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Nations
without States

Political
Communities
in a
Global Age

To the memory of Ernest Gellner

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Is it possible to refer to nations without states as new political actors in the global age? Is the traditional nation-state system being replaced by a system of nations integrated within larger political institutions? Will nation-states become nations without states in a world organized around supranational institutions to whom nation-states are progressively surrendering significant aspects of their sovereignty? What are the reasons for the current strengthening of nationalism in nations without states? How does globalization impinge upon the reshaping of political institutions? Nationalism is thriving in nations without states such as Catalonia, Scotland, Quebec and Flanders. A series of factors contribute to this. They include: the fragmentation of the former Soviet Union and the nationalist feelings it has sparked off in places such as the Baltic Republics, Georgia and Chechenia; the proliferation of transnational institutions such as the European Union; the pressure exerted by an increasingly globalized culture capable of reaching the remotest corners of the world; and the invigoration of multinational corporations which break the boundaries of national economies. Contemporary politics are grounded upon a constant tension between pressure exerted by sub-state movements which put forward nationalist claims, thus questioning the state's legitimacy, and the growth of supranational organizations which require the state to surrender relevant attributes of its traditional sovereignty.

In this context, I refer to nations without states as cultural communities sharing a common past, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, and wishing to decide upon their political future which lack a state of their own. These

communities are included within one or more states which they tend to regard as alien, and assert the right to self-determination, sometimes understood as further autonomy within the state, though, in other cases it involves the right to secession. I employ the expression 'nations without states' rather than 'stateless nations' to avoid the specific meaning that the latter term has within anthropology.

The origin of the consciousness of forming a distinct community among members of nations without states can, in most cases, be traced back to a more or less distant past in which the nation enjoyed its own political institutions, as was the case in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Wales and Scotland. Often this involves going back to an era previous to that of the emergence of the nation-state system. As Anthony D. Smith has stressed, the ethnic origin of most nations can be traced back to a time when the 'core' of ethnicity which resides in certain 'myths, memories, values and symbols' transmitted through different generations was established. Smith lists six main attributes of an ethnic community or *ethnie:* (1) a collective proper name; (2) a myth of common ancestry; (3) shared historical memories; (4) one or more differentiating elements of common culture; (5) an association with a specific 'homeland'; and (6) a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.[1] In my view, to acknowledge that there is an ethnic origin to most contemporary nations is far from assuming that all pre-modern political communities turned into nations or nation-states, and does not imply that nations are perennial entities.[2] Extremely complex processes lead to the disappearance of some nations and to the emergence of new ones. What is relevant about the current strength of nationalist movements in nations without states is that, in many cases, they emerge within nations which once enjoyed a separate political and/or cultural identity which is now being invoked, revitalized and adapted to the new

socio-political circumstances in which the nation lives and evolves.

In spite of the significance achieved by nations without states, no attempts have been made to offer a systematic analysis of them as emerging new political actors. One of the major obstacles for this is the lack of a clear-cut distinction between the concepts of nation and state in the literature about nationalism. In this sense, the general approach of this book is highly relevant to the contemporary political situation in as far as one of the central themes is the problem of separating the idea of a nation from that of the state – in other words, the problem of the preservation and perpetuation of communities with their own distinct culture in a world in which most political units are larger than national.

Three main approaches can be found in the restricted literature considering forms of sub-state nationalism. The first focuses on single case studies. It includes writings of a monographic or comparative nature in which one or more particular case studies are subject to an in-depth analysis. In such works very few, if any, theoretical considerations are made which go beyond the specific features of the cases involved.

The second approach comprises more general studies about the relevance of the regions and regionalism within Europe. These analyses tend to display a highly empirical outlook and focus on the implications of political decentralization for the areas concerned. The third is a more abstract, theoretical approach which examines the profound transformations affecting the nation-state. In so doing, most studies consider what is generally referred to as 'peripheral nationalism' and the role of a globalized economy as two major factors contributing to the emergence of sub-state units. The focus of attention is not the rise of nationalism in

nations without states but the ways in which the traditional state is being recast.

(1) The first approach examines the re-emergence of nationalism drawing on specific case studies. It explores the reasons for the renewed strength of the nationalist movement and the social structure of the societies involved. The history of the relationship between the national minority and the state which contains it as well as the components of the specific national identity defended by the nationalist movement are carefully examined. I distinguish between two types of studies within this approach. The first contains works in which different case studies are compared. The second refers to monographic analysis concerned with a single case study.

Michael Keating offers one of the most sophisticated accounts within the first category. His book *Nations against the State* compares nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland. In his view, the nationalist movements now emerging in these three nations should be interpreted as a response both to the changes in the capacity and legitimacy of the states containing them, and to the reconfiguration of territorial politics after the two World Wars. These nationalisms, which are historically rooted and have developed within states, offer a pragmatic solution to cultural or territorial questions. Keating argues that Catalan, Scottish and Quebec nationalism contains ethnic as well as civic elements in its doctrine, the political strategies it tries to advance and the support base it receives, although, in his view, its civic dimension has been strengthened over the years.[3]

For Keating, it is essential to distinguish between ethnic particularism and minorities' nationalism. In the three societies he studies, he considers national identity to be an organizing principle for the society as a whole, even if not all

its members are committed nationalists. He argues that, in the past, Catalonia, Quebec and Scotland were politically and economically dependent on the states containing them, a situation which now has been reversed. He writes, 'This dependence has lessened as the states have lost their capacity for territorial management and the minority nations have become more self-assertive'.[4] For Keating, these three nations emphasize social solidarity as a main value of the political culture while, at the same time, being strongly committed to their continental regimes, NAFTA in one case and the EU in the other two. These nationalisms, Keating argues, interpret their relationship with the state as a pact which is open to re-negotiation, a perspective which is commonly shared by the states containing them where it has proven a very conflictive point. Within this first approach, David McCrone's *Understanding Scotland: the Sociology of a Stateless Nation* is a good example of a monographic study about the specific features of nationalism in a single area. He describes the different elements which have contributed to the generation of a specific Scottish national identity throughout time and focuses upon the novel factors which are currently contributing to a renaissance of Scottish nationalism. In his view, Scottish nationalism should be understood not simply as the assertion of linguistic or cultural distinctiveness, but as a political challenge to the authority of the central British state.[5]

(2) The second approach examines regions and regionalism in Europe where since the early 1960s there has been a revival of sub-state nationalist movements. These studies focus on different decentralization experiments carried out within the European Union and considers whether regions have become or are in the process of becoming an essential level of government in Europe.

This approach is well represented by Christopher Harvie's *The Rise of Regional Europe.* In this book, Harvie considers different EU regions and focuses upon the ways in which history is being employed by their nationalist movements. He also looks at elites and regional cultures, and he concentrates on the economic dimension of the re-emergence of what he refers to as 'regionalism'. He does not employ the term nation, and includes under a single denomination 'region', areas with a cultural and historical basis and areas which are merely determined by economic or geographic factors. He is sceptical aboutthe possibility of creating a Europe of the Regions due to the great inequalities existing among them.

Patrick Le Galès and Christian Lequesne in their recent book *Regions in Europe* also challenge the notion of a 'Europe of the Regions' and argue that 'the dynamics of particular regions and the discourse of Europe of the regions, have led one to overlook the fact that regions are structurally weak in terms of government and governance'.[6] They argue that only a small number of regions (and cities) are on their way to becoming collective political actors in European governance. In their view, most regions are weakly institutionalized, endowed with a weak political capacity, and are destined to manage scarcity or economic decline, as well as to protect culture, the environment and identities. They consider the Europe of the Regions as a myth whose importance should not be exaggerated, though the thesis they defend does not refer to the decline of regions in Europe, 'but to decline of causes that logically converge to reinforce regions'.[7]

(3) The third approach includes a substantial number of theoretical works which from different perspectives concentrate on the changes affecting the traditional nation-state. These studies do not address the rise of nationalism

in nations without states in a direct way, however. Their analysis almost invariably contains some references to what is often referred to as 'peripheral nationalism' and considers the role of sub-state units within a progressively globalized economy.[8] This approach embraces some works which relate the nation-state's crisis to the intensification of globalization processes. David Held offers the best of these accounts.[9] In his view, the state is suffering a double crisis, one of rationality in so far as it is unable to fulfil its traditional functions, and a legitimacy crisis in that it is no longer able to achieve massive loyalty. Held argues that the number of groups which claim the principle of democratic legitimacy when demanding the right to control their political destiny is increasing. At the same time, the relevance and content of this principle is being altered by the intensification of globalization processes. In his view, it is essential to recognize three elements of regionalization and globalization. First, the changes in the nature, scope and capacity of the modern state produced by processes of economic, political, legal, military and cultural interconnectedness. Second, changes to the nature and dynamics of national political systems brought about by regional and global interconnectedness which links different states and their citizens in chains of interlocking political decisions and outcomes. Third, the transformations experienced by cultural and political identities as a result of such processes, that have led many local and regional groups and nationalist movements to question the nation-state's legitimacy.[10] It is in this context that Held refers to new patterns of local and regional government and development and argues that while national sovereignty, even in regions with overlapping and divided authority structures, has not been wholly subverted, 'political domains clearly exist with criss-crossing loyalties, conflicting interpretations of rights and duties, and interconnected

authority structures which displace notions of sovereignty as an illimitable, indivisible and exclusive form of public power'.[11]

From a different perspective, Horsman and Marshall provide one of the most illuminating accounts of the changes affecting the nation-state and the possible alternatives to its traditional structure. In their view, 'the decline in nation-state autonomy has compromised the pact between citizens and the nation-state ... Any solution will require ways of managing the multiple links between and among the citizen, the state, regional and international organizations, and the global economy. It will require a rethinking of communities and their rights and responsibilities.'[12] Notwithstanding such affirmations, Horsman and Marshall in some sections of their book refer to the Scots, the Catalans, the Basques and the Lombards' demands for autonomy as a sign of growing tribalism.[13] Michel Maffessoli and Eric Hobsbawm[14] also refer to the re-emergence of nationalism in what I call nations without states (they usually refer to them as regions) as an anachronism and a sign of backwardness. In my view, one should be wary of the theories which label the resurgence of sub-state nationalism as tribal, while often legitimizing state nationalism. From their perspective, 'the nationalists' are always the 'other people', those who 'generate trouble', 'show dissatisfaction', 'pose a threat to the state's integrity' and 'question the state's legitimacy'. I argue that to employ the term 'tribal' to describe the nationalism of nations without states disregards two crucial points.

First, it ignores the fact that contemporary forms of nationalism differ substantially from the classical nationalism which contributed to the constitution and consolidation of the nation-state in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. A sizeable number of the nationalisms which are now gaining salience in nations without states are

grounded upon the defence of democracy and collective rights and, as I will show later on in the book, are intimately connected with the transformations brought about by globalization. A considerable number of these nationalisms claim the right to freely develop their nation's specificity within a framework of respect and tolerance and, in so doing, they challenge the nation-state by questioning its legitimacy.

It is true that not all nationalisms in nations without states are democratic and for this reason we should be attentive to the urgent need to distinguish between those which are based upon democratic principles and those which defend an ethnocentric world view grounded upon the implementation of exclusion mechanisms which often involve the use of force. My point is that, at present, there is a sufficient number of democratic sub-state nationalist movements for the social sciences to reflect on them as distinct phenomena which deserve particular attention.

Second, the very use of the term 'tribalization' to refer to the resurgence of all types of sub-state nationalism is an anachronism because it implies a return to the past which is no longer possible and neglects the connections between the rise of sub-state forms of nationalism and current alterations affecting the nation-state system.

Nationalism has traditionally been an uncomfortable topic for social scientists. In the nineteenth century and early this century we encounter numerous examples of great scholars who paid scant attention to what clearly was one of the major political forces of their time. As I have shown elsewhere, Max Weber, a German nationalist himself, never provided a systematic theory of nationalism. Émile Durkheim and Karl Marx predicted that nationalism would soon disappear.[15] History has proved them to be wrong. Instead, nationalism has played a key role in the modern age and it currently manifests itself as a potent force.

Nationalism, however, has often been portrayed in intellectual circles as a sign of backwardness and as a doctrine opposed to the cosmopolitan ideal once formulated by Kant.[16] Such uneasiness towards nationalism stems from its potent emotional dimension which clearly differs from the ideal of rationality defended by the *philosophes* which has up to now remained unquestioned. On these grounds, indiscriminate rejection of sub-state nationalism should be carefully assessed, since it often hides strong and not always declared forms of 'state nationalism'.

The study of nationalism requires the analysis of the specific situations in which it arises. The political ideologies to which nationalism is attached are crucial to understanding the significance and character of nationalism in each particular case. Above all, we should realize that the complexity and flexibility of nationalism are connected to its multifaceted character. Therefore, nationalism is sometimes associated with those who advocate xenophobia and ethnic cleansing, while in other cases it is applied to describe those who defend their right to exist and peacefully cultivate a particular culture which makes them 'different' from other groups. The eighteenth-century concept of popular sovereignty was designed for the 'whole people'. When the revolutionaries stated that the principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the nation, they may be taken to have asserted that the nation was more than the king and the aristocracy. National self-determination turned out to be one of the most frequent interpretations of popular sovereignty.

The new ideas of the *philosophes* emphasizing liberty, equality and, in particular, the idea of state power rooted in popular consent were initially applied to the construction and consolidation of the nation-state. At present, democratic nationalist movements in nations without states invoke the principle of consent and the idea of popular sovereignty to legitimate their claims for self-determination,

a concept which, as we shall see later on in the book, may be subject to significantly different interpretations. The idea of self-determination has the capacity to challenge the nation-state as a political institution which, in most cases, has been created upon the attempt to seek the cultural and political homogenization of its citizens, paying scant attention to its own internal diversity.

It is my contention that, although the accounts included in the three approaches I have just briefly summarized have made significant contributions to understanding current changes affecting the nation-state while examining with varying depth the unexpected force of sub-state nationalism, they lack a systematic account of the re-emergence of nationalism in nations without states and fail to consider the crucial role that it is likely to play in the near future. I consider the re-emergence of nationalism in Western nations without states as the result of a multidimensional process which requires a specific examination of the conditions of modernity which have brought it about. The main weaknesses of the literature I have mentioned stem from its inability to focus upon nations without states as a primary subject of analysis.

At present a significant number of nations without states are struggling to become global political actors in a changing world within which they enjoy the capacity to provide individuals with a strong sense of identity. Nations without states open up the possibility for individuals to play a more active part in the political life of their communities through participation in autonomous institutions. In so doing they contribute to the dynamization of civil society and encourage civic coherence. Emphasis upon identity is of paramount importance, but it is also crucial to take on board the sound economic arguments for decentralization which are in favour of the creation of sub-state units. In my view,

there are strong cultural, political and economic arguments for nations without states to become global political players.

Objectives and structure

This book focuses upon the re-emergence of nationalism in nations without states in Europe and North America. The empirical focus includes Catalonia, Scotland, Wales, the Basque Country, Quebec and Northern Ireland as well as First Nations in the United States and Canada, although there are spot references to some other cases. All these nations have ethnic origins that can be traced back to an era previous to the rise of the nation-state. They are all evolving within industrialized societies endowed with democratic institutions, Western democratic nation-states that grant them varying degrees of autonomy and recognition. Thriving nationalist movements exist in all of them. Most of these nations without states are, in fact, included in the European Union, a pioneering political institution which might play a part strengthening them and their various nationalisms if it decides to implement a much debated decentralization policy in favour of a Europe of the Regions.

I am aware that there are sub-state nationalist movements emerging in many parts of the world, the former Soviet Union, Asia and Africa, as well as native movements among native peoples in Australia and New Zealand which deserve much attention and offer interesting examples of new forms of nationalism. For the reasons I have just mentioned, their analysis is beyond the scope of this book.

This book has four main aims. First, to offer a definition and a typology of the different political scenarios in which nations without states find themselves in the West. Second, to advance a systematic analysis of the processes leading to

the generation of nationalist movements in nations without states paying particular attention to the role of intellectuals and the impact of the media in the construction and reproduction of nationalist messages. Third, to establish a clear-cut distinction between cultural resistance and armed struggle as major strategies employed by different nationalist groups in the advancement of their goals. Fourth, to assess the factors which might contribute to generating a completely new political environment in which nations without states are likely to become global political actors.

The book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One focuses upon the concepts of nation, state and nationalism as three terms closely related to each other. It explains the link between these concepts which are presented as forming a triad characterized by constant tension and interdependence. Here, I relate the unfolding of nationalism in nations without states to the profound metamorphosis currently being experienced by the nation-state and the intensification of globalization processes. The pre-eminence which the nation has achieved in late modernity is connected to the role it played in the Romantic era. Following this line of argument, questions about the value of diversity, the need for civic coherence and the restoration of a sense of community are examined. The nationalisms of nations without states are studied as social movements seeking the recognition of the communities they represent as distinctive cultural units with a territorial dimension and the desire to decide about their political future.

Chapter Two offers a typology of the different political scenarios in which nations without states find themselves, paying particular attention to the nature of the state containing them and the aspirations expressed by the nationalist movements studied. References to Catalonia, Quebec, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Kurdistan, among others, are made here to illustrate the various

political environments in which nations without states live and develop. It should be emphasized that this is not an exhaustive typology. It does, however, offer sufficient elements of analysis to permit a general classification of the radically distinct options faced by nations without states.

Chapter Three examines recent expressions of nationalism emerging among Native peoples in the United States and Canada. From an historical perspective, these peoples are very different from the well-documented ethno-historical European nations without states, but they share enough features with them to be included here. This chapter expands the traditional definition of nations without states to include American Indians as nations which have appropriated the language of nationalism and adapted it to their own non-Western realities. Conflicting definitions of self-determination employed by Canadian indigenous communities are considered here to illustrate the complexity of current debates on sovereignty and self-determination.

Chapter Four's focal point concerns the role of intellectuals in the construction of nationalist discourses seeking to re-create a sentiment of community among the nation's members. Intellectuals are under pressure to generate, wherever it is absent, or increase, wherever it already exists, the intensity of national consciousness. Their task is to construct a political discourse critical and subversive of the current state of affairs and put forward a set of principles which should favour the strengthening of the community as distinct and separate from the state containing it. Intellectuals are crucial in the configuration of the nationalist movement, but they are insufficient to guarantee the survival and development of a particular culture and language as something more than a piece of ethnographic curiosity and philological interest. To be successful, a nationalist movement, which generally starts

as an elite movement, has to obtain a mass following. Elite nationalisms are bound to disappear if they fail to transform themselves into mass social movements.

Chapter Five investigates different strategies employed by nationalist movements in nations without states to counteract the homogenizing policies of the state and advance their goals ranging from cultural resistance to armed struggle. Here, I examine different types of action which are generally included within cultural resistance. This chapter goes on to study the so-called 'dark face' of nationalism, its relation with violence. Political terrorism and 'total war' as well as 'state terrorism' are carefully analysed in this section.

Chapter Six explores some of the main features of the traditional nation-state which are being altered by increasing globalization. It introduces the concept of the 'post-traditional nation-state' to refer to a nation-state which is being forced to make fundamental changes to its traditional concepts of sovereignty, territoriality, control of the means of violence and the administration. A careful analysis of the relationship between the European Union and its member states illustrates the changes and dilemmas faced by nation-states in these four crucial areas. The chapter then moves on to consider the reasons which permit us to envisage a medium term future in which nations without states might become global political actors. Questions about national identity and geopolitics, as well as the economic viability of nations without states are discussed here.

Chapter Seven sums up the main arguments expounded throughout the book and concentrates on what I consider the main questions and dilemmas currently faced by nations without states which are likely to be intensified in the near future. These are: internal diversity; the possible use of violence as a mechanism to advance their goals; and

excessive bureaucratization. Multiculturalism, procedures to avoid the use of force and the implementation of subsidiarity as a political principle are examined as useful tools in confronting these three major challenges.

Questions about legitimacy, the desire to reconstruct a sense of community among otherwise isolated individuals, and the disintegration of traditional sources of identity are crucial factors to consider when studying the renewed vigour which nationalist movements in nations without states are experiencing. The transformation of the economy, communications technology and a rising awareness of global interdependence design a novel political scenario in which new actors are coming on stage. To begin with I turn to the relation between nation, state and nationalism as three interdependent concepts in constant tension with each other and offer a definition of what I mean by nations without states. In recent times the preeminence of the nation seems to be on the increase. Individuals have embarked upon a quest for identity which often seems to take them away from a progressively weaker state and back to smaller cultural communities which in many cases seek to play a political role. At present, identity is closely connected to politics.

1

State and Nation

The nation has become one of the most contested concepts of our times. Different cultural, political, psychological, territorial, ethnic and sociological principles underlie the multifarious definitions of the nation provided by the various scholars, politicians and political activists willing to shed some light on this much disputed term. Their lack of agreement suggests a major difficulty in dealing with such a complex phenomenon. The crux of the matter probably resides close to the link which has been established between nation and state, and to the common practice of using the nation as a source of political legitimacy. To be or not to be recognized as a nation entails different rights for the community which claims to be one, since being a nation usually implies the attachment to a particular territory, a shared culture and history and the assertion of the right to self-determination. To define a specific community as a nation involves the more or less explicit acceptance of the legitimacy of the state which claims to represent it, or if the nation does not possess a state of its own, it then implicitly acknowledges the nation's right to self-government involving some degree of political autonomy which may or may not lead to a claim for independence.

   The nation, however, cannot be viewed in isolation. I argue that a clear-cut distinction needs to be drawn between three main concepts: nation, state and nationalism. By 'state', taking Weber's definition, I refer to 'a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a

given territory',[1] although not all states have successfully accomplished this, and some of them have not even aspired to accomplish it. By 'nation', I refer to a human group conscious of forming a community, sharing a common culture, attached to a clearly demarcated territory, having a common past and a common project for the future and claiming the right to rule itself. This definition attributes five dimensions to the nation: psychological (consciousness of forming a group), cultural, territorial, political and historical. By 'nationalism' I mean the sentiment of belonging to a community whose members identify with a set of symbols, beliefs and ways of life, and have the will to decide upon their common political destiny.[2] But yet another term needs to be defined and distinguished from the ones I have just mentioned, the nation-state. The nation-state is a modern institution, characterized by the formation of a kind of state which has the monopoly of what it claims to be the legitimate use of force within a demarcated territory and seeks to unite the people subject to its rule by means of cultural homogenization.

Nation, state and nationalism form a triad characterized by a constant tension between its three components. Hence, changes in the definition of one of the constituents have the capacity to influence and, to some extent, even alter the definitions of the other two. For instance, if belonging to a nation is defined in terms of common blood, the definition of the state and with it that of citizenship, as an attribute conferred upon its members, will have to include blood as a *sine qua non* condition for membership. Consequently, any nationalist movement emerging in these specific circumstances will focus upon common blood as a requisite for exclusion and inclusion in the nation that they want to defend and promote. In other cases where common ancestry is replaced as the primary condition for membership of a particular nation by birth or residence

within its territory or by the simple wish to belong to it, the definition of the nation and the character of nationalism are altered accordingly.

This example refers to conditions for membership, that is, to elements which are considered to be indispensable to establishing a distinction between those who belong and those who do not belong to the nation. But alterations in the definitions of nation, state and nationalism are not restricted to conditions for belonging or criteria for membership.

The state's self-definition as a unitary, a federal or even a multinational political institution holds significant consequences for the peoples living within its boundaries. Once one of these self-definitions is adopted by a specific state, it has the capacity to influence the definition of the nation. This is particularly evident when a people is confronted with a state that declares itself to be multinational, thus assuming the coexistence of more than one nation within its territory. Such a position entails an automatic distinction between nation and state which challenges the commonly accepted coincidence between the two. A multinational state explicitly acknowledges its internal diversity and, in so doing, it influences the diverse definitions of nationalism that may emerge within its territory. First, in these cases, the nationalism instilled by the state will necessarily involve the acceptance of the diverse nations included within its borders. This type of nationalism tends to focus on shared constitutional rights and principles as elements able to hold together an otherwise diverse citizenry. Second, the nationalism emerging from some of the national minorities included within the state is strongly influenced by the state's recognition of their status as nations. The minorities' nationalism is bound to focus upon demands for greater power and resources which will allow them to further the

degree of self-government they enjoy – assuming that they are already entitled to some political autonomy.

In a similar way, alterations in the definition of nationalism also have the power to impact upon the definitions of both the state and the nation. Therefore, a nationalist discourse based upon the rejection, dehumanization, and portrayal of those who do not belong to the nation as 'enemies' and as a 'threat' will feed xenophobia and ethnic hatred. This type of nationalism is likely to foster a narrow definition of the nation based upon the exclusion of the different and the belief in the superiority of one's own nation above all others. A state endorsing this sort of nationalism is likely to base its policy on the marginalization or sometimes even the elimination of 'others' within its territory, and/or the pursuit of a consistent assimilation policy. This type of state often engages in conflicts with other states as a result of an aggressive economic and/or territorial expansionist policy.

So far I have offered some examples showing how differences in the nature and definition of one of the constituents of the triad motivate substantial variations in the definitions of the other two. A further consideration suggests that different definitions of nation, state and nationalism coexist simultaneously in different parts of the globe. Hence, the relation between the three components of the triad can be analysed by focusing upon two different levels. The first, as I have shown above, involves the study of how changes in the definition of one of the constituents affects the other two. The second moves on to consider the eventual emergence of external factors capable of altering the very nature of the triad by shifting the balance of power between its members and even threatening to undermine one of them at the expense of another. Here we are confronted with radical transformations able to alter the more or less stable equilibrium existing between the triad by affecting their relationship at a structural level well

above the particular situations considered when analysing individual cases.

At present, the main challenge to the relationship between the triad concerns the radical and rapid transformations altering the traditional nature of the state. The proliferation of supranational institutions, the increasing number of multinational corporations, and the emergence of sub-state nationalist movements contrive a novel political scenario in which the traditional role of the state is being undermined in a fundamental way. The signs of this have already become apparent; the radicalization of state nationalism, the proliferation of ethnic and national conflicts and the state's resistance to giving up substantial aspects of its sovereignty represent but a few examples which hint at the state's urgent need to recast its nature. At this moment in time, we are witnessing the rise of what I call 'nations without states' as potential new political actors able to capture and promote sentiments of loyalty, solidarity and community among individuals who seem to have developed a growing need for identity. Sound political and economic arguments may also be invoked in trying to account for the relevance that nations without states may acquire in the foreseeable future.

Nations without states

By 'nations without states' I refer to nations which, in spite of having their territories included within the boundaries of one or more states, by and large do not identify with them. The members of a nation lacking a state of their own regard the state containing them as alien, and maintain a separate sense of national identity generally based upon a common culture, history, attachment to a particular territory and the explicit wish to rule themselves. Self-determination is sometimes understood as political autonomy, in other cases

it stops short of independence and often involves the right to secede. Catalonia, Quebec, Scotland, the Basque Country and Flanders represent only a few of the nations without states currently demanding further autonomy. It could be argued that some of these nations do have some kind of state of their own since a substantial number of powers have been devolved or one in the process of being devolved to their regional parliaments. But, in my view, political autonomy or even federation fall short of independence since they tend to exclude foreign and economic policy, defence and constitutional matters, and this is why it continues to make sense to refer to them as nations without states. The main qualities of the nation-state which, in one way or the other, favoured the assimilation of otherwise culturally diverse citizens were: its power to confer rights and duties upon its citizens; to provide for their basic needs – a function which since the Second World War materialized in the establishment of more or less generous welfare systems; and to maintain order in society while controlling the economy, defence, immigration and foreign policy, education and communication systems.

A nation without state, as the term indicates, is based upon the existence of a nation, that is, a community endowed with a stable but dynamic core containing a set of factors which have generated the emergence of a specific national identity. The state, that is, the political institution with which the nation should ideally identify, is missing. This creates a picture in which we have the cultural unit but lack the corresponding political institution regarded as legitimate by the members of the nation. The relationship between nation and state seems to have shifted from a time in which the state and its role in nation-building was given pre-eminence. In contrast, contemporary nationalist movements in nations without states are actively involved in 'state-building'. We should note, however, that the state they seek