its most solid contributions in the area of structural conditions facilitating nationalist mobilization, even though this approach tends to under-emphasize the ethnic origin of nations and their further transformation.

Although most theories coincide that nationalist mobilization is a product of modernization, they diverge on whether the ethnic preconditions are residual or explanatory, and on the factors that catalyze the nationalist mobilization. Addressing this last issue, a nation exists when it is considered as such by a majority of the population, that is, when it becomes a mass and not just an elite phenomenon (Connor, 1994). In Hroch's terms, a nation exists when it succeeds in passing from phase B, political agitation, to phase

C, broad support and identification with the nation (Hroch, 1985). In this case we still need to answer the question of what social preconditions facilitate the success of nationalist political mobilization. We shall briefly summarize several plausible socioeconomic facilitators of nationalism that have been suggested in the literature.

The contributions of *political development theories* to an understanding of structural factors are often unjustly forgotten due to certain very debatable ideological assumptions that accompanied their principal theses and in the end were shown to be empirically false. Development and cultural assimilation were linked so that the decline of ethnic mobilization was predicted as modernization progressively substitutes traditional relationships with instrumental and urban ones. In addition, an excessively linear causality theorized the existence of an ethnic difference prior to political mobilization. Yet this approach does not explain how the ethnic difference can be a political outcome shaped during the political conflict -which is often the case.

Although the linear and assimilationist aspects of Deutsch (Deutsch, 1953) or Rokkan (Rokkan, 1970) as well as the initial linkage established by Gellner between industrialization and nationalism (Gellner, 1964) are not supported by comparative research findings, these authors have highlighted other preconditions which ought to be taken into account. As researchers such as Hroch have recently pointed out, significant factors that favor the development of nationalist movements include a degree of "social mobilization" (participation in the educational or electoral systems...) as well as vertical "social mobility" and a certain density of social communication networks and channels (Hroch, 1993). Leaving aside the linear model of ethnicity's gradual extinction, we find that nation-building is only moderately well explained as a process of externalization and defense of a traditional lifestyle which is threatened or in the process of disappearing. Although nation-building is often described as a "return to tradition", a more correct explanation would center on the process of dissolving prior social, economic and psychological bonds in order to adopt a *new* socialization and behavioral mannerism. In short, every nation is a newly birthed community, mobilized as a social and political construct built on new values and ideologies, articulated within certain ethnic and identity borders.

In addition, both Deutsch and Rokkan pointed out that modernization and social mobilization would have contradictory effects. If a speedy mobilization tends to encourage assimilation, it may also raise peripheral resistance to the core. Thus the very channels for assimilation in the nation-state may also become vehicles for subnational division/defense/reinvention of local culture, language and traditions, giving rise to a process of “ethnic revival” (Deutsch, 1953; Rokkan and Urwin, 1982; 1983).

In turn, authors such as Brass, Breuilly or Linz have demonstrated that once freed from its linear nature, which predicted the mechanical coincidence of the *nation-building* and *state-building* processes, nationalism as a central phenomenon of modernity must be explained in reference to a second key factor - the state. Although nationalist discourse teaches that the state is an expression of the nation that preceded it, and even called it into being, the nation can be shown to be the product of the state. Both ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena inseparably linked to the activity of the state (Brass, 1991). This is so to the point that the modern state becomes the model for nationalism, supplying nationalism with its fundamental political objective: its own state (Breuilly, 1993). Linz has recently highlighted how attention to *state-building* processes and their crises can aid in comprehending the reasons why potential nations on an ideal ethnic-linguistic map may nonetheless fail in their construction process (Linz, 1995). In fact, as Tiryakian has pointed out among others, the three historical waves of nationalism (nation-states, colonial nationalism and nationalism directed against the nation-state) all in one way or another unequivocally place the state as their point of reference (Tiryakian and Rogowsky, 1985). Brubaker has brilliantly shown that the “institutionalized multi-nationality” that is at the base of the emerging nationalisms in the ex-USSR can only be fully grasped in the light of the peculiar territorial structure of the Soviet state, which gave substance and institutional incentive to the nationalities (Brubaker, 1996). Finally, the *Minorities at Risk* study has concluded that there is overwhelming empirical evidence demonstrating that the progressive increase in state power generates defensive reactions within, by groups who radicalize the conflict and become the source of numerous ethnonational rebellions world-wide (Gurr & Harf, 1993).

Moreover, nationalist mobilization is also catalyzed by other interesting social preconditions, which this theoretical perspective refers to and

subsequent comparative research on nationalism has consistently confirmed. Thus we have factors such as the mitigation of class cleavages, which leaves open the possibility of incorporating the electorate into nationalist parties of a *catch-all* variety. Another influential factor would be the greater level of economic development of a peripheral area vis-à-vis a less developed and ethnoculturally distinct core. A third would be the concentration of ethnically homogeneous populations within certain geographical limits (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Linz, 1973; Petrosino, 1991; Linz and Stepan, 1996). Recently Díaz Medrano has formulated a new variant of the developmental theories, paying special attention to the different *models* - rather than levels - of development. One of the factors that would explain the differences between Basque and Catalan nationalism is the contrast between the mixed production of mainly capital goods in the Basque country, compared with the principally endogenous and specialized production of consumer goods in Catalonia (Díaz Medrano, 1995).

The *cultural division of labor* school focuses on a series of social preconditions for nationalism. It constitutes an interesting explanatory approach even though it is weakened somewhat by its intertwining with the *internal colonialism* model (Hechter, 1975; Nairn, 1977; Gourevitch, 1979). In effect, Hechter's initial work tends to rely excessively on a reformulation of the Gramscian theses of "internal colonialism", so that unequal capitalist development would constitute the independent variable explaining national mobilization within the Western multinational states. The center/periphery relationship would act within the Western countries so as to superimpose on the distinction between developed core/underdeveloped peripheral nationalities an ethnocultural difference between the hegemonic nation within the state and the historic nationalities "existing prior" to the nation-state building process. In this manner economic exploitation and cultural oppression would mutually reinforce each other, giving birth to nationalist movements in the poor peripheries of the modern nation-states. Subsequent empirical analysis actually demonstrated just the opposite (Ragin, 1977, 1979; Connor, 1994; Smith, 1981; Nagel and Olzak, 1982; Díaz Medrano, 1995). The greatest political success for nationalist movements is found in the most highly developed territories that show an ethnic difference. Maybe it would be useful to reintroduce the notion of "relative deprivation" proposed by Gurr, since the decisive factor is not the grievance that the

group has suffered, but rather the perception of it that the leaders make public based on the gap between their expectations and reality (Gurr, 1993).

As mentioned earlier, there is an explanatory deficit in the excessive emphasis on *activating* ethnicity which ignores the development of the ethnic preconditions. For example, this approach does not explain why ethnic solidarity prevails over, say, class mobilization understood in a strict sense. There is in fact a clear divergence over the effects of class conflict on nationalist mobilization: while Laitin classifies it as a factor that weakens nationalism (Laitin, 1985), Díaz Medrano holds that the stronger the internal class conflict, the greater the likelihood of developing separatist movements (Díaz Medrano, 1995).

However, the *cultural division of labor* hypothesis is much more plausible. When cultural and occupational differences are superimposed in the labor market, segregation within the job market occurs along cultural and linguistic lines, encouraging the cultural *persistence* and *mobilization* of those who share one same subordinate labor status along the cultural cleavage. Group solidarity is doubly reinforced, due to stratification and to internal communication concerning common traditions, culture and language. If the members of a minority are systematically relegated to low status posts and lower income, the linkage of class interests with social and communicational exchanges will be a powerful motivator of ethnic group solidarity. The segmental division of labor may then be translated into a concentration of ethnic groups in specific jobs, while the informal or association networks strengthen the ethnic limits, thus bringing together their cultural, economic and labor interests (Hechter and Levi, 1985). Hechter (1978) and Gurr (1993) admit that there are operationalization problems associated with this specific category of national minorities, the *ethnoclasses* (i.e. the North African minority in France, Koreans in Japan, non-Caucasian immigrants in Britain or the US, Turks in Germany, etc.). Still, it permits us to analytically identify exploitation and domination without falling into an economicist interpretation. This hypothesis has also demonstrated its analytical potential in large-scale comparative projects (Gurr, 1993; Gurr and Harf, 1994). Until now there has been little systematic investigation of the often decisive role that these minorities play in activating their own nationalisms once they return to their country of origin.

Sun Ki Chai has recently pointed out the pertinence of the cultural division of labor hypothesis through a comparative study of ethnic border formation in Nigeria, Malaysia, Zaire and Pakistan. Those that might be negatively affected by the mobilization will not tend to be incorporated into the process. Yet it is difficult for an ethnic group to mobilize with any effectiveness at all if shared interests are lacking, and especially those that would profit from cooperative behavior. The most common way for a group of individuals to share similar interests is through occupying a similar status in the labor market. As a consequence, this common position will be a central factor in “expressing”, producing and crystallizing ethnic borders in order to maintain or - better yet - improve their status in the job market (Chai, 1996). For this reason Chai considers modernization and migration to urban centers or plantations as social preconditions for mobilization. Cooperation between individuals and a predisposition towards collective action tend to result from the cultural division of labor in conjunction with the relatively simple process by which the group conforms to ethnic ascription criteria (language, religion, customs, etc). A preexisting common position in the labor market thus constitutes a necessary but not sufficient precondition for ethnic mobilization, which only becomes activated as a result of structural changes and migration to urban centers.

The same can be said of the *split labor market* theory, which shares with the former model an assumption that occupational roles condition the degree of solidarity and ethnic mobilization. An initial version of this theory held that the social precondition that facilitated ethnic mobilization was competition between two or more ethnic groups. This competition would take place within the same job market, not as a result of a cultural division of labor. So a strategy of ethnic division of the labor force by the owners of the means of production would heighten the competitive mobilization of different ethnic groups, each seeking the best occupations and salaries (Bonacich, 1972, 1979).

A second version of the model highlights how the persistence of ethnic solidarity and mobilization can at times be explained through the interplay of institutions and group solidarity networks. Immigrants occupy specific marginal niches of the labor market, which hampers their cultural assimilation into the receiving country. This in turn reinforces mechanisms of cooperation and solidarity such as networks providing aid, support and

socialization, which perpetuate traditions and generate hostility based on the insider/outsider dichotomy with the population of the host country, resulting in collective action mechanisms for economic and social self-defense (Bonacich and Modell, 1980). By extension, these analyses are also useful for examining the internal nationalisms of multinational states.

Finally, to conclude this brief overview of the most frequently highlighted social preconditions in the literature, we must also consider the *ethnic competition* models inspired by human ecology (Nielsen, 1980) and the theory of resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). These analyses hypothesize that competition for scarce resources among several ethnic or national groups in the same markets will encourage them to mobilize politically, which will only increase as they gain access to resources. In this manner ethnicity or nationality becomes, not a natural or biological factor, but a strategic one to be defined relationally (Barth, 1969; Van den Berghe, 1981). Thus it will be fairly malleable, as we shall see in the final section of this article, given shape by competition for access to resources including the very process of organizing groups.

Nagel and Olzak show how four processes related to modernization constitute socioeconomic preconditions that favor ethnic and national mobilization: industrialization, urbanization, expansion of the political arena, and independence from an empire or metropolis (Nagel and Olzak, 1982, 1986). The ethnic competition theory does away with any remaining plausibility of the internal colonialism thesis and confirms the validity of the cultural division of labor hypothesis. So we find that ethnic and nationalist mobilization is more likely in economically developed, urban and industrialized areas. In fact, there is empirical evidence that supports the argument that industrialization and urbanization tend to generate ethnonational resistance (Nielsen, 1980; Olzak, 1983).

In Chai's opinion, the social preconditions for ethnic mobilization presented by the cultural division of labor model are incomplete without the competitive dimension. Cooperation within the group generates altruism and trust, which means that less resources are consumed within the group in attempts to insure cooperation, and thus the mobilization efficiency of the group as an organized competitive unit is increased (Chai, 1996).

In turn this competitive dimension suggests the need to broaden the narrow economic scope of social preconditions in order to include a key area in nationalist mobilization, that is, the political and institutional factors that facilitate it.

#### **4. The political opportunity structure of nationalism**

Although socioeconomic preconditions such as social mobilization, communication and shared interests play a fundamental role in activating nationalist mobilization, an equal or even greater role is played by a group of factors that have been generally forgotten in the literature. We are referring to the institutional and strategic political contexts that nationalism encounters, given that the competition between groups occurs principally in the political arena. In this sense, two dimensions are especially relevant in the success or failure of political mobilization. First of all, we must consider the *institutionalization* of ethnicity, that is, the normative regulation and territorial structure of political power. Secondly, we must take into account the more dynamic aspect of the *policies* and *regulatory strategies* applied to ethnic problems and conflicts. The main assumption here is that these factors are central to ethnic mobilization due to the fact that ethnicity is not a pre-existing given, crystallized long ago. Rather than being an antecedent, it instead tends to be a consequence of the diverse political processes that regulate the nation-building process. In fact, institutions and policies constitute more than just the context that determines the gamut of possibilities available to the actors. Rather than being merely a frame for their interests or an external influence on their activity, institutions and policies directly *form* the actors on the scene, along with their interests and the spectrum of their activities (Brubaker, 1996). Nagel has pointed out that ethnic mobilization becomes more likely when the political access and participation structures are organized along ethnic lines, as well as when the public policies that are implemented “recognize” and institutionalize ethnic differences. But, on occasion, the very process of regulating ethnic limits creates new collective identities that formerly were non-existent (Nagel, 1986).

The political context thus becomes decisive in “transforming” into action the nationalist *mobilization potential* generated by the

aforementioned ethnic and social preconditions. Along these lines we find that the concept of *political opportunity structure* (POS) is extremely pertinent to the analysis of nationalism. It was developed in social movement analysis to explain a series of political, strategic and institutional factors that facilitate or complicate the progress of nationalist mobilization (Tilly, 1978; Tarrow, 1988, 1989, 1991; Kitschelt, 1986; Kriesi, 1995; Jenkins and Klandermans, 1995). The POS centers on the “structural conductivity” of a context for a certain movement. It is principally composed of variables that refer to the characteristics of the political system in which mobilization takes place: an open or closed system, stability or instability of political alignments, presence or absence of future allies, divisions among the elites in power, etc. However, this should not be seen as a static analysis of its components. Let us examine three points related to what we are investigating here. First, it is important to take into account both the *formal* political structure and the various *informal* strategies and practices of those in government dedicated to developing the structure (Kriesi, 1992). Second, the dynamic character of the POS will eventually be translated into a broadening of the available opportunities, as the movement progresses to the point of creating its own opportunities (Tarrow, 1994). Third, the POS presents a subjective dimension of “opportunities as perceived” by the actors. This partially de-emphasizes the structural side of the concept by relating it to the creation of meaning that accompanies the actor’s “reading” of the open or closed nature of the POS (Gamson and Meyer, 1996; Klandermans, 1997).

To begin, one of the components most often included in the POS is the *degree of state centralization or decentralization* in which a movement takes place. Originally proposed by Kitschelt based on the distinction between “strong” and “weak” states (Kitschelt, 1986), it is ideal for our purposes. According to our argumentation, ethnicity is the result of several factors including state structure and policies, the spectrum of constitutional and legal frameworks, as well as the strategies adopted by governments. All become decisive in explaining the channels and vicissitudes of mobilization (Gurr, 1993; Stavenhagen, 1996).

We may classify the most important regulatory policies for ethnic conflicts in two groups according to their possible effects on mobilization: elimination and accommodation policies.

*Elimination policies* aim at somehow doing away with the subnational difference, in order to unify a territory ethnoculturally. Ethnic disactivation is pursued by the state with variable intensity and diverse outcomes, always seeking to forge a “nationalizing” (Brubaker, 1996) or “ethnocratic” state (Stavenhagen, 1996) that serves one dominant ethnic group and its interests.

It is quite clear that in most countries *assimilation* was the preferred policy for dealing with the problem at its roots. This policy involves an absence or reduction of collective rights along with simultaneous negative and positive incentives to abandon any traditional or subnational collective identity, so as to adopt the language, culture and values of the dominant nation in a gradual nation-state building process. However, it is important to distinguish between properly labeled *assimilation* policies, and *integration* policies. The former pursue the explicit goal of gradually eliminating internal national differences in order to create a common ethnocultural identity, while the latter pursue a merely “civic” common identity (McGarry and O’Leary, 1993). Integration policies are compatible with certain recognition of national minorities, and are more flexible than assimilation policies, which focus exclusively on producing a single nation. Strict assimilation policies are by definition majoritarian and militate against consensus by incorporating strategies which in a *cultural* sense attempt to impose one official language in public administration, education and the media. In the *political* arena they encourage the overrepresentation of the dominant nationality in public positions. In the *legal* arena they empower the dominant nation’s institutions and conventions of private law. In the *economic* realm they extend preferential treatment to companies or regions representing the interests of the hegemonic nation’s elites (Linz and Stepan, 1996).

Comparative analyses demonstrate that the homogenization processes involved in building the modern nation-states have been relatively successful, although assimilation policies have had a high cultural and democratic cost. In fact, the likelihood of reemerging internal nationalism in multinational states fully depends on the success or failure that past assimilation processes have had in creating a national state. There is a greater chance for internal nationalism to become active wherever nationalization was late and deficient from a political, economic, educational or cultural perspective (Rokkan, 1970; Tiryakian and Rogowsky, 1985). A variety of

challenges to assimilation arise which encourage demands for cultural and political autonomy. These challenges may derive from the social preconditions of unequal development or from a cultural division of labor or from inter-territorial competition. Others challenges to assimilation arise from democratic incentives for territorial representation and decentralization, the crisis of the centralized and sovereign nation-state, as well as the renewed sense of value given to local languages and cultures, etc. The extended presence of elites who benefit from the reactivation of ethnonational demands thus constitutes a novel feature that feeds the ethnonational conflicts on every side (Linz and Stepan, 1996).

Among the extreme methods of elimination we find diverse approaches to *ethnic cleansing*. These include direct and indirect strategies encouraging an ethnic group to abandon a territory by applying pressure, either militarily, socially, culturally, linguistically, or through policies that coerce, ostracize or discriminate in order to normalize. This “clearing” of the national space by ridding it of members of a national minority in order to favor the hegemonic nation also affects those who resign themselves to acculturation by renouncing their cultural heritage. This type of regulation initially appears efficient in destroying any possibility of ethnic national mobilization. Leaving aside its ethical and political implications, very often ethnic cleansing has generated long term resentment and cocoon groups, along with a spiral of hate, violence and fundamentalist reaction. Instead of deactivating the ethnic problem, this policy entrenches and exacerbates it, leading to a political impasse.

However, most democratic states are also multinational or multiethnic (Connor, 1994; Linz, 1995; Máiz, 1998), and their stability partially depends on how the territorial problem is solved. Hence it is common for them to adopt non-majoritarian forms of decentralizing political power, while also implementing *accommodation* policies that break out of the nationalizing state mold. There are three fundamental varieties within these general policies, each having a certain effect on the mobilization process: federalism, consociational democracy, and with very specific features of its own, democratic secession.

*Federalism* may be defined as a politically decentralized structure that combines self-rule with shared-rule. It constitutes one of the most resistant

solutions that have been devised as a policy of *accommodation* in multinational states. The most interesting variety in our case is *territorial federalism*, in which the federated units broadly coincide with the territorial location of the diverse ethnic national groups within the country. One should not infer that accommodation tends to *deactivate* nationalist mobilization, even though it has demonstrated its effectiveness as a democratic answer to territorial conflicts within the state. It spans both the formal political opportunity structure, as well as the strategies and informal methods used by those in power and their way of interpreting the formal institutional framework. The outcome may include a variety of contradictory results, depending on what stable institutional structures exist and which regulatory or developmental policies are applied. In fact, some scholars have traditionally not considered federalism as an accommodation strategy, given that it was seen to stimulate increasing demands for autonomy and, in the end, secessionist outcomes (Nordlinger, 1972).

Thus as a decentralized and democratic territorial structure, federalism does activate the political processes of participation and ethnonational mobilization. Whether this contributes to stabilize or destabilize the system will depend principally on several additional factors in the strategic, political and institutional realms. From our limited perspective here, examining the POS, a decisive element seems to be found in the balance between the two dimensions of federalism: self-government and joint implication of the federal units in a broader shared political project. The crucial element of loyalty to the federation (*Bundestreue*) is not guaranteed by the formal POS, but instead is the product of consensus and mutual trust between the various actors participating in the pact. In any case, increases and cutbacks in powers and resources are integral aspects of the strategic environment of the actors involved.

Similar contradictory outcomes may also be observed in *consociational democracies*. Its usual characteristics include abandoning majoritarian criteria so as to govern with the consensus of the principal groups within a state, a tendency towards grand coalition governments, proportional recruiting of elites and civil servants, and in sum, a high degree of autonomy in the decisions that affect the specific groups (Lijphart, 1968, 1977). Consociationalism has been successfully implemented in various countries in order to partially deactivate ethnic conflicts by a more democratic means

than otherwise possible. Yet there are two problematic effects derived from it along the lines of what we are examining regarding ethnic national mobilization. First, it encourages elite politics by strengthening the role and power of the leaders of the various groups. This implies that in one way or another it postpones the democratic mobilization of the masses, ignoring the competitive side of politics or the formation of an active citizenry (Barry, 1991). Second, and in absolute contradiction with what we have seen so far, consociationalism assumes rather problematically that subnational and ethnic differences are objectively crystallized once and for all, when in fact they are extremely dynamic political syntheses that react to strategic and institutional stimuli, changing over time in interests, features and demands. This means that it sanctions and strengthens the existing ethnic borders, the dominant version of a culture or the existing criteria for ascription, which we have seen to be derived from the interests of specific elites and leaders (Brass, 1991).

*Secession* must be considered separately, as it is collective action by a group attempting to become independent from its state in a fashion that implies partition of the existing state's territory (Buchanan, 1991). Leaving aside ethical or political questions of various types, and examining the POS of nationalist mobilization, we find that secession's *strategic* dimension is quite a prominent matter. In other words, given the malleable self-determination goals of nationalist mobilization, the discourse of secession will often be used strategically in order to achieve certain lesser objectives which may be external (increased power or self-government) or internal (to increase intra-community solidarity and homogeneity). This, with rare exceptions such as the Canadians' IPSO "partition with partnership" (Seymour, 1998), generally encourages an anti-pluralist, communitarian discourse that exacerbates the insider/outsider distinction while covering up internal differences and overlapping or multicultural identities. Although useful in mobilizing, this leads to a peculiar spiral of maximizing positions that is hard to break. The dilemma that nationalist leaders often face is the trade-off between greater maximizing radicalism and moderation. The latter implies gaining electoral support by using the rhetoric of self-determination merely as a final threat or for internal effects to reinforce the identity of its members. In contrast, maximizing radicalism complicates the process of achieving a majority sufficient to extend and consolidate a movement. Yet the lack of independence of the leaders vis-a-vis their rank and file and the

competition between elites within the nationalist parties themselves encourages the adoption of maximizing demands and tends to contribute to extreme positions. In effect, agreements between groups that hold moderate positions are complicated by the incentives that nationalist leaders have to adopt maximizing positions which will improve their grassroots support, thus generating a peculiar internal spiral of radicalism that feeds on itself (Meadwell, 1993).

So rather than being external phenomena, or prior to institutionalization, the empirical evidence suggests that ethnic conflicts are influenced by diverse accommodation formulae which act as causal agents on the conflict (Gurr, 1993; Stavenhaven, 1996).

So far, from the prior discussion it becomes clear that there are two significant aspects of the POS: the formal (decentralized structures) and the informal (regulatory policies). But it also becomes important to link the degree of decentralization with the level of openness of a political system, that is, its degree of *democratization*. It is well known that repression of a movement (through eliminating channels for political representation, making individual rights precarious, political or legal pressure, etc.) sends the costs of collective action sky-high, making cooperative behavior very difficult (Tilly, 1978; Tarrow, 1994). This seriously complicates the mobilization process. In general the analysis of social movements finds that when the costs of collective action decrease, mobilization tends to increase, so that protest arises precisely when the system becomes more open and flexible. But this situation also tends to favor the adoption of more moderate strategies by the movement's leaders (Kriesi, 1995).

However, the study of nationalism shows that the results of repression are much more mixed. It is true that high degrees of repression increase the costs of acting so much that often it blocks the development of the movement, causing the level of protest to decrease drastically. However, it has also been found that at a certain level of repression the movement will increase its degree of organization, even to the point of isolating itself as a clandestine movement. This enables it to entirely resist the passing of time, leading to fundamentalist positions that generate very resistant networks. These reinforce the collective identity and foster a willingness to assume risks, justifying the patriot's personal sacrifice of life or liberty through

mechanisms such as a cult of the heroes and leaders chosen to speak for the people. This is often the case among repressed national minorities (Smith, 1986; Guibernau, 1996).

Several studies have also demonstrated that using negative and positive incentives in different ways with different groups is central to the process of internal solidarity building (Schneider and Ingram, 1993; Gurr, 1993). In addition, a structural analysis of institutions and laws must be completed with studies on changes in the openness of public policies, which may take place under one same normative framework (Della Porta, 1995). In general, the effects of democratization tend to favor nationalist political mobilization (Gurr, 1993). But in other cases we find that prior to the democratic transition there already existed a specific authoritarian institutionalization of multinationalism. In the ex-USSR and ex-Yugoslavia, for example, this would give rise to the relational triad that Brubaker observes: nationalizing states, national minorities, and irredenta, each with its corresponding effects on the nationalist mobilization process (Brubaker, 1996).

A third element of the POS, also to be included in the analysis of nationalist mobilization, is the re-composition of the *party system* in close association with an eventual *electoral dealignment*. From the beginning researchers of nationalism pointed out that one of mobilization's effects was the appearance of nationalist forces in the party system, which would also be a test of the movement's maturity and effectiveness (Horowitz, 1985). In Hroch's model this would imply moving from phase A to phase B, from mere cultural agitation to explicit political action (Hroch, 1985, 1993). Since nationalism is first and foremost a form of politics, a *political movement* by definition, the organizational dimension of leadership and administration of resources becomes a central element in succeeding in a competitive political arena (Brass, 1991). In order to avoid drawing the excessively rigid line found in Hroch's model between a cultural and a properly political process, an examination of the concept of *multi-organizational fields* becomes especially pertinent to our research (Oberschall, 1984; Kriesi, 1993; Klandermans, 1997). Since nationalist movements rework and spread a particular ethnic matrix, they usually generate a variety of cultural associations, clubs, publishing houses, mass media instruments, etc. A diffuse network of allies are established in fields such as culture, religion and education, constituting political support

networks that are essential to the organizational growth of the movement. In fact, the ethnic/national conflict is a *continual* form of collective action that requires a certain broad level of organization. Comparative analyses demonstrate in this regard that nationalist movements tend to arise in situations of *catness*, to use Tilly's term. That is, groups of individuals operate in the midst of structured networks of social and political relations constituting something like a *nationalist social capital*.

The rise and success of nationalist parties depends both on the trade-off between radicalization/electoral success, and in good measure on the strength of the existing party and electoral systems. The latter may hinder the political consolidation of a movement if it is majoritarian. A partial or general political realignment that erodes a dominant party's voters may provide new opportunities for the nationalist parties. If nationalists are able to politically activate cultural/linguistic resentment, or highlight the negative effects of relative deprivation or a cultural division of labor, the POS may widen enough to allow a firm nationalist base even where there was no such prior tradition. Once again nationalism as a mobilization process benefits from occasionally favorable political environments (i.e. electoral dealignment) while at the same time producing its own opportunities (i.e. adapting its political discourse to average voters). A moderate stance and the occasional discrediting of one of the hegemonic parties may present a chance for nationalism to establish itself in the political system, or even to fight for the leading role, thus creating a differentiated subsystem of parties within the larger party system.

The same strategies that Dalton encounters in the ecologist movements (Dalton, 1995) also apply to nationalist movements, who have attempted three very diverse manners of relating to the party system. They may function within existing parties as the nationalist faction; or they may form separate interclass nationalist parties centered on the defense of the homeland's interests, attempting to identify themselves with the entire community; or else they may stay away from political competition by adopting a cultural stance. But the dynamic nature of political opportunities may also channel the process in the opposite direction. A radical turn in nationalist demands or the inclusion of nationalist demands in a state party's platform may reduce the presence of the nationalist parties even when it appeared that they had consolidated their electoral position. Two good

examples of this possibility are the SNP and to a lesser extent Plaid Cymru (Moreno, 1995). In any case, linear growth in the political maturity of a nation – going from a cultural expression to a full fledged political nationalism with broad support - only takes place in nationalist narratives of the nation.

As mentioned, in multinational states with strong parties, a *vote* for a nationalist party may be due to displeasure with the dominant policies and parties, a reawakening of national identity, or the ability of the party to moderate itself and act as a catch-all. The simultaneous influence of other electoral issues and the capacity of state parties to bring them to the fore will also mark the debate. Voters may turn back to state parties through various mechanisms: strategic voting, or due to an excessive radicalization of nationalist demands for autonomy, or failure to secure selective concessions/benefits, etc.

Concerning nationalist party membership it is worthwhile to apply the “group solidarity” hypothesis in that individuals will most likely be drawn by an organization that offers concrete selective or identity benefits that are not supplied by the competition. The most probable cause of the growing demand for benefits from the nationalist party resides, as we have mentioned, in the improvement of the educational level and professional qualifications of an ethnically differentiated population, which leads some of its members to seek new opportunities. Thus, a nationalist party must offer its members a social network for integration into a community along with a discourse that defends their welfare and presents a real possibility of self-government. It must also provide a recognizable identity and “ontological security” in Giddens’ terms through membership in a nation that exists, being essentially the same, since time immemorial. But we know that nationalism combines emotional support with calculated strategies and interests. Thus other competing parties may also offer positions of prestige, social status, power, various selective incentives, etc. The model of *structural conductivity* highlights how the present and past political diversity and plurality of the context may have lasting effects on the capacity of nationalist parties to gain support. Greater political competition has historically been a complicating factor in a nationalist movement’s efforts to break into the party system (Pinard, 1975; Nielsen, 1986; Díaz Medrano, 1995).

Along with nationalist interests there is the matter of mobilizing sufficient resources to be able to reward the members and maintain the organization. In sharp contrast with the internal colonialism thesis, it has been shown that the more developed a region is, the greater its capacity to generate additional resources for use by the organization that defends its interests. In consequence, it is foreseeable that membership in a nationalist party will increase to the extent that individuals consider their participation as the best method for insuring personal progress and increased benefits, especially in the area of selective incentives offered by the party (Hechter and Levi, 1985).

This organizational element of the POS occasionally overlaps with the possibility of *new alliances* on the political scene that would reinforce the nationalist movement. This factor is of significant weight from an internal perspective as allies form part of the *multi-organizational field* of support, providing resources, ideological coverage, political collaboration, etc. These are vital for taking advantage of opportunities that arise to cash in on the mobilization potential (Klandermans, 1997). But the presence of potential allies in the political arena is also fundamental for achieving external parliamentary support, forming coalitions, etc. This provides the maximization of opportunities and additional effectiveness in defending the interests of the various groups.

Finally and briefly, two other components of the POS should be mentioned: conflict/division among elites and the international arena. These have not been investigated as extensively in the literature but are important nonetheless. Comparative analysis has highlighted that ethnic communities are formed and transformed by elites in modernizing societies, or in relatively developed regions where expectations are frustrated. This process invariably implies competition and conflict between central and peripheral elites over resources, political power and social status. Yet this should not be interpreted as the generator of ethnonational political antagonism. In fact, local elites often find it more in their own interests to cooperate with the central elites than to have a stand off with them. Eloquent demonstrations of this are the historical examples of the Basque and Catalan bourgeoisie, of the Welsh aristocracy, of the Lithuanian and Romanian nobility, etc. The greater the conflict of interests with the dominant elites, the more the elites of the dominated group will favor

nationalist mobilization. The sum of forces on each side will demonstrate the cost/benefit ratio for the local elites, who generally seek conflict only once all possibilities of collaboration have been exhausted, although usually this position remains renegotiable (Diani and Melucci, 1983).

Brass has focussed on the conflicts between elites in the transformation of ethnic groups into nationalities. In his estimate the initial stages of a nation-building process involve conflicts between local landowners and foreign conquerors, between religious elites, between religious leaders and local aristocracies. When religious, cultural or linguistic differences separate relatively disadvantaged groups of elites from their competitors in the dominant group, these differences constitute the basis for demanding more privileges and better positions. Differentiated social mobilization in modernizing multiethnic societies may favor either ethnic differentiation or assimilation. But it almost invariably leads to some form of ethnic conflict and competition between elites, which may be over control of local power or over new opportunities in the most modern fields of the emerging economy (Brass, 1991). Other factors to be explored are the *disagreements* between the elites of the hegemonic group concerning what sort of treatment to give peripheral nationalism -i.e. repression/accommodation- or the relationship to have with local elites -i.e. conflict/collaboration.

Comparative analyses always include external support as a typical facilitator of the movement's development. External factors mentioned in comparative analyses of nationalism include a favorable international setting, the crisis of the nation-state, diffusion of waves of nationalism, direct support from neighboring states... Each of these factors must be examined empirically in order to understand how it affects the specific ethnic group involved (Diani and Melucci, 1983; Gurr, 1993). An especially notorious case is that of national minorities who become veritable *irredenta* supported by neighboring states of similar nationality or ethnicity (National Homeland). The Armenians in Nagorno-Karabaj, the Palestinians in Lebanon and Israel, the Russians in Estonia and Latvia all constitute cases of mobilization where external support through economic, political and ideological means plays a fundamental role.

Gurr and Harf point out that under conditions of severe relative deprivation, the greater the external support is, the greater the chance of

violent means being used to defy the authorities (Gurr and Harf, 1994). Brubaker highlights that the increasing political cost of annexation along with the progressive loss of value in physically controlling a territory has resulted in more subtle forms of hegemony and intervention by the *national homelands*, constituting decisive factors in the mobilization capacity and possibilities of certain ethnonational minorities (Brubaker, 1996).

## 5. Solving collective action problems and nationalist discourse

Favorable ethnic and socioeconomic preconditions, along with the right political opportunity structure are necessary but not sufficient prerequisites for the establishment and consolidation of a stable nationalist movement. Like any other social movement, it must also answer specific collective action problems that arise when those individuals involved threaten the mobilization process with non-cooperative behavior. Throughout this paper we have insisted on the dual nature of nationalism, both emotional and interest-laden, symbolic and strategic. We will conclude by attempting to demonstrate a more substantial relationship than is generally acknowledged between two aspects of this type of political mobilization: the formation of nationalist political preferences and the movement's interpretation framework.

Among others, Breton, Hardin, Hechter, Laitin and Motyl have shown the analytical futility of considering nationalism as an "irrational" phenomenon from an *individual* perspective. Without denying the existence of normative or altruist factors, they center on explanations for nationalist mobilization which emphasize the participant's private interests. Thus, for example, Hardin has highlighted how nationalism may be fruitfully analyzed by examining the formation of a group that depends on "coordination power". Since it depends on membership participation and involvement, this group will be much less flexible than one linked in some way to "exchange power". As a consequence it will tend to employ hostility and insider/outsider exclusion mechanisms built on stereotypes that galvanize the collective identity, rather than drafting policies or programs with clear objectives. New members in a group based on coordination power will strengthen the group's power and its possibilities of achieving its

objectives. This in turn will benefit the members, so that a direct link is established between participating and obtaining resources via distribution of selective incentives. The answer to nationalism's collective action problem is not a prisoner's dilemma, according to Hardin, but rather an issue of *coordination* that lacks a conflict concerning the possible outcomes. By reinforcing mutual expectations, this group generates an identification process based on satisfying interests: the benefits obtained are shared among the group through coordination. In a political conflict over scarce resources a coordinated group has advantages based on the low cost of transactions and the strong element of identification, which spectacularly increases its political potential (Hardin, 1995). But this may also apply to its potential for violence. Under certain conditions highly organized nationalist groups may resort to strategic violence in order to increase the cost for the government of its centralizing policies, while pressing for additional concessions. Hence this peculiar economy of violence may be partially explained in instrumental terms: the weaker the organizational capacity and thus the less control the members have over it, the greater the possibility of an uncontrollable increase in violence disconnected from the cost/benefit ratio. This would provide an explanation for the diverse use of violence in different places such as Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, Bosnia or Rwanda (Hechter, 1995).

However, the analysis of nationalist movements clearly shows the defect of Olsonian collective action logic, which implausibly assumes that individuals decide to participate and become committed in an isolated fashion, as if the factors that guide individuals to act of one accord - solidarity, commitment, trust, pressure, etc. - were non-existent. Well-known *internal* solutions to the prisoner's dilemma become the basis for emerging cooperation in the repeated encounters between actors to the extent that they foresee future interaction (Hardin, 1982; Axelrod, 1984). This is especially the case when there is a *community*, that is, a group of individuals that possess common beliefs and values, maintaining direct and multiple contacts (Taylor, 1987). This last element is an extraordinarily interesting one in the analysis of nationalist mobilization because individuals within a group maintain direct links and loyalty with the entire ethnic collective. But even more significant is a characteristic already mentioned, the fact that the community is surrounded by a dense network of organizations such as associations, clubs or other small groups of various

types - cultural, religious, instrumental friendship, etc. These generate a *micromobilization context* of solidarity, support, trust and behavior visibility that allows the deployment of a vast repertoire of control, stimuli and selective social incentives. In this manner the face-to-face networks and communities tend to overcome barriers to cooperation - invisible personal behavior, low probabilities of reward or penalty, subjective importance of one's own contribution, etc.

But in the analysis of nationalist mobilization we should also take into account *external* solutions to the problem of cooperation. These imply a change in the preferences and expectations of the actors. An example would be political entrepreneurs who assume the risks involved in being *early-risers*, supplying decisive resources for changing other's beliefs or expectations and encouraging other's *conditional cooperation*. At the same time, they are the beneficiaries of certain selective incentives (fame, prestige, power within a group, etc.). However, in nationalist movements there are also *expressive* incentives, so that the costs of participation may be considered part of its benefits (*in process benefits*, to use Hirschman's terminology). When participation in mobilization is seen through the community's interpretational frame of reference and the doctrine of patriotic mission and sacrifice for the homeland, it becomes a reward in itself whether or not the ultimate objectives are achieved.

All of this in turn leads us beyond the narrow assumptions of epistemological individualism and private interest, so as to include in the study of nationalism as a specific form of politics the *altruistic* preferences theory (Hechter, 1993; Seers, 1983). This well-worn research tradition within rational choice involves incorporating the affective and normative aspects that constitute the other side of the phenomenon we are studying. For example, the appearance of *unconditional cooperation* improves the supply of incentives for *late comers* and removes any barriers for the mobilization to reach the take-off level.

Chai's theory of the development of altruism in communities of origin is of special interest in this regard. Making note of the consistent presence of altruistic preferences among the members of nationalist movements, this researcher hypothesizes their genesis from an *endogenous* and constructed standpoint, rather than being merely *exogenous*, finished, complete and prior

to the political process. In this fashion we assume that ethnic preconditions and ethnonational identities have a political and social aspect to their production of altruistic preferences, as well as an endogenous nature which permits us a more political and dynamic analysis of the emergence of cooperation.

Chai connects the formation of altruistic preferences not with the survival of traditional community links within a local area of face-to-face communication, but rather to emigration and broader population nuclei. Thus migration to urban centers or plantations in turn generates the formation of a common set of interests, which, according to the cultural division of labor hypothesis, superimposes the ethnic identity on a certain position in the labor market.

Now then, having the same interests - even if they are both cultural and economic - will still not be enough to overcome the free-rider problem which blocks ethnonational collective action. At this point altruism towards the members of the group acts as a factor in reducing the cost of cooperation while supplying selective and expressive incentives. In this manner a virtuous circular process is established between cooperation and altruism, creating additional altruistic preferences towards other members of the group so that the entire ethnonational community is inscribed within the circle, thus overcoming the previously limited confidence and altruism which were purely local and familial. This also encourages cooperation by increasing its marginal utility within the ethnonational competition, which in turn forges even stronger links within the group and crystallizes the boundaries of this differentiated ethnicity. Hence the ethnic boundaries of groups are built on ascriptive characteristics such as race, language, culture, religion or customs, which in the end become the basis for nationalist mobilization - and also its political outcome - through the process of endogenous development of altruistic preferences (Chai, 1996).

When addressing the problems of ethnic preconditions and the POS, we pointed out that beyond the "objective" factors that each give rise to, they also incorporate undeniable elements of subjectivity, understanding one's own distinguishing characteristics and "perceived opportunities". In this last section we have seen how the expressive and altruistic components played as important a role as one's own vested interest in the genesis of nationalist mobilization. All of this finally leads us to the mythic-symbolic dimension that

underlies loyalty to a nation based on a common culture and the insider/outsider opposition (Hedetoft, 1995). Beyond this lie the nationalist discourse and the mobilization frames.

The analysis of social movements has increasingly emphasized that these phenomena are also cultural, capable of formulating and extending collective identities and worlds of meaning (Gamson, 1988; Melucci, 1989; Eyerman and Jamison, 1990; Laraña and Gusfield, 1995; Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Klandermans, 1997). This is extremely pertinent to the analysis of nationalism as a mobilization process, since the ethnic reality is both political and cultural. Its characteristics derive less from objective markers than from the meaning given - initially by the intellectuals and elites, subsequently by the majority of the group - to certain cultural, territorial and historical properties along with the shared meaning and experience given them (Smith, 1986). In fact, ethnicity's relationship to objective data is only a weak one, which becomes more robust in the arena of symbol production. Distinguishing marks are constantly reinterpreted through the construction of myths and symbols along with political action (Melucci and Diani, 1983). So the nature of this elusive set of myths, traditions, values and symbols cannot be grasped except as a part of the conditions of discourse within which it arises, since nations are in this sense "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1983). Thus the need to specify the discursive dimension of the "idea of nation" (Greenfeld, 1992) which is so central to all nationalisms. This requires an ethnosymbolic study analyzing the social preconditions and rationality of mobilization, taking into account the ethnic materials that nationalism has available to work with (Smith, 1996). It will also be necessary in order to explain the specific articulation of the diacritical elements of ethnicity as they are formulated in each case, their transformation and external linkage with political ideologies and values that may influence them in one direction or another. In sum, it requires an analysis of the very discursive conditions that provide the possibility of nationalism developing (Cabrera, 1992; Máiz, 1996, 1997).

In this sense, we find highly useful the concept of "mobilization frames", as a set of collective beliefs that give participation sense within collective action. The central elements of the movement's discourse are a sense of injustice or inequality (grievances), a belonging to a collective identity, and a motivation for political action (Eder, 1996; Gamson, 1992). These are summarized in the frames, sometimes intentionally ("framing strategies") and at other times

unconsciously (“mobilization frames”). We have already seen how the meaning of national oppression should be analyzed from the perspective of *relative* deprivation, as frustrated expectations (Gurr, 1993). We have also mentioned how nationalism generates a collective identity through ascriptive mechanisms with diacritical elements (language or “race” or territory). These determine antagonistic insider/outsider stereotypes so that differences with others take on extreme importance, while the internal differences are minimized within the community (Touraine, 1981; De Vos and Romanucci-Ross, 1977). Myths and symbols have the additional mobilizing “virtue” of *ambiguity*, in that they galvanize the entire community while leaving aside any other internal fractures. Yet a common ethnic heritage and common socioeconomic interests are not sufficient to produce action. It is also necessary for the nationalist discourse to activate this mobilization potential through formulating and selecting mythic-symbolic elements of altruism, cooperation and sacrifice for the homeland. This leads to heroic actions, and even atrocities, along with an exacerbation of the insider/outsider conflict, supplying great doses of the emotional content essential to mobilization (Brass, 1991).

We have shown that interpretation frames do not “reflect” or “express” a preexisting objective national reality. Instead, as “rhetorical strategies”, they are fundamental instruments for building the ethnonational difference itself, choosing some features while diluting others, proposing certain political objectives while ignoring others. As such, they are a central element in collective action. In this sense, the more a discourse becomes emotional, radical, specific, bounding opposing identities, the more mobilizing it will be. But this excess in radical intensity generates a process of frame dealignment, raising for nationalist leaders a problem of political exclusiveness. The challenge of achieving a balance between the mobilizing emotion and the moderation needed to broaden electoral support generates the characteristic ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings that are typical in nationalist discourse.

From this perspective a (successful) collective nationalist actor is also the result of a dynamic of “frame alignment” (Snow and Benford, 1988; Eder, 1996). This is a process of overstating the myths and symbols of the “community of origin” so as to establish it as a natural and self-evident entity. In the eyes of nationals it is not seen as politically arbitrary but natural and immutable. Its beginning goes back to time immemorial and its essence is built

around diacritical elements of the ethnic core: a collective name, a myth of common ancestry, a shared and linear history, a common culture, linkage to a specific territory, patriotic unity, etc. Thus every nationalist *narrative* is woven through a process of symbolic packaging of several specific interpretation frames. It is, in sum, the political result of a concrete framing strategy (Eder, 1996).

Hence nationalism generates a discourse using various framing devices of moral, factual or aesthetic nature that overlap so that the individuals' identity dissolves, through immersion - Herder's *hineinfühlen* - in the collective identity of the nation. Thus, the link with the homeland is established as a duty for this collective entity that in turn has its own rights (self-determination, linguistic normalization, etc.). Overwhelming empirical proof of a national difference is provided through "scientific" data (language, race, territory, etc.). On the aesthetic level myths are developed remembering a "golden age", a common ancestry, etc. The nation is presented as an undeniable *natural* fact, while the state is nothing but an artificial construct.

In each case this strategy of framing certain values, differential ethnic elements, socioeconomic interests and political objectives leads the nationalist movement towards a specific political orientation. It also determines the strategic repertoire, the "authentic" members of the nation, the formula for self-government, the potential allies, the democratic or authoritarian nature of the community, etc. (Hedetoft, 1995; Cabrera, 1992)

Comparative analysis demonstrates that in general, nationalist movements maintain a basic gamut of three ideal-typical framing strategies, which they never completely narrow down to one. They are ethnonationalism, constitutional patriotism and populism (Diani, 1996; Viroli, 1995; Máiz, 1998). The *ethnonationalist* strategy is the most common, given that nationalism is defined by its ability to establish a collective identity based on the existence of certain distinguishing features (ethnicity). This strategy does create mobilization problems. First of all it is problematic in territories that are relatively plural or that present weak ethnic differentiation due to its lack of inclusiveness. But it also introduces a spiral logic since it principally relies on the ethnic core and devalues the voluntary or political dimensions, thus generating a mobilization that is starkly non-democratic as seen in the recent cases of ex-Yugoslavia and the ex-USSR, as well as the Basque Country and

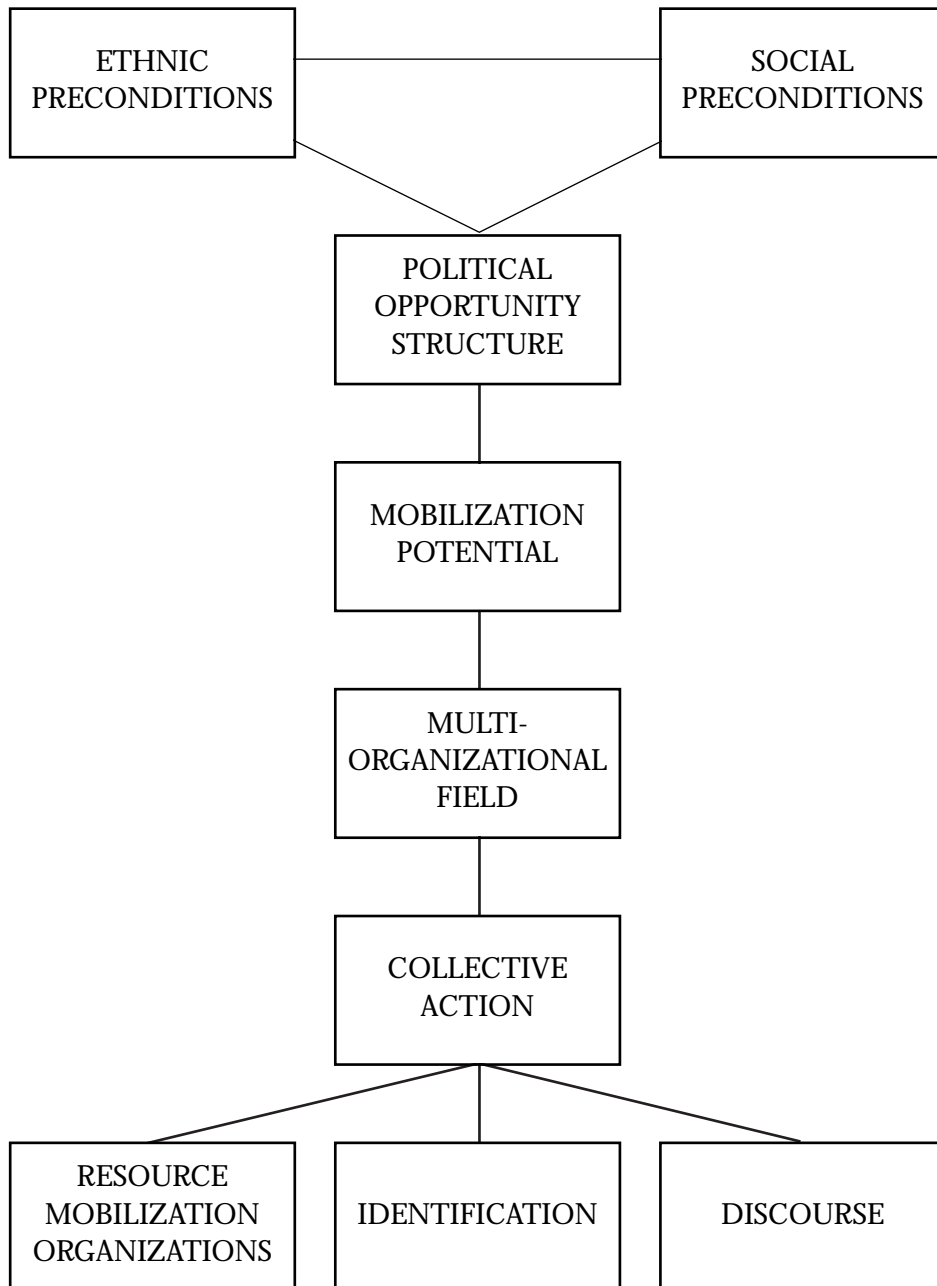
Northern Ireland. This creates anti-pluralist pressures, charismatic leadership, the crisis of certain individual rights that are subjugated to communitarian ones, and in the worse case scenario reliance on the direct incorporation of xenophobic features such as racism or ethnic cleansing. Even apparently innocuous elements of nationalism such as language, culture, traditions or territories nevertheless weaken the free and plural formation of political volition and the due respect of minorities, eroding in turn the concept of citizenship, which is central to democracy (Máiz, 1998b, Seymour, 1998).

*Constitutional patriotism* centers on the constitutional dimension of citizenship, individual rights, legal guarantees and democratic pluralism. But it must minimize the insider/outsider contradiction, creating a rational and formal discourse that is strategically very inclusive but does not pack an emotional or mobilizing punch. As seen in the evolution from “*wir sind das Volk*” to “*wir sind ein Volk*” during German unification, it leaves an open door for competitive forces that may use the more effective ethnonationalist strategy of mobilization without worrying too much about its democratic liabilities.

Finally, the *populist* strategy dilutes the ethnic foundation by limiting the insider/outsider opposition to a people/dominant elites duality (Diani, 1996). As the evolution of the Italian Lega del Nord shows, its strategic rhetoric is of great narrative usefulness and political plausibility when combined with a mix of inclusion and “antipolitical” emotional intensity. In regions with a weak ethnic difference but strong and unequal development its inclusive and mobilizing power may be great.

In each specific country nationalism tends to oscillate between the first two strategies, following one or the other more closely depending on the situation at hand. Since the populist and civic strategies dilute the definition of ethnicity that characterizes these types of movements, the ethnonationalist option tends to dominate but seldom in a pure form. Elements of the others are also incorporated in accord with the specific preconditions - ethnic, social and political opportunity structure - that each nationalist movement faces. This is not due to some objective self-evident fact as argued by the nationalists. Rather, it is the very contingent and undetermined political outcome of nationalist conflict and mobilization.

## DIMENSIONS OF NATIONALIST MOBILIZATION



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