Chapter 2
Historical Memory in Nation-Building and the Building of Ethnic Subsystems

2.1 Introduction

Most studies of 'historical memory' in political science—and especially when the authors prefer the term *historical knowledge*—suffer from two disadvantages: they remain 'histories of ideas', rarely examining the impact of those concepts on political decisions; and they are concentrated at the national level because historical memory is conceived as 'national historical knowledge'. To overcome these shortcomings:

(1) Political scientists should deal with the impact of these concepts on nation-building, decision-making and international relations. Historical memory does not remain passive knowledge but is used by political elites to strengthen nation-building. Since there were no neatly defined nations with one language as the most common vehicle of historical knowledge, especially not in Eastern Europe, minorities had to be assimilated. *Assimilation* was generally a euphemism for more or less cruel 'nation-destroying'.
(2) Political science should not just consider the central level of identity-building but should dig into the details of the historical memories of subnational ethnic groups and regions. The branch of knowledge most open to this kind of question is the study of *federalism*. Though federalism is older than the revival of the small nations and was originally not used to accommodate ethnic groups, it was at least open to taking cognizance of the existence of subnational historical memories transformed into demands for 'recognition'.

The historical memory of groups is not something which can be derived from the mere existence of a group. Marx recognized that "*Klasse an sich*", the objective existence of a group, is politically relevant only when it turns into "*Klasse für sich*" group consciousness. *Constructivism* relies exclusively on the subjective side of group identity. One does not have to be a radical constructivist to recognize that historical memories are created. *Traditions* have an objective existence, otherwise

cultural anthropology would not be possible. But traditions die out if they are not *reinforced and cultivated*, by families, communes, regions and political entities.

The rise of national states has been labelled with the euphemism *nation-building*. This term with its positive connotations obscures the fact that it was combined with *nation-destroying*. The two earliest nation-states in Europe, France and Spain, were the most nation-destroying 'nation-builders' in the era of absolutism. In France regional privileges largely disappeared, with exceptions in Alsace and elsewhere, particularly after the Great Revolution. After the abolition of historical regions and the introduction of departments, the new entities were so artificial that they were hardly able to develop a regional identity. In Spain Aragon, in a union with Castile on equal terms since 1479, lost its institutions in the War of the Spanish Succession in 1707, because it fought for the Austrian pretender, Don Carlos, and the victorious Bourbon dynasty took its revenge. Regional historical memories were extinguished most effectively the more national states modernized. The highest degree of brutality was reached with dictators like Stalin and Franco, even though both came from regional cultures, Georgia and Galicia respectively. Not only authoritarian politics were detrimental to the traditional historical memories of groups. Liberalism, combined with the idea of the national state, fought for collective rights in the name of *human rights for the individual*. Even if this predicament was solved by autonomy and federalism, non-political forces were the great 'nation-destroyers': modernization, technology and the global market. In Friedrich Engels' words, regional nation-destroying continues 'because the locomotive overthrows the push-cart of regional cultures'—even in Mecklenburg, the most backward area in Germany.

Political action was a nation-destroyer, but nation-destroying in many cases caused a counter-movement of nation-building on the basis of suppressed or underprivileged territorial subsystems. Between nation-building on a 'national' level and nation-building on a 'regional' level sometimes *federalism* was the institutional possibility to make different historical memories compatible via regional autonomy in second-tier issues (except foreign policy and defence policy). Because federal devices sometimes failed, international protective institutions for minorities were established after World War I. *Self-determination* became a slogan, but international law as well as dominant interests in the international community in the era of declining imperialism used the principle rather arbitrarily for fear that the colonies might ask for the same rights. *Recognition* for many groups was as important as *redistribution* and *participation* in central institutions. When the process of *decolonization* was finally successful, the new nation-states were confronted with a host of subnational 'historical memories' and political demands for the future.

The author tries to show in this paper:

(1) The *conditions for recognition of different historical memories* and their possibilities for identity-building within the framework of a larger 'national' state. *Nation-building was accompanied by successful nation-destroying* of the smaller historical regional entities.
(2) These possibilities vary according to the *dominating paradigms in political theory*. Liberal individualism and rationalism were hostile to the

identity-building and historical memories of regional cultures. Postmodern *constructivism* with its tolerance of incompatible cultures and pluralism influenced political actors, though the debate between constructivists and essentialists created new problems for those entities asking for *recognition*.

(3) *Language policies* are the most common instruments for identity-building by national and regional ethnic elites.

(4) *Self-determination and affirmative discrimination* became in the late twentieth century a driving force for 'recognition', autonomy and the possibility of cultivating regional 'historical memory'. Making 'recognition' universal, however, created *new predicaments because of competing identities* even at a regional level.

2.2 Nation-Building as Potential Nation-Destroying: Liberal Individualism and Rationalism Versus the Search for Identity and Historical Memories of Subnational Regions

Nation-building in modern nation-states in the North Atlantic area has generally been influenced by rational liberal philosophy. Cartesianism and rationalism were strictly individualistic. Civil rights were recognized for individual citizens, not for groups. Every attempt to claim human rights for ethnic groups was therefore regarded as dangerous in constitutional law and still more so in the law of nations. The search for *identity* was frequently opposed to *reason* because it was considered as purely sentimental (Ignatieff 1994). Nationalism was reduced by radical liberal thinkers to "constitutional patriotism" (Habermas), but many regional and ethnic subgroups were not able to identify completely with their national constitution, with the exception of the bill of rights. Even in this field they fought for more collective group rights.

The older types of pluralism have never demanded substantial national identity. Sometimes they were multinational empires who needed ethnic and cultural groups only for raising taxes and left a broad international autonomy to the rest of the administration. But these, such as the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary and the Czarist Empire in Russia, and more recently the Soviet Union, fell apart in spite of a degree of pluralism. The ideology of the Soviet Union contributed to this collapse by claiming that the search for national identity leads to 'false consciousness'. The ethnic groups in Soviet federalism were recognized and defined strictly according to 'objective' linguistic and economic criteria. Politically it was made sure, however, that their aspirations did not go very far beyond the right to create folk dance groups (von Beyme 1964). Authoritarian national states restricted possibilities for the cultivation of historical memories to the extent that in Catalonia under Franco, for instance, only the monastery of Montserrat and the Barcelona soccer team remained as symbols of cultural memory.

The successful alternative to imperial pluralism was the nation-state in an immigration society such as the United States. It was characterized by a 'benign neglect' *for cultural and ethnic groups*, and considered as the first victory of the modern building of national identity over the pluralism of empires (Anderson 1991: 191, 197). Once the Americans had severed the ties with their English compatriots, linguistic borders seemed to be insignificant. The new myth of national independence was more important than the allegedly outdated myth of the 'common cultural heritage' of all those who spoke English. The national emblem, the eagle above a bunch of arrows, symbolized the harmony of various cultural traditions and historical memories.

Early federalist systems were constructed to reconcile regional demands. But they were not meant to improve ethnic representation. The German Empire that existed till 1806 (which in the late Middle Ages had committed the error of adding 'of the German nation' to the title 'Holy Roman Empire') and the German confederation of 1815–1866 contained many non-German territories. Even Switzerland, later the standard model of multinational federalism, was initially dominated by Swiss-German speakers and the *zugewandten Orte* were benevolently treated like dependent territories. Only after the era of Napoleon were they able to implement equal rights for their Cantons (Forsyth 1989: 3). In the USA the founding fathers made a presumption of ethnic homogeneity. Jay spoke in Federalist 2 of a "united people, a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in manners and customs". Even in Spain after Franco no more than three out of seventeen autonomous units were established on the principle of sub-state nationality, and even then this applied to only 30 % of the population. Historical memory for this privilege was directly relevant, because the three groups were called 'historical nations'. The nonsense of 'historical nations', unfortunately transmitted via Hegel and Marx, was widely accepted even by non-German nationalists. In this view, Poland had a right to be reconstructed, whereas Ireland, Slovakia and Slovenia were doomed to assimilation.

It was not until the nineteenth century that thinking in terms of national and ethnic groups came to prominence. Nationalism was generally promoted by liberal political forces who tried to mitigate the collectivist implications of the nationalist doctrine. They tried to combine individualism and nationalism and identified a clearly defined 'ego' which can decide between various identities and states, and no longer needs the collectivist intermediation of regions, communes, family estates. The liberals hoped to promote a convergence between objective national criteria and the subjective decisions of free individuals. The French revolution, therefore, brought in plebiscites for the first time, as in the cases of Liège (1795) and Mulhouse (1795). In the Italian Risorgimento, plebiscites were widely used after 1860. Self-determination was, however, handled in a rather opportunistic way. Geographical exceptions to the rules were admitted. The French population in the Italian Valle d'Aosta did not get a chance to state its opinion through a referendum. A plebiscite was included in the peace treaty of 1866 between Prussia and Austria after the war with Denmark. It was, however, never implemented, in

order not to create a precedent for the Alsatians and French who demanded a plebiscite in Alsace and Lorraine. Ernest Renan in his lectures at the Collège de France under the title "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" pleaded for the free will of the people of Lorraine. In a letter to David Friedrich Strauss, Renan criticized the objectivist German concept of belonging to a nation and rightly predicted that 1 day the Slavic regions within the German Empire would also argue for separation in the name of their Slavic descent.

The new national states were not always consistent in their attitude. The German Empire (1871–1918) claimed the population of Alsace and Lorraine. Many of these, especially in the upper classes, felt like Frenchmen. They had to be German, however, because they spoke a German dialect at home. The Slavic minorities such as Poles, Mazovians and Kashubes, however, were treated as Germans because they were loyal Prussian citizens even though they spoke a Slavic language at home. In many political theories, Germany is considered as "biological essentialist" in the definition of her citizenship. But the Germans have been induced to this attitude by frequent losses of their compatriots (1866 the Austrians, 1918 Alsatians, people of north Schleswig, western Prussia and Upper Silesia, 1945 the East Germans. The essentialist definition of a German was meant to offer privileged access to those who no longer belonged to the German territory. Even after 1945, the division of Germany caused a continuation of this deviation from Western European ideas of citizenship. Only in 1990 did reunification make it possible to get rid of these objectivist biological criteria concerning the question of who can be considered as a 'German citizen'.

The German delegation in Versailles after the First World War recognized that the suppression of plebiscites in 1871 was unlawful. But the new victors of 1918 proceeded as arbitrarily as the former victors of 1871. In some cases plebiscites were held. The right of the Austrians to join Germany was not only suppressed, but even the self-nomination of the Austrian Republic as 'Deutsch-Österreich' was prohibited. Wilson's nationality principle was violated for many opportunistic reasons: in South Tyrol geopolitical reasons preponderated (as with the case of the purely French city of Metz in 1871, which Bismarck did not want to incorporate, but the military insisted). In the Sudetenland historical memories were used for the violation of the principle of ethnic self-determination: the 'integrity of the Bohemian crownlands'. In minor cases even railway lines were used as a pretext to infringe on ethnic borders (the case of Gmünd). In the Italian–Yugoslav quarrel about Fiume/Rijeka it was still clear that the principle of self-determination was not treated as a binding legal question, but rather as one of political opportunity (Heidelmeyer 1973: 37, 52).

The allied victors knew that a just solution had not been found. Therefore they created a complicated network of protection for ethnic minorities in the Versailles peace treaty (Art. 86, 93). But only a few minorities benefited from it, such as the Swedish minority on the Aaland Islands, the Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia, the Galicians and the population of Memel (Klaipeda) after its incorporation in Lithuania. Complaints about violations of minority rights were possible, but the minorities themselves could not resort to the Council. The International Court had to decide unanimously and was not obliged to transfer the matter to the Council of

the League of Nations. There were, however, some minor decisions for the protection of minorities, such as the Poles in Danzig or the Germans in schools in Polish Upper Silesia (Wittman/Bethlen 1980: 35).

After the First World War President Wilson and the European statesmen also deviated from the 'colour-blind tradition' in setting up a new international organization, the League of Nations. It largely stressed the rights of ethnic minorities because the new borders and new states had created a host of new units, claiming national identity in the name of some historical memory. The system failed and collapsed under the attack of the defeated nations which turned to dictatorships.

After the Second World War the United States stressed universal rights. This *universalism* served also as an instrument to involve the collectivist-minded Communist systems. Following the collapse of the bipolar system because of the erosion of Communism around 1990, minority rights were again increasingly demanded. International organizations such as the *Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (1991), the *European Council* (1992) and even the *United Nations* (1993) competed with declarations. The CSCE even created a *High Commissioner for National Minorities* (1993) (documents in: Hannum 1993). The declarations remained vague. Where bills of rights were contradicted, this was scarcely debated, in order not to devalue the new rights by comparison with higher-ranking rights such as 'personal freedom of the individual' and the principles of democracy and social justice.

Nation-building in the nineteenth century was successful to a large extent, even in the case of latecomers such as Italy and Germany, and in the twentieth century Poland and the Czech Republic. Nation-building included *nation-destroying* in marginal areas and in the case of many smaller ethnic groups, from the Aaland Islands to South Tyrol. The smaller entities tolerated the pressure to assimilate because the myth of national identity-building included the promise of modernization and well-being. In the period of post-materialism, however, ethnic groups which rank highly on the scales of post-materialism developed by Inglehart (1977: 237, 260) began to ask questions about their own identity which could no longer be dismissed as the 'pre-modern' aspirations of 'hillbillies'. Karl Deutsch (1972: 9), in an ironic definition, called a nation a group of people unified by an erroneous assumption about a common ethnic origin and a common antipathy for their neighbours. Since in the North Atlantic area hostilities between neighbouring 'nations' generally tended to diminish, internal conflict and pluralism could no longer be suppressed in the name of some 'national interest' and 'unified strength'. The term 'nation-destroying' was directed against all those theories which opted for assimilation, from Marxism to Karl Deutsch's theory of communication.

2.3 The Struggle for Recognition and Self-determination

The era of classical modernity was dominated under the influence of Socialist ideologies by conflicts with the aim of *redistribution*. Postmodern ideologies, on the other hand, promoted the struggle for *recognition*. In the sphere of international

law, the demand for recognition was focused on the demand for *self-determination.* Recognition was demanded by other groups; first of all the group needed to recognize itself. It did so by mobilizing its historical memory against the overwhelming influence of national definitions of self-identity which minority groups did not share. The minority problem, from a global perspective, proved to be a majority problem. This majority, however, was composed of hundreds of minorities. The Atlantic Charter drafted during the inter-allied conference in London in September 1941, which included the Soviet Union, already announced its consent for coming territorial changes, but a positive right of self-determination for ethnic groups was not recognized. Churchill wanted to restrict self-determination to those areas occupied by Germany, but he was afraid that after the war it might be applied in the colonies. The forthcoming victors were close to a kind of 'saltwater thesis'. Self-determination and the right of secession were restricted to overseas colonies, and were not granted to 'aboriginals' and ethnic minorities (Kymlicka 1998: 131). In the consolidated democracies, even most minorities have accepted this and renounced the right to secession in the name of self-determination. In Spain, according to surveys only a minority of 7 % favour secession from the national state. In the Basque Country the figure was higher: 19 %; in Catalonia it was 17 % (Moreno 2001: 68f.).

International lawyers did not yet dare to apply the principle of self-determination to territorial conflicts. This was seriously discussed only later when *identity policy* became a fashionable idea. Sceptics gave an early warning against the consequences of this new development because of the sheer number of subjects who might demand self-determination among the 15,000 cultures in the world. Some authors even spoke of "ethnographic surrealism" (Clifford 1988: 119). The principle of self-determination, combined with utopian constructs of historical memory and of a coming future, contained the danger of a complete fragmentation of the world and a further alienation of thousands of groups haunted by the spectre of identity politics. The good old device of mitigating territorial conflicts via *federalism* was too symmetric in its way of thinking. Postmodern identity seekers longed for *asymmetric rights* even if the majority, like the Anglophones in Canada, recognized a "multination conception of federalism" (Kymlicka 1998: 129, 146ff.). Canada seemed to be classical model for the consequences of recognizing multinationalism: Pierre Trudeau as a French-speaking Canadian prime minister gave more rights to the component units in a "Charter of rights and liberties". Nevertheless, ten provinces felt that their identity had been neglected. Quebec declared the Charter to be an 'imperialistic yoke' and the 633 'aboriginal first nations of Canada' protested because their rights were not protected against encroachment on the part of the provinces. The English or French minorities in various provinces were also not satisfied (Tully 1995: 11f.). This example proves that a solution to recognizing all historical memories and accepting their rights to autonomy and self-determination is hardly possible. This is why the Spanish solution, with no overall concept but granting *pre-autonomias* to various areas just when the central government was being confronted with new demands, demonstrated some wisdom. But it also created new demands. The Catalan CDC Party fought for Catalan privileges but was eager to restrict them to the three

'historical nationalities' (Catalonia, Basque Country, Galicia) (Nohlen/Hildenbrand 2005: 279). It was supported by the Constitution (Art. 148.2) which required more than an absolute majority for such demands from the regions. It envisaged, however, the possibility of a later procedure that after 5 years would give 'equal rights' with other privileged areas. A *symmetric federal solution* in Spain seemed to be impossible because there were so many groups of different levels of importance and with different historical traditions. It was, however, easier in the case of Belgium, where only two major language groups had to be accommodated. The 'federalism of dissociation' in Belgium subordinated every consideration to ethnic questions. It did not respect the traditional provinces, and dissolved a historical entity like Brabant along language lines (Delwit et al. 1999: 53).

2.4   Language Policies as an Instrument of National and Regional Identity-Builders

There are certain positions of compromise between essentialists and constructivists in social theories. Not every mythic narrative is accepted by the target group. Constructions need a certain basis in social reality. There is a kind of *Wahlverwandtschaft* (kinship relation) between construction and reality (Benhabib 1999: 25). Even if a scholar has proved that the allegedly ancient Scottish 'highland kilt' was invented by a Quaker in the early eighteenth century who came not from Scotland but from Lancashire, this invention took root only within a familiar cultural setting. 'Inventors' have to resort to existing elements of the historical memory of a group (Kapferer 1987: 211).

Political activities have played the role of an intervening variable and the result of politics sometimes seems to be approval of constructivism and sometimes not. In a comparative perspective, areas which develop *regional parties* are successful in preserving their historical memories, traditions and autonomy. Most European areas developed such parties. But in the long run only those parties are successful identity promoters which play a role in national politics and sometimes tip the balance in government-building, such as the South Tyrol People's Party in Italy or the Catalan and Basque Parties in Spain. But even in cases of stable political organization within the regional identity-builders, success is not guaranteed. There are obviously limits to the success of identity policies if the identity myth is far beyond the experience of most regional people.

The most common instrument of identity-building is *language policy*. Its effectiveness also varies. The enormous propaganda efforts for identity-building in the Soviet Union and in former Yugoslavia were not able in the long run to create a new national identity even though there was even a single dominant language—Russian or Serbo-Croat. Even the statistics from the Soviet Union prove that the success of language policies can meet with resistance. Estonia was economically and culturally the most developed republic in the Union. Nevertheless, more than a quarter of its population claimed not to be able to speak Russian (figures in von

Beyme 1988). Apparently this perception was not dictated by reality but rather by the expression of hidden resistance to 'Russification'. For decades we were taught a 'Serbo-Croat language'. After the dissolution of the federation the Serbian language in the remnant of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Macedonia) was reduced in the Constitution to two dialects, written in Cyrillic characters (Art. 15 in the Constitution of 1992). Even the USA experienced anxieties about declining like former Empires, and strengthened the language requirements for its immigrants.

Democratic politics has been called "politics in the vernacular" (Kymlicka 2001: 213, 220). This should not be taken literally. Multinational countries have always been able to change the balance of ethnic groups through migration, and not just in the early days when 'going west' in the USA meant encroaching on the rights of the Indian tribes. Only well-organized minorities such as the Québecois were powerful enough to obtain some influence on immigration policies. Nevertheless, the problem remains that newcomers prefer to learn English. Thirty-seven per cent of Canadians with some French background spoke English at the workplace in 1975, whereas only 6 % of predominantly English-speakers turned to French in a comparable situation (Meisel 1975: 350). The *protection of national languages* in democracies has to be reconciled with the principle of *equal opportunities*.

The size of the constructed macro-aggregate is no determinant factor for its success. *Revivals* rarely have been as successful as the rediscovered Hebrew culture in Israel. In Ireland, similar efforts to revitalize the Gaelic language have scarcely been successful. Even decades of bombing have not produced the result that the majority of the population of the Basque Country in Spain uses Basque as its first language. All Basque speakers are bilingual, as most people were in the former Soviet Union. The Basque language is spoken only by a quarter of the population of the region. The majority (59 %) in that area speaks only Spanish. This is one of the reasons why the historical Basque movement relied more on claiming their old rights and *fueros*, whereas the terrorist branch of the movement today hopes to bomb the country into linguistic homogeneity. Even in regions like Catalonia where command of the regional language is better developed, there is a gap between those who speak Catalan (68 %), and those who are able to write it (39.9 %) (figures in Nohlen/Hildenbrand 2005: 158ff.). Historical memory thus remains partially illiterate and is bound to 'oral history'. Since Spain follows the liberal principle of a *dual school system* which leaves it to the parents to decide whether their children go to a school where all the subjects are taught in the regional language, it is unlikely that the figures will quickly improve. The alternative *monistic model of homogeneous school districts* in Switzerland and in Belgium is less liberal, but in the short run produces more homogeneity. But even this model is permanently under threat from immigration, which blurs the borderlines of ethnic groups.

Recognition is no one-way street. The dominant group has to recognize the particularities of regional cultures without prejudice—and vice versa. A recent (2005) survey by SOFRES in France showed that Alsatians were recognized by 96 % of French people as being the same as any other French person, even though they are sometimes ridiculed for their heavy quasi-German accent. Only the Bretons

ranked above this level (98 %). Corsicans (89 %) and French Moslems (79 %) ranked below it, and even below black citizens of the Antilles (90 %). After the Second World War, Alsatians were still suspected of being half-German. In 1946 only 65 % of the French recognized them as "normal Frenchmen like others" (Sondage 2005: 62). Successful integration and regional policies apparently have a big influence on mutual recognition. It is not by chance that the French authorities only recently accepted bilingual street signs in Strasbourg, since the autonomist movement has withered away in this area.

Language policy is not only an instrument of central 'suppressors'. As soon as a sub-unit has won its privileges from the central government, it normally resents the fact that historical boundaries do not coincide with the language group. Most historical ethnic autonomous areas in Spain did away with the traditional boundaries of administrative units and thus proved to be as reckless modernizers as the central government used to be, if on a smaller scale. Historical memories create new *irredentas*. Some Catalans claim that Valencia and the Balearic Islands should belong to 'Greater Catalonia'. Both speak a variant of Catalan, but both claim to be independent 'nations'. In the tiny state of Andorra in the Pyrenees, only 35 % of the people speak Catalan. Nevertheless, the Constitution of 1993 made it the only official language. Basques and Catalans complain about the respective minorities in France—inaccessible to them, a permanent irredenta.

In the postmodern age of 'political correctness', even the successful American model has run into trouble. It has not yet disintegrated, but conservative thinkers such as Huntington are afraid that in the long run this might well be the result of the 'struggle of cultures', which is not only being waged on the global stage. This increasingly has linguistic aspects, since Spanish is spoken by more than 11 % of the American population. Almost two-thirds of American students choose to study Spanish as a foreign language. Demands for bilingualism in the south-west of the USA are increasing. The Afro-Americans benefit from these quarrels and gain an advantage because they after all speak English and so are not partisans in the 'War of Cultures'.

Older specialists on questions of minorities, such as Nathan Glazer (1978: 221), continued to fight against *affirmative discrimination*. Public policy, according to this concept, should take no account of differences of race, colour or ethnic group. A Jewish scholar, as the exponent of a well-assimilated minority, was, however, suspected of promoting the special interests of his group. The Jews are not among the deprived groups in the country and even in religious matters, with the exception of some religious sectarians, they tend to remain silent, so that they are more easily able to accept this liberal 'colour-blind' point of view than the torchbearers in the struggle for the rights of the black population or the Hispanics. Ideological liberals tend to oppose all theories of *affirmative action* and claim that these measures aggravate isolation and alienation from the overall goals of the nation, without solving the social problems of these groups (Kymlicka 1995: 4). The division of state and religion was extended to cultural and ethnic groups: *state demos* should remain separated from *social ethnos*. This parallel between religion and ethnos makes little sense, however. People can change their religion, but not their race or ethnic origins, and mostly not even the accent in which they speak the dominant 'state language'.

2.5 Essentialists Versus Constructivists: The Predicaments of Regional Historical Memory and Justice for all Subnational Units

In the age of decolonization not only did the number of nations grow, but so did the number of countries with mixed ethnic composition. A pioneer of studies of ethnic groups, Walker Connor (1994: 29), counted and found only 9.1 % ethnically homogeneous entities among 132 states. Dominant ethnic groups ruled in 18.9 % of cases, where they counted for more than 90 % of the population. In 23.5 % of cases the largest ethnic element ranged from 50 to 75 %, and only in 29.5 % did the dominant ethnic group constitute below 50 % of the national population. These data demonstrate the enormous need for nation-building propaganda. Dominant ethnicities use the myths of their group and pretend that they are valid for the whole population of a nation-state. Ethnic and cultural subsystems react by developing their counter-myths. These tend to be the more constructed the less historical continuity a group was able to develop. The Slovaks, for instance, always under the domination of other groups, mostly Hungarians and Czechs, in the preamble of their constitution went back to the 'Grand Moravian Empire' in the sixth century in order to justify their claims for autonomy and independence, though this empire embraced many other areas, from Poland to Hungary. The Croats extended the 'constitutional poetry' in their preamble back to many centuries of Croatian struggle for autonomy against Hungarian domination in their historical estates.

Most ethnic groups in modern national states share the same traditions of individual rights. Nevertheless, Norway insisted on splitting from Sweden in 1905. In 1992 Slovakia left the nation of Czechoslovakia—with no historical memory of this entity—which had been 'invented' by Masaryk after the collapse of the Hapsburg monarchy. If it were claimed that the two cases were conflicts in a still pre-democratic world, the same could hardly be said in the cases of Belgium and Canada, two democratic countries permanently on the brink of disintegration along ethnic lines. Democratic surveys have shown that, even when it comes to the same values, ethnic groups, because of their different historical memories, have different attitudes. French-speaking Canadians proved to be more cynical about whether their government was trustworthy, but on the other hand they were more tolerant towards the economic and fiscal policies of their rulers than the Anglo-Canadians (Meisel 1975: 325). In the case of separation or institutional quasi-separation, as in Belgium, historical traumas were more decisive than the legal convictions of the ethnic groups involved. This can be shown even for normal democratic states. Nowhere does the right of citizenship live up to the expectations of a constitutional patriotism oriented towards human rights. Why does a native criminal have more rights in some respects than a useful and assimilated alien resident?

The post-nationalist age in Europe created the paradox that 'national identity' was *de-mystified* but smaller regional identities were *re-mystified*. It could be shown, especially in America, that symbolic policies with their cult of the flag, the national anthem, historical narratives, ceremonies and monuments contained

highly irrational elements. But the identity-building of the smaller ethnic units demanded even more irrational ontological definitions of their national or regional or even tribal identity. They used a kind of *tu-quoque argument* and claimed that no unit could demand higher dignity simply because it had a longer tradition of statehood to promote its ideas of national identity. No narrative of identity can claim higher rationality and all the theories of nation-building and their reconstruction of the historical past in a rational perspective are suspected to be on the same irrational level (Gellner 1987: 3, 178). New postmodern theories have even tried to deconstruct the individual as the only subject of human rights, and literature has experimented with the negation of the 'creating ego' as well as with coherent work as its outcome. Debates between neo-liberals and communitarians have tried to settle some of these disputes. There are enlightened mediators between the two positions who claim that the whole dispute is but a debate among intellectuals sharing the same liberal basic values (Kymlicka 2001: 21). In mature democracies even ethnic and religions minorities (with the exception of ethno-religious fringe groups such as the Amish or the Jewish Chassidists) do not challenge the basic legal convictions of the Nation.

An important argument against the feasibility of universal recognition of various entities with their own historical memory was the fact that in many countries development by now is *intercultural*. Cultural differences can no longer neatly be separated. Cultural difference is no panopticon of fixed and incompatible reconstructions of the past and visions for the future. The dominance of 'civilization' over 'culture' was increased by the modernization process, and it became the centre of sociological theories of history from Toynbee and Ogburn to Alfred Weber and Spengler. Frequently the USA is blamed for promoting *Americanization*, which blurs the borderlines between various cultures and historical memories. It is mostly overlooked that those products taken for American homogenizers of cultures are already frequently 'made in Hong Kong'.

The debates about regional and ethnic identity in established national states are waged by two camps: essentialists versus constructivists. Constructivists hint at the *myth-building power of* 'historical memories' and deny that there exist clearly defined objective territorial entities. The *alien* is everywhere, and with growing migration he is present even in marginal areas. Oddly enough the reaction of the East German population in marginal areas towards a small number of aliens is more intolerant than in cities crowded by foreigners, Berlin, for instance, mockingly called 'the fourth largest city of Turkey'.

Common destiny is constructed by ethnic ideology and common enemies are easily discovered. Those having a national passport are reduced to *aborigines* (Singer 1997: 38ff.). Ethnocentric activists of the majority group claim that under the pressure of migration *ethnocide* is under way (Meyer 2002: 71). Active genocide of the fascist period by militant regional homogenizers is reduced to an ideology of defence. It sounds less fascist, but the boundaries between the groups are again elevated to ontological heights.

The anti-essentialists are in danger of also putting forward essentialist arguments, as in the question of whether 'recognition' or 'redistribution' is more

important for the momentum new social and ethnic movements develop, though they agree that there is no longer any god-like point of view from which one can pass judgement on the developments in identity-building and historical memories (Fraser in: Fraser/Honneth 2003: 231). The constructivist explanation has the virtue that cultures and their historical memories are not interpreted as compulsory limitations. *Reflexive self-criticism* in postmodern times always includes the claims of other cultures (Benhabib 1999: 52). Anti-essentialism counters the *holism of cultural essentialism* with the praise of a 'pluralism of perspectives and cultures'. Nevertheless, even some pluralist ideologies, especially gender and ethnic groups, turn out to be essentialist as soon as they argue on the basis of 'biological constant factors'. Whereas the dominant great aggregations—male chauvinist society or the dominant language group—are deconstructed, the newly-discovered minority is cemented in terms of an entity which cannot compromise over essential tenets of its culture and historical memory. Enlightened feminists have tried to diminish this danger and have claimed only a *tactical essentialism* in favour of a *good common cause* as long as they have to fight for the rights of their group (Calhoun 1995: 202). But we have seen many tactical beliefs turning into stable ideologies.

In the era of postmodernism it is recognized that ethnic identity and its historical narratives aimed at promoting 'historical memory' can never be fully rational. The constructivist thinkers take it for granted that ethnic historical memories are "invented". Traditions seem to be mostly invented. Only 'customs' have an objective historical justification, according to a typology created by Hobsbawm (1983). But traditions can never be invented arbitrarily. Where new states were created, the cultural elites had to invent more historical memories than the elites of established nations need for national cohesion, especially when they showed no inclination to resort to the traditions of the *aborigines* as in Australia. In other more recent nations, such as Mexico, the native element was so important that it could be used as one element of a myth of the two merging historical memories. Art (Orozco, Rivera) and literature have contributed largely to forging an ideology of this merger.

The extension of autonomy and recognition was meant to create more freedom and democracy. But sometimes the politicians of regional areas, who create their own historical memories, are in danger of promoting ethnic purges. This was obvious when Yugoslavia collapsed. The trials at The Hague have not yet clarified all the violence and genocide committed in the former Yugoslav republics. But even below the level of war-like purges we have to ask to what extent the collective rights of a territorial sub-unit may restrict individual rights in the name of group solidarity. This is an urgent question in those areas where minorities work with coercion in and outside the group, from the Basque Country to Iraq. Defenders of collective rights justify this, hinting at the possibility of dissenting individuals in democracies 'opting out' and moving into another area. In the Basque Country not only have about a thousand people who oppose ETA policies been killed, but about 200,000 citizens have left the area, and the majority of those who speak exclusively Spanish is frightened, as are moderate Basques (Thibaud 2005: 70).

This conviction of the Basque essentialists frequently contradicts another value so dear to many ideologues of minorities and their historical memory: *Heimat,* the right to live in one's home area.

Even in peaceful Switzerland there was a case of ethnic violence, the case of the French-speaking 'Jura' within the canton of Berne. Ethnic conflict lines were reinforced by feelings of religious identity. Until 1815, the Jura belonged to the Archbishop of Basel and remained Catholic in a protestant canton. Even a referendum could not solve the problem because the anti-secessionists in the south remained faithful to Berne. The new canton of Jura finally embraced only the north. The question of the Jura remained unsolved, as did the Irish question after the division of the island (Höpflinger in: Gerdes 1980: 59).

Historical memories are manipulated according to the expected economic development of groups. Recently the environmentalists have discovered that 'Small is beautiful', and universalized the principle of small groups within a nation-state. The poor periphery in some federations seemed to carry the main burden of technical and economic development in the use of natural resources. Even areas which were not the poorest areas of the nations, as in some parts of Scotland or Spain, started to rebel. Devolution and decentralization has been developed in order to prevent over-exploitation of regional resources by national and transnational corporations (Kothari and Camilleri in: Hampson/Reppy 1996: 154ff., 122ff.). But there are many problems concerned with protecting regions which can only be solved at a national level. Excessive decentralization, as demanded by eco-regionalists and ethnocentric groups, may result in territorial small groups that remain helpless before the trend towards globalization (Kymlicka 2001: 142f.). The Spanish flexible policy towards the autonomous regions seems to be more successful. In Spain the privileged autonomous areas, with the exception of Galicia, were never underdeveloped. The Basque Country even became a leading economic centre and its banks sided with Madrid centralizers. Its position became weaker as the other areas developed (in terms of per capita income, the Basque Country has declined to fifth place after Madrid, the Balearic Islands, Navarre and Catalonia) (figures in Nohlen/Hildenbrand 2005: 72). Apparently older hypotheses of deprivation which reduced the struggle for self-determination and autonomy to marginalized poor people have been shown to be false. In Western Europe, South Tyrol was the first area to use force, though only against 'things' (such as pylons) and not against 'persons'. Its inhabitants were ridiculed as hillbillies, but even when the movement began it was one of the richest rural areas in Italy. The Basque Country used to be the richest province in Spain, but nevertheless caused unrest. Scotland got richer through its oil, but this has not stopped it demanding more autonomy. Questions of historical memory and political identity are becoming more acute, as we know from studies such as 'The Silent Revolution' on post-materialism (Inglehart 1977). After these experiences, we have to be prepared for more demands for autonomy and ethnic identity, especially if globalization progresses as quickly as it has in the last two decades.

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